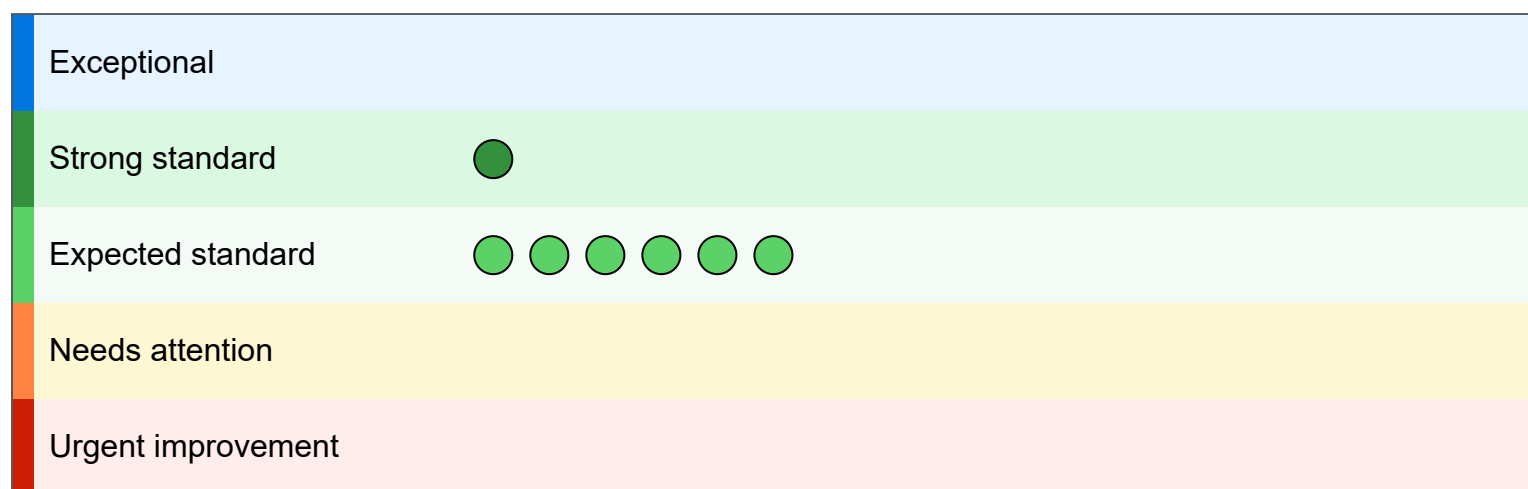


St Mary's Primary School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Address: Pack Horse Lane, High Green, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S35 3HY

Unique reference number (URN): 140440

Inspection report: 21 April 2026



✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders have established rigorous systems to monitor attendance, lateness and absence. They act swiftly to address concerns. When pupils are absent more persistently, leaders work purposefully with families. They set clear expectations and engage with external agencies to support parents and carers when necessary. Leaders are systematic and strategic in improving attendance. They use a range of highly effective approaches, such as workshops for parents and personalised pathways to provide targeted support. As a result, attendance for all pupils over time, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, remains consistently above national averages. Persistent absence rates are below national averages and continue to improve, including for vulnerable pupils.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is highly positive. This is because staff set high expectations. Pupils demonstrate enthusiasm for learning. Leaders have established a warm and caring school culture, underpinned by trusting relationships between staff and pupils. Bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. Pupils are confident that these would be dealt with effectively if they occurred. Leaders have robust systems to monitor and improve behaviour. They track any incidents of poor behaviour closely. They identify patterns and trends and take swift action to address them. When some pupils require additional support, leaders design bespoke strategies to help pupils to understand and manage their feelings and emotions effectively.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils achieve well, and most pupils are prepared for the next stage in their education. This achievement is reflected in national assessments, where pupils consistently achieve outcomes that are at least in line with, and in some areas above, national averages.

In early reading, outcomes are positive. Pupils in the early years and key stage 1 develop secure phonics knowledge and learn to read fluently. Pupils score above national averages for their phonics screening check in year 1.

Pupils' work in their books presents a more variable picture. While leaders have developed a broad curriculum, further work is needed to ensure that pupils produce high-quality work that enables them to embed their knowledge and skills, particularly in some of the foundation curriculum subjects.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard ●

Leaders have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum that clearly sets out the knowledge and skills pupils should learn from the early years to Year 6. For example,

leaders have improved the mathematics curriculum so that staff teach mathematics with consistency and precision.

Reading is prioritised throughout school. Across early years and key stage 1, phonics is taught accurately, and pupils learn how to read well. Books are closely matched to the sounds that pupils know, and pupils read with success and increasing confidence.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils are supported well in their learning. They generally access the curriculum alongside their peers because teachers make skilful and personalised adaptations to help them to succeed.

Leaders recognise that standards are not as high in writing as they would like them to be. They are rightly prioritising the development of the writing curriculum and are implementing their planned strategy for improvement. From the early years, teachers emphasise the importance of correct posture for writing and effective pencil grip. However, staff do not consistently reinforce high expectations for handwriting across the curriculum. There is some variation in the quality of teaching across different subjects.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders emphasise the importance of the early years foundation stage and have established a thoughtfully designed, well-sequenced curriculum. The essential knowledge and vocabulary that children need is woven through the curriculum so that children's learning develops securely over time.

Children make a positive start in the early years. They are well cared for by nurturing staff who know them well. Appropriate arrangements are in place to support children's wellbeing. Staff quickly identify any barriers to children's learning and provide targeted support to help children access the curriculum and learn well. Staff engage in purposeful conversations with children. This helps children to develop their speech, language and communication effectively. Children typically achieve well from their starting points by the end of the Reception Year.

The learning environment supports children to develop independence, follow routines and engage positively in their learning. Activities within the provision are structured to enable children to practise their skills while allowing flexibility to respond to their interests.

Phonics is taught with precision. Children build secure phonics knowledge to make a positive start to early reading. There is an appropriate focus on early writing, with staff modelling correct letter formation and promoting effective early writing skills. However, staff do not consistently check that children write letters and words accurately.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders accurately identify pupils' individual needs and barriers to learning and wellbeing. The school's clearly structured approach enables staff to implement different levels of tailored support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders review the support that pupils receive carefully and make timely changes when needed so that help is matched to pupils' needs effectively.

Staff receive appropriate training and guidance to adapt the curriculum and teaching in line with pupils' individual needs and targets. Leaders work purposefully with external specialists to ensure that pupils get the right support at the right time and to inform teaching strategies in the classroom. Leaders track the impact of these strategies closely to ensure that pupils make progress from their starting points.

Leaders use evidence-informed approaches to design their strategy for the use of pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Although disadvantaged pupils are well supported and achieve well, leaders' checks on the impact of this funding for individual pupils lacks the necessary rigour. Leaders cannot be sure that the funding is being used as effectively as possible to make a sustained difference and offer additional opportunities and experiences for pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to the school community and have established a positive, supportive culture for staff and pupils. Staff wellbeing and workload are prioritised effectively. Staff describe feeling respected and trusted and part of the school team. Professional development for staff is targeted and supports whole-school improvement.

Leaders and governors share an ambitious vision for the school. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They continually strive to improve the school further. The school and trust work in partnership with external professionals and services to support pupils and families. Leaders know their local community well and take proactive steps to reduce barriers to pupils' learning and improve their wellbeing. Parents and carers are positive about the school. They typically value its inclusive, nurturing and caring environment and appreciate the approachable staff and the way the school 'feels like a family'.

Governance of the school is effective. Governors and trustees are aware of their statutory duties and hold leaders to account for pupils' safety and wellbeing. They carry out their duties well. Governors use their knowledge of the school to understand and validate the information they receive about aspects of leaders' work. This enables members of the local academy committee to provide appropriate challenge and support to the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school provides a nurturing and ambitious environment where pupils feel safe, valued and supported to grow personally as well as socially and emotionally. Leaders have established a broad curriculum to support pupils' personal development. This includes relationships and sex education and wider opportunities. This allows pupils to keep themselves safe, including online.

Pupils benefit from experiences such as school productions, sports competitions and opportunities to learn musical instruments. They can take on positions of leadership. This enables them to learn first-hand about democracy and respect. Pupils understand the importance of helping others and contributing to the community. These experiences support pupils' confidence, social development and sense of responsibility. The ethos of the school, including its charitable work, instils a sense of community spirit and spirituality in the pupils.

Pupils benefit from effective pastoral support. Pupils understand the importance of respecting one another and the world around them.

While there is a range of clubs available, pupil participation in these is variable. Leaders are taking steps to improve participation in these opportunities.

Pupils develop an understanding of respect, diversity and inclusion and can explain the importance of treating everyone fairly, regardless of their background. They have some knowledge of the fundamental British values, particularly democracy and respect for others. However, their understanding of other British values, such as individual liberty and the rule of law, is not consistently secure. Similarly, while pupils learn about different faiths and cultures, their understanding is sometimes superficial or confused. As a result, pupils are not as well prepared in these aspects as they could be for life in modern Britain.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils at St Mary's are proud of their school. Their attendance is high. Pupils are happy, safe and secure. They are welcomed into a caring, inclusive community where they are valued and supported as individuals. From the early years, pupils develop a clear sense of belonging. They experience a nurturing environment where staff take time to understand their needs, interests and personal circumstances. They feel confident to express themselves, knowing that adults will listen and care.

The school's work with its wider community plays an important part in pupils' experience. Families are actively involved in school life, and school events create opportunities for shared celebration and connection. There is a sense of partnership between home and school. Pupils understand their role in the community. They enjoy taking up leadership positions, for example as school councillors. They understand the importance of 'giving back' to others, for example through fundraising efforts.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy coming to school. During social times, they play happily together. The school atmosphere is calm, orderly and purposeful, meaning that learning is rarely disrupted. Staff deal with incidents of any poor behaviour effectively. Bullying is rare and is dealt with, if it occurs.

Leaders place the pupils at the centre of everything they do, ensuring that learning and support are adapted so that pupils can succeed and thrive. Any barriers to pupils' learning or wellbeing are quickly identified so that pupils get the support they need. Most pupils make positive progress from their starting points and achieve well. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should further implement the writing curriculum to ensure that all pupils develop secure writing skills.

- Leaders should ensure further support for teachers to implement the redeveloped curriculum with consistency, to enable pupils to produce high-quality work across different subjects.
 - Leaders should develop their strategic oversight and monitoring of provision for disadvantaged pupils so that support is reviewed and adjusted carefully, leading to consistent improvement in pupils' opportunities and experiences.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of St Clare's 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 (CEO), Steve Davies, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Matthew Davis.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection. They also met with members of the local academy committee, the chair of the trust board as well as the CEO. Inspectors spoke with some pupils, staff and parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Hallam. Its last section 48 inspection was in June 2023.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Alexandra Healy

Lead inspector:

Lorraine Bamforth, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Yeomans, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

176

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

210

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

11.36%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.14%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.77%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	72%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	79%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	74%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	63%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	86%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	96%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	93%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	78%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	83%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	67%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	81%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	88%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	20%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	50%	62%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	20%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	40%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	20%	68%	-48 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	50%	80%	-30 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	20%	78%	-58 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	40%	80%	-40 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	3.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.3%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.6%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	5.8%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.3%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	12.3%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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