



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR
ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL

Name of School:	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Clare Phipps and Jonathan Sims
Hub:	South East London Hub
School type:	Academy
MAT (if applicable):	N/A

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	02/03/2020
Overall Estimate at last QA Review (if applicable)	This is the school's first review
Date of last QA Review (if applicable)	N/A
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	05/10/2011

1. Context and character of the school

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a heavily oversubscribed two-form entry primary school with a 52 place Nursery. The two assistant headteachers have very recently been appointed as co-substantive headteachers after carrying out a temporary acting headship arrangement since September 2018. The school has a close working relationship with the Sisters of Mercy Convent on whose land the school sits and pupils use the convent chapel for worship. Strong links exist with the church and the priest plays an important part in the life of the school. The distinctively Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of school life.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average and there are fewer pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly below the national average, although there are a growing number of families from Eastern Europe. The school has a relatively stable population and slightly less deprivation than the national average.

St Mary's has a strong sporting and musical tradition. The school has specialist sport and music provision and its own chamber choir. There is significant expertise amongst the staff which they share with other local schools.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, demonstrate a highly ambitious vision. This is underpinned by the school's distinctive Catholic ethos and Christian values that staff and pupils live out daily. A love of learning is fostered through the infectious enthusiasm, passion and commitment all of staff who have extremely high expectations of themselves and their pupils. They want the very best for the pupils in their care both academically and socially. High levels of nurture and support enable pupils to be resilient and feel confident to try new challenges without fear of failure. Pupils summed this up in the motto they created, 'dream, believe, achieve, succeed'.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is developed exceptionally well through coaching, sharing high levels of staff expertise, working with other local schools and external training opportunities.
- The highly experienced mathematics leader is a mathematics mastery specialist and she shares her expertise, which includes leading teacher research groups and coaching triads, both within the school and beyond. The English leader has

created a unique 'Think Aloud' reading programme, which is currently being rolled out across the local authority. It ensures that teachers are well equipped and confident in their teaching of reading.

- Leadership strengths in other subjects include an exemplar portfolio of RE work which the RE leader has created for the diocese and the computing leader's work with the London Grid for Learning on the use of virtual reality headsets.
- Church and local community links are a real strength of the school. The parish priest is regularly in school and leads worship for both pupils and their families. Mutually beneficial opportunities exist through close links with The Sisters of Mercy Convent and the neighbouring home for the elderly through the 'Together Old and Young' project, where pupils work with residents on various activities, including crafts and singing.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Workshops help parents to support their child's learning at home and parental talents are harnessed to support learning. This includes a professional chef who comes into school to cook with pupils.
- Curriculum enrichment enhances learning significantly, with many opportunities to reinforce learning through visits and visitors. For example, Year 6 pupils visit World War Two evacuees living in the local almshouses and spend the day as evacuees at 'Kent Life'.
- Take up for the wide range of extra-curricular clubs on offer is high and pupils take on a range of responsibilities, including those of junior travel ambassadors and 'Faith Friends'.
- Although staff give freely of their time, leaders are mindful of the wellbeing of everyone and the workload of teachers. They are trialling a less onerous marking system and ensure that time is provided to enable staff development.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

- ...leaders ensured that the well-planned foundation subject curriculum was more clearly documented.
- ...progress towards the completion of the appropriately prioritised actions in the school development plan was more evident for monitoring purposes.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Children get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at St Mary's because teachers carefully identify and support the individual needs of every child and focus on developing communication and language skills to enable all children to access the well-planned curriculum. Consequently, by the end of Reception, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is well

above the national average. This high expectation continues in Year 1 where a significantly higher proportion of pupils meets the expected standard in phonics than is seen nationally.

- Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above the national average for pupils reaching age related expectations; the figure is at least double the national average at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils made above average progress in 2019 in reading and well above average progress in mathematics. Attainment was extremely high in reading, writing and mathematics and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard was exceptionally high.
- Senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers have together created a carefully crafted curriculum plan. This makes cross-curricular connections and plans for progression so that pupils build on prior learning to reach a well-planned intent. It incorporates locality studies, including the history of river transportation and industrialisation over time in the area in Year 4. This links with the historical significance of Eltham studied in Year 3 and prepares for work on the industrial revolution in Year 5.
- Middle leaders, having identified clear end points for units of work in each subject have supported teachers to ensure that there is a sequential progression within topics and that tasks are appropriate to meet learning intentions. Pupils can articulate these connections and have them further reinforced through reading texts linked to topics and the study of current events through 'Newsround.' Pupils of all abilities are enabled to access the curriculum through appropriately adapted learning.
- The exceptional outcomes in mathematics are achieved through a clear progressional long-term plan and a well-embedded mastery approach implemented throughout the school. Fluency, application and reasoning are evident in all mathematics lessons, with prior learning effectively consolidated and built on. Concrete, pictorial and abstract learning using a range of relevant practical resources supports teaching highly effectively.
- A love of reading is promoted throughout the school. Sharply focused phonics teaching provides an excellent building block on which the school develops reading using stimulating, high quality challenging texts and a whole school structured approach to reading.
- Trusting relationships, high expectations by all staff, well-embedded routines and interesting fun learning engage pupils' interests well. Therefore, they want to come to school, attendance is high and pupils display exemplary attitudes to learning.
- Strong teacher subject knowledge, animated enthusiastic delivery, modelling, open-ended and targeted questioning enable misconceptions to be addressed and understanding deepened. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, an Anthony Horowitz novel was used highly effectively to emulate writing techniques and enable pupils to build tension in their writing.

- Talk partners are used effectively to formulate ideas and stimulate discussion, ensuring that everyone's opinions are valued.
- Stimulating, attractive and vibrant learning environments celebrate pupils' high quality work and well-used working walls in all classrooms support learning very effectively.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

...connections between the exceptional SMSC provision and PSHE were woven through foundation subject planning.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- Planned provision to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils has a very positive impact on the outcomes for these pupils. A focus on supporting communication and language in EYFS ensures that any gaps in learning are quickly eliminated and disadvantaged pupils are enabled to attain as well as their non-disadvantaged peers. Barriers to learning are identified early because leaders and teachers work closely with families and get to know them well so that high quality support is put in place which precisely meets the needs of each individual.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, disadvantaged pupils attain significantly better than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at age related expectations and greater depth. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2019, disadvantaged pupils attained significantly higher outcomes than the national average at age related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils exceeded the excellent achievement of their non-disadvantaged peers in writing and mathematics at age related expectations.
- Disadvantaged and SEND pupils are encouraged to participate in a range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities which they may not otherwise access. The school pays for disadvantaged pupils to attend an after school club and wrap-around care. This focus on both academic and social development has secured high levels of attendance and low persistent absence for both disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs.
- Assessment and close monitoring of progress are used highly effectively to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the most relevant intervention and support. Staff are well trained, often on individualised interventions and external help is proactively and appropriately sought. Consequently, these pupils make strong progress in mathematics and better progress than other pupils nationally in reading. The suitably adapted curriculum enables them to access and enjoy learning and to be appropriately challenged.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

None identified.

5. Area of Excellence

None submitted for this review.

6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

The school continues to work closely with its local hub to share best practice and further enhance the provision.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.