

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Falmouth

Mongleath Road, Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 4PW

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 July 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Tim Moran. This school is part of Plymouth CAST, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Zoe Batten, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ruth O'Donovan.

What is it like to attend this school?

Kindness exudes in this inclusive school. Pupils show impeccable manners and greet adults with a friendly wave and a welcoming smile. In the classroom and throughout the school, pupils display extremely positive attitudes. During playtime, pupils of all ages design their own games, play on the trim-trail or complete colouring and craft activities.

The school is ambitious for all pupils to achieve highly. Where necessary, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) experience a bespoke curriculum, but more often, expert adaptation enables them to learn alongside their peers. As a result, pupils live up to the high expectations. Published outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics exceed the national averages.

Pupils develop strong and long-lasting friendships through the school buddy system. This adds to the family feel and enables pupils to thrive. As a result, they enjoy school and attend well. If problems arise, they feel confident that trusted adults will support them to resolve their worries. This means pupils feel safe.

Pupils take great pride in their positions of responsibility, such as well-being ambassadors, school councillors or the 'Mini Vinnies'. They help make the school a better place by conducting litter picks and singing at the local residential home.

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

The school has designed a broad and rich curriculum. It enables pupils to build their knowledge year on year. Underpinned by high expectations, pupils learn very well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In the main, pupils revisit important concepts and deepen their understanding. For example, pupils in Year 2 interpret data in block graphs. Older pupils build on this. In Year 6, they explain their learning well using mathematical vocabulary such as the 'x-axis' and 'y-axis' when they solve coordinate problems.

Most activities link well to the knowledge and skills that the school wants pupils to learn. For example, in the Reception Year, children explore new words when making mud smoothies. Older pupils recall historical facts about the defence systems of castles. However, on occasion, some learning activities, including in the early years, do not deepen pupils' understanding sufficiently. When this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Children learn to read as soon as they start school. They can blend sounds to read words. Teachers give pupils books that include the sounds that they have been taught in phonics. This helps them build fluency and confidence. Those who need extra help with reading receive regular support from skilled staff. This helps pupils to become fluent readers who enjoy reading a diverse range of texts. The school fosters a love of reading. Children in Reception Year like to vote for their favourite books during daily story time. Pupils read regularly for pleasure, building lasting habits.

The school regularly checks on how well pupils learn. Teachers use a range of strategies such as 'know more, remember more' quizzes. This helps pupils to remember what they have learned. Pupils with SEND benefit from early identification of their needs. Staff plan appropriate individual next steps to help pupils reach the targets in their education, health and care plans.

The school fosters a compassionate and nurturing culture where everyone feels included. Pupils learn the importance of equality and inclusivity. They develop empathy and respect for all. Pupils proudly say this is a school where 'you can be you'. As a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary.

The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education helps pupils to understand about the dangers of drugs, alcohol and smoking. They know about healthy relationships and how their bodies change as they grow. Pupils learn about beach, road and fire safety through visitors to the school. Pupils engage with opportunities that extend beyond the academic. A range of clubs, such as tag rugby, running, art and netball, help pupils develop their talents and interests. Pupils enjoy outdoor and adventurous activities, including residential visits. A visit to London helps to develop pupils' independence and resilience.

Local governors and central trust staff work closely with leaders. They provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge to the school. Staff appreciate how the school and trust consider their well-being and workload. Most feel supported in their roles, and enjoy working at the school.

Parents and carers appreciate the care and attention their children receive. They particularly value leaders' communication and approachability.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, including in the early years, some activities do not enable pupils to deepen their understanding of key concepts. This limits pupils' ability to develop a detailed knowledge and understanding of important content. The trust and school should provide staff with the guidance and support they need to ensure that activities enable pupils to know, remember and do even more.

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	140775
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10378945
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth O'Donovan
CEO of the trust	Zoe Batten
Headteacher	Tim Moran
Website	www.st-marys-fal.cornwall.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 February 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Plymouth. It received a section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character in October 2022. The next inspection is due in two years.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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 the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with school leaders, subject leaders, parents, pupils, members of the local governing body and representatives from the trust.
- The lead inspector listened to some pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: met the designated safeguarding lead; checked the single central record of adults working in the school; 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at lunchtime. They spoke with pupils and staff about behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss how the school supports their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the school day. They considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sophie Hillson

His Majesty's Inspector

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