

Inspection of a good school: South Marston Church of England Primary School

Old Vicarage Lane, South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 4SH

Inspection dates: 12 September 2019

Outcome

South Marston Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils really enjoy school. They like their lessons and the after-school clubs on offer. In fact, they found it difficult to think of any ways to improve their school.

Teachers plan interesting ways to help pupils to learn about the world. They encourage pupils to read lots of good-quality books. Teachers have high expectations. Pupils work hard and get the help they need from staff. This ensures that they achieve well.

Pupils say that staff take time to get to know each and every one of them. This, they say, helps them to feel safe and settled in school. Pupils told inspectors about adults they could talk to if they needed any help.

There are very few cases of bullying. However, some pupils mentioned that, now and again, there can be some rough play during lunchtimes. Leaders recognise this and have made changes to make sure that there are more interesting things on offer. Sports coaches now come to school during lunchtimes to encourage sporting activities.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils and have designed a curriculum that teachers use to plan their lessons. As well as meeting the requirements of the national curriculum, the curriculum is sequenced well. Teachers plan work that helps pupils to learn more. New learning is repeated, which helps pupils develop their understanding over time. Curriculum leaders are enthusiastic about their subjects and lead them well.

There are high expectations of behaviour across the school. Pupils are proud of their school. The themes of wisdom, dignity, hope, respect and community are explored and celebrated throughout the year. This helps guide pupils to behave well in and out of class.

Residential visits and extra sporting activities help to support pupils' personal development. Most pupils achieve highly and, by the time they leave the school, they are ready for secondary school.

Leaders think carefully about how they ensure that pupils who fall behind catch up quickly and do well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, pupils who need it have effective individual teaching support. This helps them to be ready for new learning.

The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (the trust) understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Trust leaders work well to ensure that the school continues to improve. Teachers say that leaders help them to manage their workload. For example, the trust has introduced more straightforward ways for teachers to assess pupils' work. This reduces the time spent on this aspect of their work.

Last year, curriculum leaders introduced resources to help pupils to read more high-quality books. This worked well. Pupils we spoke to told us confidently about the books they read. Leaders are now working to provide support and guidance for staff so that the teaching of reading is consistent and effective.

The teaching of phonics is strong. This helps pupils who are at the early stages of reading develop an understanding of sounds and words. There is a well-organised system for teaching reading, which starts from the beginning of Reception. However, leaders need to ensure that, for the youngest readers, reading books match the sounds that they know. This will help pupils gain confidence in themselves as readers.

In the pre-school and Reception classes, staff are caring and help children to feel secure. Children who have just started school settle in well. Staff create interesting learning activities that encourage children to learn about the world around them. For example, in science, children go on walks to find out about how leaves are starting to change colour.

In mathematics, staff show children how to use equipment to learn more about numbers and shapes. There are extra learning challenges for mathematics in the outside space too. Inspectors saw children developing their mathematical understanding well, both inside and outside.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding leaders make sure that staff have the training and on-going information they need to keep pupils safe. Leaders report concerns to agencies that can provide help. Staff understand their responsibilities to help keep pupils safe and know how to report any concerns they may have. Recruitment processes are secure. The appropriate checks are carried out on new staff. Pupils told us that they feel safe at school. A small number said they would like more careful checking by adults at lunchtimes so that they can have help to sort out friendship issues.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Reading rightly remains a school priority. This is because staff are determined that more pupils can read fluently by the time they leave the school. Senior leaders need to ensure that teachers are supported well, so that the teaching of reading is consistently strong.
- Pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read have books that are too challenging. Leaders need to ensure that words in reading books match the sounds that pupils already know more closely. This will help pupils to use the knowledge they gain during their phonics lessons to achieve success when reading.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, South Marston Church of England Primary School, to be good in February 2013.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143494
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10111585
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	111
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lynda Fisher
Headteacher	Luke Maddison
Website	www.southmarstonprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school includes a pre-school class that includes provision for three- and four-year-olds. It is situated within the school building.
- The school is a Church of England primary school.
- In November 2016, the school became an academy and joined the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust.
- The school offers a before-school and after-school club each day during term time.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we had several meetings with the headteacher and the head of school. We also met with curriculum leaders. We spoke on the telephone to the chair of the governing body and met with three governors. Inspectors also had two telephone calls with senior officers at Swindon local authority. We also met with the chief executive officer of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust.
- Inspectors met with the designated leader for safeguarding and the governor who leads on safeguarding. Throughout the inspection, inspectors looked at how well leaders create and maintain a culture of vigilance. Inspectors checked that the school's safeguarding policy is in place and understood and implemented by all staff. We talked

to staff, pupils and parents about the school's work to keep pupils safe.

- We agreed with the headteacher to look at some areas of the school's work in more detail. Together with senior and curriculum leaders, we carried out 'deep dives' into reading, mathematics and science. Deep dives include a series of connected inspection activities, such as: discussions with leaders, visits to lessons, work scrutiny, discussions with teachers and discussions with pupils. However, we are not inspecting individual subjects. We draw together our findings about subjects to judge the quality of the education at the school.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Helen Springett

Ofsted Inspector

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