

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Amphill Road, Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 1LJ

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 June 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mary's is a warm and welcoming school. Its key aims are for pupils to be happy and successful. Pupils constantly demonstrate the school's well-embedded mission of 'live, love, believe'. In this, pupils naturally show the values of kindness, respect and equality. They behave well and are polite and courteous to visitors. Pupils know they should include everyone in activities and not leave anyone out. They are adamant that there is no bullying, and they know that staff will help them if they have any worries.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' achievement. Pupils work hard to meet these expectations. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils approach their work conscientiously and responsibly. They show positive attitudes in lessons and share their ideas respectfully with each other.

Pupils take enormous pride in how well they look out for the needs of others. They are keen to help by taking on extra responsibilities, such as well-being, music and chaplaincy ambassadors. Through these varied roles, and many other opportunities, pupils develop an exceptionally strong sense of character. They learn to understand how they can make a positive and genuine difference to their school, the local area and beyond.

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

The school has had a dogged focus on improvement since the last inspection. It has implemented a curriculum that typically details the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary pupils will learn and when. This careful thinking has helped pupils to deepen their understanding across many subjects. However, in a few wider curriculum subjects, including in the early years, the important knowledge pupils should learn is not defined as clearly as it could be. As a result, teachers do not always know the precise content that they need to teach.

The school has embedded its phonics programme successfully. Most pupils learn and recall letter sounds well by the end of key stage 1. Throughout the school, most pupils read with fluency and confidence. As a result, they are motivated to read more challenging texts. Those pupils who struggle to read, receive timely support to help them keep up. Pupils, right from the start in the pre-school, enjoy hearing well-selected stories. As they move through the school they experience, explore and discuss an increasingly diverse range of texts.

Teachers typically deliver the curriculum well. Staff make regular checks on what pupils know and remember. In most subjects, they use this information to address any gaps or misconceptions in learning that pupils may have. However, in a minority of subjects, the systems in place to check and evaluate what pupils know and can do are not used as effectively as they could to address any misunderstandings. This means pupils' learning is not always secured in a timely way before they move on.

Staff swiftly identify and meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils have individual plans to match their specific needs. Staff make

appropriate adaptations to help pupils access their learning. This helps pupils with SEND to successfully access the same curriculum as their peers and achieve well.

Pupils behave with maturity in lessons and around the school. This creates a calm and purposeful environment. Routines from the pre-school to Year 6 are securely established. Pupils respond respectfully to staff and each other. Pupils' attendance is a priority. Most pupils attend regularly, although some pupils do not attend as regularly as they should. The school is taking effective action to improve pupils' attendance, where this should be higher.

The school offers a highly comprehensive and very purposeful programme for pupils' wider development. It enables pupils to grow into very well-rounded individuals by the time they leave for secondary school. A thought-provoking weekly debate explores different views and scenarios throughout the school. Outdoor learning helps pupils connect with nature and develop their spirituality. Pupils' talents are developed through an array of opportunities, including musical, sporting and creative options. Pupils are open and accepting to different views and understand that people should be treated fairly. Their appreciation of the fundamental British values, equalities and different cultures is preparing them well for life in modern Britain.

The federated governing board is clear in its ambition for every pupil to have the best start to their school life. In what has been a time of uncertainty at the school, governors have kept an effective oversight of the school's strategic direction. They have taken decisions that are rooted in the school's values and in the pupils' best interests.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, and in the early years, the important knowledge pupils should learn is not always defined as clearly as it could be. This makes it more difficult for staff to teach the precise knowledge, skills and vocabulary that the school intends. The school should ensure that key learning is clearly defined in all subjects, so that teachers can teach the curriculum with precision.
- At times, the systems in place to check and evaluate what pupils know and can do are not used as effectively as they could be. Some pupils, in some subjects, do not understand key knowledge securely. The school should ensure that staff identify and resolve errors and gaps in pupils' understanding before new curriculum content is introduced.

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	118195
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	10341469
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alexandra Pettitt
Headteacher	Margaret Sanderson (Executive Headteacher) Sian Broome (Head of School)
Website	www.stmaryspri.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 November 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is one of three Catholic primary schools that are part of the St Boniface Federation. These schools are led by a federated governing body, which was established in October 2024.
- The governing body manages a nursery for two- to four-year-olds and before- and after-school childcare provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Portsmouth. The last Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection of its religious character was in May 2023.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other leaders within the school. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing board, including the chair of governors, and educational representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- 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.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. An inspector also spoke with parents on the first day of the inspection.
- The views of staff were gathered through interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection, as well as the staff survey.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views throughout the inspection, including through the classroom visits, group discussions, as well as at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Chris Parker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rebecca Mayman

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025