

# Inspection of a good school: St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Credenhill, Hereford, Herefordshire HR4 7DW

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Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2021

## Outcome

St Mary's C of E Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

A strong Christian ethos underpins the work of the school. There is a distinct sense of community spirit. It is like one big, happy family. Adults model the school's values, such as friendship, forgiveness and compassion. Pupils follow their lead.

Staff encourage pupils to develop a strong sense of morals. Pupils learn to be good citizens and to respect each other. Pupils are polite, thoughtful and courteous. Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils feel safe at school and say there is always someone to turn to if they are worried or upset. Pupils say that there is no bullying, and, if there was, adults would deal with it quickly.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils can take part in the many activities provided. Pupils take on leadership responsibilities, such as sports captains, milk monitors and playground pals. This supports their personal development. Many visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. These include trips to musical performances, such as 'Young Voices', and to the Hay Festival to listen to an author.

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

The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school well, ably supported by all staff. They are acutely aware of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on any lost learning and have worked hard to support pupils and families during this time.

Leaders and staff use a demanding, rich curriculum to inspire pupils to achieve their best. Pupils' curiosity is sparked by stimulating activities. They really enjoy their learning. In lessons, pupils contribute well to questions and tasks. Curriculum plans outline the knowledge and subject-related vocabulary that pupils need to remember. Some subject leaders are new to their roles. Currently, they do not have the knowledge or expertise to monitor curriculum plans effectively or to provide training for their colleagues. This limits the impact they have on the progress pupils make.

In some subjects, such as English and mathematics, teachers check pupils' learning effectively. However, in other subjects, teachers provide fewer opportunities for pupils to recap on what they already know. This means that pupils do not remember key knowledge over time. For example, in geography pupils in key stage 2 struggled to recall the names of continents and oceans that had been taught in key stage 1.

Reading is a high priority in the school. Teachers use a well-structured early reading programme to deliver daily phonics lessons. Pupils start learning the sounds that letters make as soon as they start school. Teachers make regular assessments to ensure that no one is falling behind. Where pupils find reading more difficult, teachers make sure they get the help they need. Reading books are matched well to pupils' needs.

Teachers share their enjoyment of books. They use high-quality texts to promote a love of reading. Teachers read to pupils every day. Pupils say that they look forward to story times. Staff use texts systematically to improve pupils' vocabulary. Initiatives such as 'reading champions' and 'reading suitcases' encourage pupils to read more.

The teaching of mathematics is strong. Leaders have developed a well-planned curriculum. Starting in the early years, children develop their knowledge of number through effective teaching and practical activities. Teachers build in time for pupils to revisit and recall previous learning. Pupils develop mathematical skills and a firm understanding of mathematical concepts. They learn how to use their knowledge to tackle mathematical problems well.

Pupils behave well and enjoy their learning. Classrooms are calm and purposeful with little disruption. Around school, pupils conduct themselves impeccably. They are considerate of each other and show respect towards staff.

Pupils with SEND participate fully in school life. They achieve well alongside their classmates. Leaders make sure staff have the resources they need to teach pupils with SEND. Staff work closely together to provide support for these pupils and their families.

Pupils' wider development is a particular strength of the school. Pupils take part in sports tournaments and performances. They have many opportunities to work with the local community. This includes decorating a model of the Hereford Bull with poppies to go on display in the town centre. Leaders stress the inclusive nature of the school. Pupils in Year 5 write a letter to the parents of new Reception class children saying how they will look after them.

Leaders are supportive of staff and manage their workload and well-being effectively. Parents speak very highly of the school. They appreciate the many opportunities that the school offers. They praise the inclusive culture and appreciate how staff care for pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained and can spot pupils who may be at risk of harm. All staff know how to report any concerns they have. Safeguarding leaders follow up any concerns rigorously and seek support from external agencies where needed. Leaders prioritise pupils' safety. They check that staff and visitors to the school are suitable to work with children. Leaders know their community well. This local knowledge helps leaders to address specific safeguarding risks that pupils might face in their area. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe and to access help when needed.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, such as geography, teachers do not regularly assess pupils' learning to check what they know and remember. This means that there are gaps in pupils' knowledge, and they struggle to remember what they have been taught. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum builds in opportunities to assess, recap and revise, so that pupils are able to recall and apply significant prior knowledge.
- Some subject leaders of the foundation subjects do not yet have the knowledge and skills to drive improvements. Leaders should continue to provide these subject leaders with the training and support needed to make sure these leaders have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

## **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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2016.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 school 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116799
<b>Local authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199874
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	157
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Reverend Mark Johnson
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Bernadette Davies
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.credenhill.hereford.sch.uk">www.credenhill.hereford.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	21 and 22 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- St Mary's C of E has a Church of England Christian faith-based ethos.
- The school's last statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools was carried out in October 2019. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school federated with Much Birch C of E Primary School in September 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher and the deputy headteacher. She met with the special educational needs coordinator. She held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and representatives of the governing body. She also spoke on

the telephone with the Herefordshire local authority head of learning and achievement, who is also a school improvement partner.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. The inspector met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at curriculum plans, spoke with pupils and staff, and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with pupils at breaktime and observed their behaviour around the school. She also met with a group of pupils to talk about the wider curriculum.
- The inspector noted 2019 external performance data about the school and looked at school documents. These included information about behaviour, the school curriculum and improvement planning. She also checked the school's website.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school, the inspector spoke to members of staff and pupils. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss the school's policies and procedures. During these meetings, records were scrutinised, including those relating to the safer recruitment of staff. Case files were sampled to explore how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm. The inspector also spoke with a range of pupils and staff to evaluate the school's safeguarding culture.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online Ofsted Parent View survey, including the free-text responses. The inspector considered the feedback provided by members of staff through the survey for staff.

### **Inspection team**

Lynda Townsend, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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