

Inspection of St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School

Ardwell Lane, Greenleys, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK12 6AY

Inspection dates:	14 and 15 May 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and caring school. All pupils are well known to staff and feel valued. Pupils embrace the many opportunities available to them to be active and responsible citizens. They are keen to take on leadership roles, such as prefects, liturgy leaders and eco-council representatives. Additionally, pupils coordinate and participate in regular fundraising events. Through these opportunities, pupils learn about charitable causes while developing their wider life skills.

Staff are committed to ensuring that all pupils experience a broad range of trips, visits and experiences that enrich their lives. Pupils develop their confidence through regular singing and musical performances. The range of clubs on offer is well considered to allow pupils to explore new interests and to discover new talents.

From the early years upwards, most pupils develop the reading, writing and mathematics skills that they need to prepare them for the next stages of their learning. However, learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not as effective as it should be. Sometimes, these pupils do not receive the right level of support that meets their needs in the classroom.

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

The school has designed a curriculum from the early years upwards that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. However, this ambition is not achieved consistently across the school. Pupils generally achieve well in mathematics, writing and reading. However, in some subjects, teaching is not informed by a carefully considered curriculum. Where this is the case, pupils do not build their knowledge or remember their past learning as well as they could.

Teachers explain content and activities clearly so that pupils understand what is expected of them in lessons. Where practice is most secure, teachers check pupils' understanding routinely so that misconceptions can be addressed effectively. However, this does not happen consistently, and sometimes activities are not well matched to where pupils are in their learning. Where this is the case, pupils do not learn effectively.

Phonics teaching is well structured and prioritised in the school. From the early years upwards, pupils have well-established daily routines that support their reading development. Pupils who need extra help to catch up receive timely interventions. The school encourages pupils to read widely and often, sharing books with their peers and their families.

The specific needs of pupils with SEND are not accurately identified. The school recognises where pupils need additional help and ensures that plans are put in place. However, the process of identifying needs is not systematic or precise. As a result, planned provision is not consistently well matched to pupils' particular learning needs. The school has put in place a number of additional resources and interventions to support pupils with SEND. Initiatives such as the 'star room' help pupils with the most complex

needs to be ready for class-based learning. However, learning in lessons is often not suitably adapted to enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum as successfully or independently as their peers. Sometimes, pupils are unable to participate in activities and tasks when they are not being directly supported by staff. As a result, pupils with SEND often miss valuable learning time while they wait for help. This means they do not achieve as well as they could.

Children in the early years build secure foundations in number and reading as a result of well-structured curriculums in these areas. Across the wider areas of learning in the early years, curriculum thinking is less well considered. The school has not thought carefully enough about how children will build their knowledge and skills incrementally. While children enjoy a range of activities, these are not planned or implemented consistently well. Children's learning is not supported or extended effectively. As a result, some children do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and respectful, routinely meeting the high expectations staff have for them. The school supports pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour effectively. Pupils are enthusiastic to achieve well. They participate well and take pride in their work. The school provides many rich opportunities for pupils to widen their cultural experiences. These are well received and contribute positively to pupils' wider development. Pupils understand how to stay safe online. They have positive values and recognise the importance of kindness and equality.

Leaders have created a warm and welcoming school environment. Pupils attend school happily, and staff feel well supported in their work. However, leaders, including those responsible for governance, do not have a sufficiently accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The specific needs of pupils with SEND are not identified with sufficient accuracy. As a result, some provision plans do not reflect the precise support that will enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and be successful in their learning. The school should ensure that it accurately identifies specific learning barriers for pupils with SEND and that provision is well matched to their needs.
- In lessons, learning is not sufficiently well adapted to meet the specific needs of pupils with SEND. This means that, too often, pupils with SEND are unable to access learning as swiftly or as independently as their peers. The school should ensure that learning activities for pupils with SEND are adapted, where needed, so that pupils with SEND can be successful in their learning.

- The curriculum in the early years does not identify and make clear how children will achieve the curriculum end goals. As a result, some activities do not provide children with appropriate opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding. The school should review the provision in the early years to ensure that children's learning builds deliberately over time.
- In some subjects, teaching is not informed by a carefully considered curriculum. In these instances, pupils do not follow a coherent sequence of learning in each subject. When this is the case, pupils are less able to remember and connect what they have learned previously. The school should strengthen its oversight to ensure that a well-thought-out curriculum supports pupils' learning in each subject.

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	110483
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10341308
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	385
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Laura Maw
Headteacher	Rosemarie Jones
Website	www.stmarymagdalenemk.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 October 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in April 2019.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation of the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music, physical education and English. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governing body meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

Tash Hurtado, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lorraine Greco	Ofsted Inspector
Jody Murphy	Ofsted Inspector

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