

# Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Ipswich

Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 4EU

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Inspection dates: 5 and 6 March 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteachers of this school are Joanne Berry and Josephine Measham. This school is part of Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic multi-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, Flavio Vettese and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Bergin.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Mary's Catholic Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Mary's Catholic Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

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

The motto of 'be ready, safe and respectful' resonates throughout this highly diverse school community. Pupils behave and learn exceptionally well because of their teachers' very high expectations. Staff vigilantly ensure pupils' physical and mental well-being. As a result, pupils are safe and they look out for each other. Pupils know they can turn to an adult if they need help.

Pupils are excited, inquisitive learners. Children from Reception Year are ready to learn. Pupils bubble with enthusiasm when they share their knowledge. They learn attentively and listen to others. They take turns and eagerly answer teachers' questions. They read with clarity and express their ideas articulately. Pupils love their school and this is reflected in their high attendance.

Pupils, including many with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy a rich range of extra-curricular activities. This helps pupils to gain important cultural knowledge, sporting prowess and other skills. Pupils love performing. The school's orchestra brings the school together in praise and celebration. Trips to the theatre enrich pupils' knowledge of music, dance and drama. Younger children visit the zoo. Older pupils find out about solar energy from experts. This enhances their understanding of environmental issues. Parents resoundingly value the quality of education their children receive.

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

Leaders have constructed a hugely broad and ambitious curriculum. They have equipped teachers with strong subject knowledge. Teachers skilfully present knowledge in small stages. They revisit prior learning and meticulously check for gaps, misunderstanding and mistakes. As a result, pupils recall knowledge accurately and with ease.

The knowledge pupils learn builds upon what they already know. Pupils, starting from Reception, begin to understand complex ideas. They explain the world around them with precise subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils develop a deep understanding of the subjects they learn. For example, in science, Reception-age children carry out investigations independently and in groups. They grow plants. This helps them to understand that life needs light and water. Pupils build on this important knowledge over time, so that older pupils can explain the principles of photosynthesis and the importance of the Sun.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading across the curriculum. Teachers adopt a highly consistent approach. They introduce sounds clearly and provide considerable opportunities for practice. As a result, Reception-age children recognise and blend new sounds automatically. Pupils read with fluency and expression. Leaders regularly check how well pupils are learning to read. Pupils who fall behind receive swift support and they catch up.

Pupils learn to apply strategies to make sense of unfamiliar texts. They grasp sophisticated ideas such as plot construction in *Romeo and Juliet*. They read books about historical figures from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Pupils discover, therefore, how people overcame prejudice and other challenges in their lives. This inspires them to become resilient individuals. It also enhances pupils' understanding of equality and justice.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are some of the highest in the country. This is significant because a third of the pupils at the school speak English as an additional language.

Leaders accurately identify pupils with SEND. They carefully check that teachers provide the precise support to ensure pupils with SEND access the full curriculum. Leaders regularly review how this support is working. As a result of this, pupils with SEND achieve highly.

Pupils' personal development is central to the wider curriculum. The school nurtures open-minded, kind and compassionate individuals. Pupils embrace the responsibilities they will gain as they mature. They know how their actions may impact on others. Pupils intervene to help their peers resolve disagreements. They understand that how people feel can affect how they behave. They therefore show tremendous empathy to others. This ensures a highly inclusive ethos in the school. Pupils respect and value difference. They do not tolerate any form of discrimination.

Pupils develop important leadership skills. Pupils help to run the library. Student councillors represent other pupils' views. They negotiate with leaders on how to improve the school environment. The 'Mini Vinnies' orchestrate a range of fund-raising activities for local, regional and international charities.

Leaders, the trust and governors incisively evaluate school performance. The trust and governors check that leaders' actions are in the pupils' best interests. They hold leaders to account but also support them. Staff appreciate the high-quality training they receive, which strengthens their subject knowledge. This equips them to realise the school's ambitious vision. The school provides an outstanding level of education. This prepares pupils exceptionally well for the future. Leaders are sharing their considerable expertise to support other schools in the trust.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145382
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10295102
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	214
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Bergin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Joanne Berry and Mrs Josephine Measham
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmaryscatholicprimaryipswich.com">www.stmaryscatholicprimaryipswich.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic multi academy trust.
- The school's religious character was inspected under section 48 of the education act in April 2018. The next inspection is due to be completed by April 2026.

## 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the CEO, deputy CEO, chair of governors, other governors and trustees, the headteachers, other leaders, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and science. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and a review of any curriculum documentation. They also scrutinised other curriculum areas and pupils' work.
- 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 considered the views of pupils, staff and parents. There were 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 52 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey. There were 48 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors considered 48 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also spoke to parents.

### **Inspection team**

Adam Cooke, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lynn Ayling

Ofsted Inspector

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