

Inspection of St Helen's Church of England Primary School

Greenhill, Alveston, Bristol BS35 2QX

Inspection dates: 17–18 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

'Flying High' is the vision that sits at the heart of St Helen's Primary School. Leaders, staff and governors are highly ambitious for all pupils. This ambition flows through all aspects of school life. Leaders make sure that teachers set work that challenges pupils and ingrains a passion for learning. Pupils are well-rounded individuals and are remarkably well prepared for secondary school. This is because teachers help them to develop deep knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects.

Teachers organise carefully the subjects that pupils learn, alongside values such as compassion, empathy and belonging. These values permeate the school. Pupils look after and respect each other. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils say bullying does not happen at their school. They feel safe and are extremely confident that staff will sort out any concerns they may have.

Teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to understand their place in the wider world. An example of this work are the visits pupils make to a local care home to practise art with elderly residents. Pupils are proud that they are able to make a difference to the world around them. They are extremely happy and say they love their school.

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

The quality of education is outstanding. Leaders have embedded a highly ambitious curriculum. Teachers set challenging work that builds very well on pupils' knowledge and skills. This provides pupils with a deep and impressive understanding across a range of subjects that prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education. Pupils are highly motivated in the work they do and talk about it with great enthusiasm. They are able to remember difficult concepts that they have learned in previous years. For example, Year 5 pupils are able to talk about the impact Romans have had on modern society.

The work pupils do is meaningful, has a purpose and furthers pupils' personal development. Teachers plan learning that helps pupils to understand how their actions make a difference to others. For example, pupils have written to their local MP about issues that concern them. They have also raised money to help build classrooms for their partner school in Uganda.

Teaching children to be expert readers is at the heart of the curriculum. All staff have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Children start learning to read as soon as they join Reception. They very quickly develop the skills they need to be confident readers. When pupils are struggling, teachers make sure they get the support they need to catch up. Further up the school, pupils read widely and often. The experiences pupils have of different types of books contribute to pupils achieving exceptionally well.

The school is a nurturing and caring environment. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable.

Pupils are keen to do well. They say they love their school.

Pupils learn about a range of different faiths and cultures. This well-organised learning helps pupils understand and empathise with others from around the world. For example, Year 4 pupils looked at the value of belonging. They learned that they belong to the local community in Alveston before looking outwards at the wider community of Bristol. They were then able to link this to historical knowledge of the slave trade and the Windrush generation.

Teachers make sure they understand pupils as individuals. They provide support that is expertly matched to these needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve very well as a result.

Leaders invest thoughtfully in staff development. They make sure that staff have the expertise needed to deliver an ambitious and effective curriculum. Staff feel supported and are proud of the school they work in.

Governors are highly effective. They have a clear vision and only want the very best for their pupils. They understand the need to provide both support and challenge to leaders and maintain an effective balance between the two.

Children in early years make a flying start to their school career. Teachers plan challenging and varied activities that capture children's interest. The Reception classroom is a lively and exciting environment to learn in. Children are well cared for and they trust the adults around them. Teachers quickly identify any specific needs and make sure that children receive the support that is right for them. Children are exceptionally well prepared for the move into Year 1 as a result.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding is at the forefront of their work. Pupils are well looked after. Leaders have developed clear systems for checking that staff have the training they need to take the right action to keep pupils safe. Recruitment checks are stringent and well organised.

Pupils feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe. They talk confidently about staying safe online.

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 the provider and 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	109158
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10088338
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Anne Straw and Neil Martin
Headteacher	Andy Spens
Website	www.sthelensprimaryalveston.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2018

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, St Helen's has entered into partnership with another local school. The executive headteacher of both schools is also the substantive headteacher of St Helen's.
- St Helen's is run on a day-to-day basis by the head of school. He took up post on 1 June 2019.
- The date of the school's most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) was 13 March 2018.

Information about this inspection

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

- We visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to staff and pupils to evaluate the quality of education. Some of these activities were conducted jointly with senior leaders. We also observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at break- and lunchtime.
- We held meetings with leaders and governors. We also analysed responses to

questionnaires completed by 16 staff, 71 parents and carers, and 63 pupils.

- We looked at documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation and documents related to safeguarding and attendance.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: art and design, history, mathematics and reading. These deep dives involved visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils. We also looked at pupils' learning in religious education to check the depth of the curriculum offer.

Inspection team

Nick Sheppard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Steve Wigley

Ofsted Inspector

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