

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Maidenhead

Cookham Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 7EG

Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Rosemary Akehurst. This school is part of Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Bill James, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Kenny.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their happy and nurturing school. They understand the importance of the school rules, which help and guide their decision-making. Pupils are friendly and treat each other kindly. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Pupils know that if they have any concerns, there is always a caring adult who will listen and help. This makes them feel safe and supported.

In recent years, the school has undergone a period of change and moved from strength to strength. Staff are ambitious for pupils to thrive and flourish in all aspects of their education and wider school life. Pupils rise to the challenge of higher expectations and achieve well.

Pupils are polite and kind. They behave well in classrooms and around the school. Staff help pupils to recognise their emotions so they can manage themselves well. A sense of care and compassion permeates in lessons and at social times. Playtimes are harmonious because pupils look after each other and their environment.

Pupils experience an interesting and extensive range of wider opportunities, which broaden their horizons. They relish taking part in activities that develop their interests and hobbies. Pupils also prize the wide array of sporting, cultural and musical clubs on offer.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and coherent. In some subjects, such as English and mathematics, the school has clearly identified the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils should learn over time. Staff are well informed about pupils' prior knowledge. They use this knowledge effectively to build pupils' understanding securely. However, some subjects in the wider curriculum are at an earlier stage of identifying the key content. This means that pupils' learning does not consistently build on what they have learned previously. Where this is the case, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. Staff make effective adaptations for individuals through targeted adult support and effective use of resources. The school works well with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes in all areas of their learning.

Reading is a top priority. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and benefit from the professional development opportunities offered. Pupils learn phonics using a well-structured programme. Staff have the expertise to ensure that swift interventions help pupils keep up with the programme. The school makes sure that pupils read books that help them practise the sounds they know well. The sharp focus on those at the early stages of reading helps pupils secure the skills to read effectively.

The school has robust systems in place to improve pupils' attendance. These strategies are making a positive difference. Where pupils' attendance remains a concern, the school works diligently with families to offer them the help they need.

Pupils behave well. In the early years, children flourish because of the care and warm relationships modelled by the staff. Children are encouraged and supported to keep trying, even when they find things tricky. Any pupils who find it hard to manage their behaviour are very well supported to learn the strategies they need to succeed.

The programme for personal development is well considered. The school's effective wider work supports pupils to be resilient, independent and positive citizens. Pupils value the roles of responsibility they are given. These include library monitors, chicken monitors and house captains. Pupils gain valuable leadership skills while contributing to their school and local community. Strong social skills begin in the early years to help children be well prepared for their learning in Year 1.

Leaders and the trust make decisions in the best interests of staff and pupils. Staff appreciate the rich and wide range of training opportunities that they can now access to improve their leadership skills. This is starting to improve their oversight of the changes made to the school's curriculum. The school recognises the need to be more systematic in its evaluation of the impact of these changes. There is a strong sense of teamwork among staff. Staff are proud and happy to work in this school. Staff value how considerate school leaders are of their workload and well-being. Parents and carers are highly positive about the school.

Leaders, governors and trustees are steadfast in their aim to set high standards in all areas of the school. The trust and the local governing body have an accurate oversight of the school's work that they use to support and challenge leaders effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some foundation subjects are at an early stage of implementation. The curriculum design and assessment are not as refined as they should be. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should identify the key knowledge and skills it intends pupils to learn and remember. This will help teachers check pupils' understanding accurately to inform future teaching.
- The school's oversight of the quality of the curriculum is not consistently strong across all subjects. This means that, in some subjects, the school does not know as much as it could about the impact of the changes it has made. The school should continue to

strengthen its systems for evaluating the curriculum so that these are equally effective in all subjects.

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	139882
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10379870
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	293
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Kenny
CEO of the trust	Bill James
Headteacher	Rosemary Akehurst
Website	www.stmarys-maidenhead.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 February 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary joined the Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust in February 2024.
- This is a Roman Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Portsmouth. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in October 2024.
- The headteacher took up post in January 2022.
- A significant number of staff have left or joined since the previous inspection in February 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, CEO and other school leaders. An inspector also spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Portsmouth.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the board of trustees, the chair of the local governing committee and the CEO.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, physical education and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View and parents' written comment. An inspector also talked with parents on the morning of the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of their responses to Ofsted's confidential staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.

Inspection team

Gareth Flemington, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Kate Magliocco	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Wayne	Ofsted Inspector

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