

Inspection of St Mary's The Mount Catholic Primary School

Jesson Road, Walsall, West Midlands WS1 3AY

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 April 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

A palpable sense of compassion and community shines through at this Catholic faith school, where pupils 'live, love and learn as Jesus taught'. Pupils relish coming to school and are rarely absent or late. They are happy, feel safe and love to learn.

Staff really care about pupils and want what's best for them. A whole-school focus on talking about mental health is part of the supportive culture. Pupils thoroughly appreciate their school. They know that staff work hard to give them an education that helps prepare them for their future.

Teachers have high expectations for pupils. Pupils produce high quality work because they try hard and have positive attitudes. They achieve well, and this contributes to them being well prepared for their next steps in education. Pupils welcome visitors enthusiastically, proud to show them their talents and their learning.

Pupils behave well and relationships are very positive. At playtimes, pupils enjoy one another's company and interact respectfully. Poor behaviour is unusual. On the rare occasions that pupils' conduct falls below expectations, staff and pupils talk things through and resolve problems quickly.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has set out the curriculum carefully in all subjects so that it builds over time. They have put particular emphasis on the importance of vocabulary. Pupils are learning and remembering this well, enabling them to talk with confidence about their work. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a real strength. Staff identify needs quickly and put in place support that enables pupils with SEND to thrive.

Pupils learn the curriculum successfully. They achieve very well in mathematics and English, becoming skilled mathematicians and accomplished writers. Across other subjects too, pupils learn and connect key information. Teachers revisit previous learning so that pupils embed their knowledge. They draw on what they have learned in previous lessons to help them with new tasks. In French, for example, previous learning about colours enabled pupils to describe clothing in a later lesson well.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and present information clearly. They explain concepts well and address misconceptions effectively when offering pupils feedback. During some lessons, teachers do not gauge pupils' understanding in the moment effectively enough. This means they can sometimes move on to new learning before pupils are ready.

Staff are skilled in supporting pupils at an early stage of learning to read. In daily phonics lessons, children in the early years quickly learn the sounds that letters make and how to blend them together into words and sentences. Pupils throughout school love to read and

do so widely, often and with enthusiasm. They enjoy it when their teachers read to them, and they develop a love of literature.

Children in the early years get off to a flying start. Staff are experts at developing children's language skills, and the early years are characterised by purposeful chatter. The school has ensured that Nursery and Reception are highly engaging environments awash with high-quality resources. Children settle quickly into routines and become confident and independent learners and explorers. They interact kindly and the early years is a harmonious place to be.

The curriculum extends way beyond the academic. Opportunities for personal development are extensive. However, the school lacks a clear strategy to ensure consistency around such aspects as clubs on offer. Pupils take on meaningful roles, including becoming school councillors, liturgy leaders and even health and safety experts. They take their responsibilities very seriously and make a tangible difference to their school community. Pupils gain a secure understanding of how to stay safe online and in the real world. They learn about issues such as democracy and equality and show respect for people of other faiths and beliefs. This contributes to how well pupils behave. This is a school filled with helpfulness, understanding and empathy.

Staff are very proud to work here and feel supported. The school has been successful in building positive relationships with parents and carers and the wider community. There is an impressive buy-in from staff, pupils and governors. This is certainly a school where everyone is pulling in the same direction. Pupils and staff alike told inspectors that being at St Mary's The Mount is just like being part of one big family.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes teaching does not check effectively that pupils understand fully the content of lessons. This means that teaching can move on before concepts are fully grasped. The school should support teachers to check accurately how well pupils understand and make necessary adaptations to maximise learning.
- The personal development programme is extensive but not set out clearly enough. This means that the experience pupils get is inconsistent around elements including participation in clubs. The school should ensure that it structures the personal development programme to ensure that pupils gain the maximum benefit from it.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	104232
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10343797
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Malcolm Rose
Co-headteachers	Catherine Amos and Joanne Smith
Website	www.st-marymount.walsall.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 October 2013 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- As a Catholic faith school, the school is subject to inspections under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The school was last inspected in June 2019 and judged as good. The next inspection is due by the end of the summer term 2026.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school provides before- and after-school care.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the co-headteachers and other leaders.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and French. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to some pupils read to school staff.
- An inspector held a meeting with the chair and other members of the board of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke to representatives from the local authority and from the diocese.
- The lead inspector spoke to a school improvement adviser.
- An inspector visited a school assembly.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at different times of the day and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including school improvement plans and the school website.
- An inspector spoke with some parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Gareth Morgan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Pete Hines OBE

Ofsted Inspector

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