

# Inspection of St Mary's C of E Primary School, East Barnet

Littlegrove, East Barnet, Barnet, Hertfordshire EN4 8SR

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

This school was last inspected 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

St Mary's is a welcoming and inclusive school where all pupils are valued and well supported. Leaders have high expectations and provide pupils with a wealth of interesting and worthwhile experiences. The curriculum that pupils study is broad and ambitious.

In most subjects, pupils are successful in remembering and building on what they have learned previously. This means they are generally well prepared for their next stage of education.

Provision for pupils' personal development is outstanding. Staff take every opportunity to celebrate diversity and to teach pupils about the views and experiences of others. They support pupils exceptionally well in understanding the importance of inclusion and respecting different cultures, beliefs and values. For example, pupils have been researching significant role models, such as inspirational women from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds.

Pupils are exceptionally well behaved. They are friendly, polite and enjoy coming to school. They said that they feel safe and well looked after and that bullying is rare. Pupils are kept safe, and the few instances of bullying are dealt with swiftly by staff.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including in the early years. Leaders have identified what they want pupils to learn and remember in each subject.

The curriculum has been well sequenced so that teachers are clear about what pupils need to learn and when. For example, in history, pupils learn about chronology by placing events they study on a timeline. This supports older pupils to understand how different periods in history relate to each other.

Most teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They provide appropriate activities that help pupils to secure their knowledge and build on what they have learned before. Teachers typically check pupils' understanding and use this information to address any errors or misconceptions that arise. As a result, in most subjects, pupils develop a deep understanding of subject content. They are well supported to learn and remember more.

However, in a few subject areas, the curriculum is at an earlier stage of development. In these subjects, teachers' own knowledge is not always as secure. This means that, at times, they do not present subject content clearly and do not check as carefully what pupils have learned previously. As a result, the depth of pupils' knowledge does not develop as securely.

The curriculum for early reading and phonics is well developed and ambitious. Staff, including those in the early years, have been well trained. They take care to pronounce sounds correctly and provide texts that closely match pupils' knowledge of phonics. These things help pupils to learn to read with accuracy and fluency. The knowledge that they gain helps them to learn to spell accurately. It also helps their reading in other subjects. Pupils enjoy reading and being read to. They develop a love of books and have a secure knowledge of different authors and genres.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. They are identified quickly, and their needs are met well. This is because staff consider pupils' specific needs carefully and provide appropriate extra help and resources. As a result, pupils with SEND typically access the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their learning are exemplary. They are very enthusiastic about their work and listen carefully in class. From the early years onwards, pupils take great pride in their work and are always keen to improve further. For example, children in the Reception class were highly motivated about improving their speaking and listening when collaborating with others. Similarly, older pupils take responsibility for improving their work independently.

Leaders' and staff's work to support pupils' personal development is exceptional. For example, through the curriculum and assembly times, pupils are taught about important values such as democracy, forgiveness and resilience. Pupils learn about diverse beliefs and cultures by learning about and celebrating world faiths. Pupils also learn about the things they can do to keep physically and emotionally healthy. For instance, older pupils have recently been considering healthy eating as well as how body image is portrayed on social media.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, senior leaders and those responsible for governance. Staff are happy to work at the school and feel listened to. They said that they are supported well and given extra time to complete any additional tasks that they are asked to do.

The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of school life.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that safeguarding is a priority across the school. Policies and other safeguarding documentation are kept up to date and comply with the latest guidance. The right pre-employment checks are carried out on staff before they are appointed to work at the school.

Staff and governors attend frequent training about safeguarding and keeping pupils safe. Pupils at risk of harm are swiftly identified and supported well by leaders and

staff. Leaders actively seek and act on guidance from external agencies when needed.

The curriculum has been designed to ensure that pupils are given important knowledge about keeping safe. For example, pupils learn about the importance of mental health to their well-being.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a few subjects, the curriculum is at an earlier stage of development. In these areas, the curriculum is not sufficiently embedded in order to support pupils to develop a deep and detailed understanding of subject content. Leaders should ensure that teachers check that pupils have secured the component knowledge needed to learn and remember more in these subjects.
- Occasionally, teachers' subject knowledge is less secure in curriculum areas that are at the earlier stage of development. When this happens, they do not consistently explain subject content clearly and accurately. Leaders should make sure that teachers have sufficient training and support to strengthen their subject expertise in each of the subjects that they teach.

## **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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

|                                            |                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 101324                                                                       |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Barnet                                                                       |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10255345                                                                     |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                                                      |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided                                                              |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4 to 11                                                                      |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                                        |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 210                                                                          |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                                           |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Stephen Edwards                                                              |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Maria Constantinou                                                           |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.stmarysen4-barnet.co.uk">www.stmarysen4-barnet.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 24 and 25 March 2010, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005              |

## Information about this school

- St Mary's is an average-sized Church of England voluntary-aided primary school.
- The school had its last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, on 13 February 2020. The next section 48 inspection is due in 2025.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, and other staff. Discussions were also held with members of the governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and geography. To do this, they met with subject leaders, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects as part of this inspection.
- The inspection team reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with staff and pupils.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff, as gathered through discussions and Ofsted's surveys, were considered.

### **Inspection team**

Alison Cartlidge, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Maureen Okoye

Ofsted Inspector

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