

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bodmin

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Barn Lane, Bodmin, Cornwall PL31 1LW

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 April 2025

Outcome

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bodmin has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Alison McDonald. This school is part of Plymouth CAST, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Zoe Batten, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ruth O'Donovan.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school lives out its vision of 'Make a difference together'. Staff put pupils at the heart of everything they do. The school has highly positive relationships with its parents and carers. Staff endeavour to support both pupils and their families with any issues they may have. This excellent pastoral support helps pupils to be happy and enjoy school.

The school is ambitious for its pupils. This includes pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds or those that have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff expect pupils to work hard. Pupils thrive on these expectations. In lessons, pupils try their best and are eager to engage with their learning. A small number of pupils find it difficult to manage their emotions. The school supports these pupils well. It carefully adapts the pupils' provision to help them improve their behaviour.

Pupils enjoy a diverse range of clubs in which to pursue their talents and interests. The school ensures that there is opportunity for all. It removes barriers so that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND can participate fully in these. Pupils learn to be caring and thoughtful citizens. For example, they raise money for charities and litter pick in the local community.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to refine and improve its curriculum. This has been a key driver in the school maintaining its strong performance. The curriculum is ambitious in what it expects pupils to know. This starts in the early years, where children get off to a wonderful start to their education. Staff place a strong emphasis on supporting children to become independent. This enables children to apply themselves to tasks over sustained periods and learn well. As a result, children are well prepared for key stage 1.

The trust has supported teachers to use effective teaching strategies in which to implement the curriculum. Teachers use these strategies effectively. In lessons, staff question pupils well to probe pupils' thinking further. Staff give feedback to pupils to help them improve. This helps to address pupils' misconceptions. Teachers also check what pupils can remember about previous learning. However, some of this work is at an early stage in some subjects. Some pupils struggle to recall their previous learning. This means they find it hard to make links to their current topic and build new knowledge securely.

Children learn about the importance of reading as soon as they start in the early years. Staff promote books throughout the curriculum. Children develop a love of reading through learning familiar stories. The school's approach to teaching early reading is highly effective. It has trained staff well so that they have the expertise to spot any pupils who need some help. It targets support carefully to help pupils catch up and keep up. High outcomes in the 2024 phonics screening check reflect pupils' success in learning to read.

Older pupils typically learn English and mathematics well. By the time pupils leave the school, most are working at the expected standard. However, a much smaller proportion achieve the higher standard. This is because on some occasions teachers do not consider well enough what pupils can already do. They provide some pupils with work that is not challenging enough. When this happens, pupils' thinking is not deepened as much as it could be. The school has rightly identified that this is an area in which it needs to improve.

The school identifies pupils with SEND early. It checks what children can do on entry in the early years to spot any issues swiftly. Pupils receive the precise, timely support they need to help them learn the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils are well prepared for life beyond St Mary's. The school places an importance on pupils developing leadership roles. This helps instil pupils with a sense of responsibility. Pupils develop an understanding of moral issues through assemblies. The school uses visitors such as the police to help pupils understand how to stay safe both online and in the locality. Pupils experience a range of trips to help them deepen their knowledge of the curriculum.

Pupils attend school regularly. This is because the school has effective systems to address quickly any concerns over pupils' absence. The school uses suspensions of pupils proportionately. The trust and governors keep a watchful eye to check the

appropriateness of these. The school prioritises staff's workload and well-being. Consequently, staff morale is high. They are proud to be a part of the school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, teachers do not consider what pupils can already do well enough. Some pupils complete tasks that are too easy and do not extend their knowledge fully. As a result, those pupils who are already secure in their learning do not extend their knowledge as much as they are capable of. The trust should ensure that teachers provide work which fully extends pupils' learning so that they achieve the highest possible outcomes, including a greater proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading and mathematics.
- In some subjects, the opportunities for pupils to recap and recall previous learning are at an early stage of development. This means that some pupils struggle to recall previous concepts and find it difficult to make links to new learning. The trust should ensure that it establishes systems across the curriculum for pupils to revisit and recall their learning so that pupils can build on prior learning effectively.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

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	140773
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10344677
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth O'Donovan
CEO of the trust	Zoe Batten
Headteacher	Alison McDonald
Website	www.st-marys-bod.cornwall.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Plymouth. It received a section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character in October 2021. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place within five years of this date.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with senior leaders, groups of staff, groups of pupils, the chair of the local governing body and representatives from the trust.
- The inspector conducted two telephone calls with staff from the alternative provisions.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector considered responses to the staff survey, the pupils survey and the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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