

Inspection of a good school: St Nicholas Church of England First School

Belvide Gardens, Chillington Drive, Codsall, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV8 1AN

Inspection dates:

24–25 September 2019

Outcome

St Nicholas Church of England First School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's values of trust, care, respect, challenge and thankfulness underpin learning and school life. The school includes all pupils. It goes above and beyond to cater for individual pupils' needs, including those with complex social and emotional needs.

Leaders have high expectations that pupils will achieve well and that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school teaches its lessons through a range of topics. These provide pupils with hands-on practical tasks that develop their curiosity. Pupils take in a wide range of activities that extend their learning, for example performing 'The Jungle Book' as part of theatre club and learning how to throw a frisbee at Lilleshall Sports Centre.

Pupils are happy here. They receive excellent care and attention. They know how to keep themselves safe. Relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils and one another, are positive.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They say that if bullying occurs a teacher sorts it out.

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

School leaders, governors and staff all really want to provide the very best education for pupils. Teachers ensure that learning activities are interesting. These build on pupils' previous learning in all subjects.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make a good start. This is because the classroom environments are well organised. Children can learn inside and outside of the classroom.

The teaching of reading begins with simple rhymes and songs in the early years. Well-trained staff teach phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) daily. The books which

pupils take home are carefully matched to the phonic sounds they know. Pupils who fall behind have well-focused support to keep up and catch up so they can read these books. Most pupils read fluently by the end of key stage 1.

Teachers use their knowledge and enthusiasm to plan and deliver lessons well in other subjects. Subject leaders make sure that learning is practical and 'hands-on' for pupils. A range of resources are used to help pupils understand key ideas and learning. This is particularly the case in science and mathematics.

Pupils are encouraged to apply their learning across subjects. For example, in science they were asked to design a 'hen house' so the chickens would be happy and healthy. Pupils used their understanding of materials and living things to create a suitable home.

Pupils are able to talk about their learning and know some of the key words linked to their topics. However, assessment in some subjects is not in place to check what pupils can remember over a longer period of time.

Pupils behave well. They are rarely distracted from their learning. They have a very clear understanding of British values and what these mean in practice. For example, pupils talk about the importance of treating each other fairly and with respect.

The school has recently changed the way it supports pupils who need extra help. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils now receive support within classes rather than being taken out of lessons. The school has plans to check this, but it is too early to say if it is working.

The SEND coordinator (SENCo) is relatively new to post and is supported by experienced colleagues until she has completed her training. Individual plans for pupils with SEND ensure that pupils' needs are identified and that they receive the care and attention they need.

Teachers say that they are well supported by leaders and their workload is taken into account. There is a culture of staff helping and supporting each other across the school.

The school is well led and managed. The direction provided by the headteacher is strong. Parents speak highly of the school. Governors understand their responsibilities and monitor the work of the school well. There are valid reasons for pupils leaving the school mid-year.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' welfare is leaders' top priority. Leaders train staff so they know what to do if they have concerns about pupils' well-being or safety. Staff and leaders act quickly when they have any concerns.

The school works well with other organisations to support pupils, and their families, to get

the help they need.

Leaders and governors check that staff are suitable before they begin work at the school.

Pupils know about stranger danger and how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all subjects have assessments that are as fully developed as others. Leaders should ensure that assessments which identify the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils should achieve within each year group are in place so they can make even better progress.
- The effectiveness of interventions that take place within classrooms has not yet been monitored. Leaders should evaluate the impact of the extra support they are providing for pupils to ensure that they are supporting pupils to make better progress.
- The SENCo is relatively new to post and about to undertake the required national training. Leaders should use the current good practice that exists within the school to further support and develop the SENCo's skills.

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, St Nicholas Church of England First School, to be good in November 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	142986
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10111712
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Matt Jevons
Headteacher	Jodie Parker
Website	http://www.st-nicholas.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Nicholas CE First School is a founder member of Codsall Multi-Academy Trust. The trust has appointed a chief executive officer (CEO) to oversee the work of its schools. Local decision-making is delegated to the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with a range of staff as part of the inspection. The inspector spoke with the headteacher, the two assistant headteachers, the SENCo, office staff, subject leaders and support staff. The inspector also spoke to governors and trustees including the CEO.
- The inspection focused deeply on reading, mathematics and science. All other subjects were considered as part of the inspection. Evidence was collected through meeting with subject leaders, meeting with teachers, scrutiny of curriculum planning, visits to lessons, talking with pupils and examining their work.
- The inspector also considered 123 recent responses to Parent View and spoke to parents during the inspection. The inspector also looked at the 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors examined school documents, including policies and records relating to

behaviour, bullying, safeguarding and the curriculum. The school's website was also checked.

Inspection team

Heather Phillips, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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