

Report summary for parents and carers on St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Date of inspection: 19/01/2026

Summary

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a happy, caring and nurturing school where all staff act as positive role models and create a highly effective learning environment. They foster respectful working relationships with pupils and each other, and pupils develop excellent attitudes towards their learning. Leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Nearly all pupils behave extremely well and are polite and supportive of each other. Leaders, staff and governors promote a strong culture of safeguarding. While the school works rigorously to improve attendance, overall, pupils, especially those who are eligible for free school meals, do not attend school regularly enough. Most pupils feel safe and enjoy their time in school. The school develops strong relationships with members of its community. Parents appreciate the caring and nurturing ethos and the engaging learning experiences the school provides.

Teachers plan interesting, real-life learning opportunities that capture pupils' imagination, engage them in their learning and help to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. Most pupils, including those from low-income households, make effective progress in their learning. However, teachers over-direct learning and use photocopied task sheets for pupils to complete too often. In these instances, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to plan their responses to learning, including making decisions about how they will work, or express and present their learning. Teaching assistants are highly skilled at meeting pupils' individual learning and well-being needs. They support pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) effectively to make good progress towards their individual targets.

Governors play an active role in school life and make a strong contribution to the self-evaluation process. Together with leaders, they have a sharp focus on identifying and addressing areas for improvement well. Leaders and governors rightly prioritise pupils' progress when evaluating the school's work. Leaders have developed a highly successful approach to evaluating pupils' progress, which they use effectively for improving the school.

Recommendations and next steps

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

R1 Improve attendance, especially for pupils entitled to free school meals

R2 Give pupils more choice in how they express and present their learning

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection

Full Report

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to [the full report](#).

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