

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Calcutta Road, Tilbury, Essex RM18 7QH

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Victoria McBrown. This school is part of Christus Catholic Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the Catholic Senior Executive Leader, Joanna Seymour, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Bertrand Okechukwu Emecheta.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School behave with genuine respect for adults and each other. All pupils are nurtured and valued, making their school day enjoyable. Pupils say 'everyone is welcome' and are proud to be part of the school community.

From the early years, pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of what they can achieve. This means behaviour in class is consistently calm and learning is not disturbed. Pupils thoroughly enjoy working together to help and support each other. They listen attentively in lessons and contribute enthusiastically. Pupils are keen to succeed because their efforts and achievements are routinely celebrated.

The school ensures that pupils learn the importance of supporting others in the local community. They make tangible contributions through charitable events, fundraising and designing artwork for the local area.

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

The school's ambition for all pupils is reflected in the carefully designed curriculum. This sets out the key knowledge pupils need to learn in each subject from Nursery to Year 6. Pupils learn well because information is broken down into small steps. During lessons, pupils use 'knowledge passports' and 'learning walls' to help them remember key aspects of their learning. This helps them to record, revisit and retain the knowledge they need and successfully learn more.

Pupils develop a real love of reading. They talk enthusiastically about the books they read, confidently discussing the social issues and moral dilemmas these raise.

The support pupils receive to help them learn to read helps them greatly. This is because all staff are well trained to support those in the early stages of reading. There is a clear structure and sequence to the teaching of phonics. This begins in children's second week of Reception. Pupils' reading books are matched closely to the sounds that they know. Reading these daily ensures that they become confident, fluent readers. In all year groups, teachers read stories every day. They encourage discussion to broaden pupils' understanding of the topics they cover and widen their vocabulary.

Children in the early years enjoy a range of activities. High priority is placed on developing children's communication and language skills. They quickly learn new songs and are introduced to new words clearly and precisely. Children in the early stages of language development are quickly identified. The school seeks the advice of other professionals to make sure that appropriate support is put in place. Children learn the importance of washing their hands and how to put on an apron ready for painting. Outdoors, children develop their physical skills and play imaginatively together in the 'shop'. The curriculum sets out the small and precise steps for children to learn in literacy and mathematics. In other areas, learning is not as

precisely planned for, and learning relies more on children choosing activities rather than systematic teaching.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The school identifies pupils' individual needs accurately. Plans are in place that meet pupils' individual needs so that they can access learning with their peers. Work planned for pupils is skilfully adapted to match the ambition of others. Some pupils benefit from teaching that takes place in a calm, less busy space outside the class. This means that when needed, pupils receive more tailored support.

Pupils recognise the diversity in their community and understand that everyone should be treated fairly. They know that their own opinions may differ from others and have opportunities to debate these. Pupils talk positively about the trips they experience. Books and visits help pupils learn about different cultures and beliefs. They learn about the impact of significant events such as the Windrush scandal. Class reading books promote discussion about moral and social dilemmas, including bullying and acceptance. This prepares pupils for life in wider society. The school provides a range of clubs. These are mainly derived from pupils' suggestions and are more limited because pupils do not know what may be possible. An enrichment curriculum has been designed to help broaden pupils' horizons, but this is in the very early stages of implementation.

Leaders at all levels work effectively together. They have created a positive culture of professional development and continuous improvement for the benefit of all pupils. They know the school well and make carefully informed decisions by regularly listening to the views of staff, pupils and parents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The opportunities for children to participate in clubs, trips and activities do not extensively enrich the personal development of all pupils. Leaders should ensure that they plan a wide and rich set of opportunities for pupils to learn more about themselves, others and the world around them. This will further help pupils to broaden their horizons and develop their own talents and interests.
- In some areas of the curriculum, learning relies more on children choosing activities rather than systematic teaching of the small steps of learning they need. This means children may miss some aspects of learning in these areas. The small steps of learning should be more precisely considered and taught across all areas, as they are in literacy and mathematics.

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 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	146867
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10268141
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Bertrand Okechukwu Emecheta
Headteacher	Victoria McBrown
Website	www.stmarystilbury.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary school is part of Christus Catholic Trust, which consists of 6 primary schools.
- This school is a Roman Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection took place on the 14 June 2017, which was judged outstanding. The next inspection should take place within the next 3 years.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, relevant faculty leaders, the school's link trustee, the chair of the local governing board, the vice-chair of the local governing board, the foundation governor and Catholic Senior Executive Leader of the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, science, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with faculty leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked a sample of pupils' work across year groups and observed pupils reading.
- 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 inspector considered the 34 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

Mireille MacRaid, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jo Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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