

Inspection of a good school: St Mary's CofE (A) Primary School

Mucklestone, Market Drayton, Shropshire TF9 4DN

Inspection dates:

19 November 2019

Outcome

St Mary's CofE (A) Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto 'Living, Loving and Learning in God's Care' threads through the daily life of St Mary's. It is a friendly, happy and caring school. Parents value the care and attention given to their children's learning and well-being. The headteacher leads the school well. Parents speak highly of the headteacher's leadership.

Pupils behave very well. They play nicely together at break and lunchtimes. Pupils are proud of the role they play in school life, for example being a playground pal, librarian, litter picker or school councillor is important to them. 'It makes our school better.' Pupils feel safe at school. If bullying ever happens, leaders deal with it well.

Staff want all pupils to do the best they can. Pupils make the most of the clubs and visits on offer throughout their time in school. These include residentials, theatre trips, gardening, leading services and visiting the local nursing home. This helps them to be confident, articulate and responsible young people who are well prepared for secondary school. As one parent said, 'My child bounds into school every morning and come homes very tired but full of excitement about everything they have learned.'

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

Reception children have a good start to their school life. Staff know each child well. Children make the most of the well-organised and inviting early years environment. Exploring and investigating together, they learn well and are ready for Year 1. They benefit from times when they work alongside Year 1 and as part of the whole school. Pupils respond well to the very high expectations set by staff.

Pupils begin to learn letters and sounds as soon as they start school. Adults teach letters and sounds in a structured way. However, they are not always clear on what pupils should know at what point in the year. Occasionally, teachers do not always challenge the most able well enough. This slows their progress. Younger pupils read regularly to a grown-up in school. This helps them to read become fluent readers. Older pupils enjoy books in a

range of contexts. Older pupils also enjoy it when teachers read to them. Staff and pupils value the recently opened school library. Year 6 pupils are serious about their librarian responsibilities. They showed an inspector their 'book fountain'. They explained how they arrange the books to help others choose and enjoy new books.

All teachers are new to the school since September 2019. Two are newly qualified teachers (NQT). As a result, the headteacher is currently taking the oversight for all subjects. She has a clear plan of when teachers will take on the responsibility for a subject and for which subject. Staff are developing their leadership skills. She is supporting staff well in developing their teaching practice and setting high expectations for behaviour. Staff say she is very giving with her time and in supporting their well-being. Staff morale is high.

The headteacher has trained staff so they support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access all of the curriculum. This helps the pupils to be successful learners.

The headteacher has introduced a new English scheme. This is helping teachers plan writing lessons that build on what pupils already know. Key stage 2 pupils say that they are enjoying revisiting the same book in English. They know the texts well and are becoming better writers. Pupils' knowledge of grammar is good. The new spelling scheme is helping pupils to be more aware of their spelling. They use dictionaries to help both spelling and understanding the meanings of words. For example, during reading a child used a dictionary to look up the word 'impeachment'. They were then able to explain the individual meaning of the word and in the context of the article as well.

There is a new history scheme. Teachers use this to plan lessons that are beginning to help pupils know more, remember more and make links in their learning. For example, pupils learn about a time in the past when only men could vote and discuss the link to suffragettes in more recent times.

The school's curriculum is developing. There is some variation in how effectively subjects are taught. Some subjects, but not all, are well structured and sequenced. Teachers do not yet fully understand the smaller steps needed to help learning stick with pupils. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are on the way to ensuring that all subjects are planned and sequenced in a way that will allow pupils to know more and remember more over time. Training of staff is already happening.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know how to keep pupils safe. They use walkie talkies at playtime to be able to talk with staff inside school if needed. They carry a 'grab bag' of items such as a first aid kit.

Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. Staff and governors have regular training to help keep them up to date. The headteacher has put sensible arrangements in place with a local school to help staff if she is not on site.

Pupils are sensible and manage their own safety well around school and out on the playground.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet fully coherently planned and sequenced in all subjects. Therefore, some subjects are taught more effectively than others. Leaders need to ensure that the content in all subjects is carefully selected and sequenced.
- Teachers do not yet fully understand the smaller teaching steps needed in sequencing learning to help learning stick with the pupils. Pupils have gaps in their learning. Leaders need to support new members of staff, including NQTs, to deepen their own subject knowledge so they understand and can teach smaller steps within a lesson or over a unit of work to deliver better teaching for pupils.
- The headteacher currently has responsibility for all subjects. This means that leadership is not yet shared across subjects. Leaders need to follow their timeline in developing and training staff members, including those who are newer to the profession, to have the knowledge and skills to fulfil subject leader responsibility.
- Leaders need to review the curriculum to make sure that the planning supports teachers to match learning to all pupils' needs, particularly the most able, so that all pupils can achieve their full potential in all subjects.

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 St Mary's CofE (A) Primary School to be good on 20–21 May 2015.

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	124342
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10088558
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Emma Furnival
Headteacher	Clare Hill
Website	www.st-marys-mucklestone.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 May 2015

Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed to the school in April 2018.
- Four teachers are new to the school since September 2019. This is all of the teaching staff in the school.
- Two of the four new teachers are newly qualified teachers.

Information about this inspection

- Subjects considered as part of this inspection were reading, writing and history. Inspectors carried out lesson visits to see these subjects being taught and looked at pupils' work. The inspectors talked to pupils about their work. They spoke to teachers who taught these subjects and held discussions with the headteacher. An inspector listened to pupils read.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, office manager and six governors. She also spoke with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors explored safeguarding arrangements by speaking to the school's designated safeguarding lead, reviewing safeguarding records, checking how risks are managed, talking to staff and pupils about how they keep safe and checking the school's single

central record.

- The lead inspector considered behaviour and attendance information and policies and procedures relating to pupils with SEND, pupil premium funding and child protection. The school's website was also checked.
- Inspectors observed behaviour on the playground and lunchtime.
- The lead inspector considered seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 15 responses on Ofsted's Parent View. There were no responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- Inspectors talked to parents and pupils to gather their views about their school, behaviour, their safety and learning.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ben Cox

Ofsted Inspector

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