

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

Lodge Lane, The Grove, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV15 5EQ

Inspection dates:

30 November–1 December 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this happy and welcoming school. The school's strong Christian ethos is reflected in all aspects of school life. Leaders have built this upon the values of trust, friendship, compassion, respect, peace and truthfulness. At St Mary's Bluecoat CofE (VA) Primary School all pupils are treated with respect, dignity and kindness.

Pupils get on well and take care of each other. They enjoy chatting and playing together, often in mixed age groups. Bullying is rare but when it happens leaders take swift action to sort it out. This helps pupils to feel safe at school.

Pupils enjoy taking part in clubs and extra-curricular activities. Leaders are now beginning to reintroduce opportunities that have been disrupted by the pandemic. For example, the school choir recently performed to the local community. Pupils say they were proud to represent their school.

All pupils access a broad curriculum. They have memorable experiences and lessons that they enjoy. However, the school's curriculum is not sufficiently developed in several subjects. This means that pupils do not build up their knowledge and skills as well as they might.

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

Pupils study all national curriculum subjects. Curriculum leaders have ensured that some of these subjects, such as mathematics and English, are very well planned. Curriculum plans in these subjects set out the key knowledge, vocabulary and skills that pupils are expected to know and remember. This helps pupils to build their knowledge in a logical order. For example, children in early years learn how to count objects and regularly practise using numbers. These activities prepare children well for mathematics lessons in

Year 1. However, in many other subjects the curriculum is not so well planned or sequenced. The precise knowledge and vocabulary that pupils are expected to learn each year is not set out clearly enough. Leaders have plans to develop the curriculum further and are aware that there is still much to do.

Teachers explain new information to pupils clearly. They show pupils how to be successful in their work. Adults make regular checks on pupils' understanding in lessons. For instance, they ask searching questions that invite pupils to explain their answers fully. These checks show staff which pupils need extra help. Teachers then put appropriate support in place to help all pupils learn.

Curriculum leaders track pupils' progress over time in subjects such as mathematics and English. However, they are not able to do this in subjects where the curriculum is less well developed. In these subjects, the key information that pupils are expected to know and remember at key points in their education is not set out clearly. This makes it difficult for teachers to check the progress that pupils make through the curriculum.

Pupils who are learning to read benefit from daily phonics lessons. Leaders have identified that pupils' reading has been disrupted by the pandemic. Many pupils are behind where leaders would normally expect them to be. Leaders have acted quickly to help these pupils catch up. Pupils now learn to read in smaller groups. Staff can provide lessons that are well matched to pupils' abilities. As a result, most pupils are becoming better readers over time.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are particularly expert in helping these pupils. They think carefully about pupils' needs and make adaptations to ensure that all pupils access a broad curriculum. For example, staff in the school's SEND hub teach lessons that are precisely matched to pupils' abilities. This helps pupils with SEND to engage fully in their learning.

Pupils enjoy learning and have positive attitudes towards school. They listen carefully to teachers and are keen to share answers in lessons. Many, including children in the early years, have the confidence to approach visitors and welcome them to their school. Occasionally some pupils lose focus in lessons. However, staff understand the best ways to help these pupils. They use strategies to quickly get them back on track.

Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to build their understanding of modern Britain. For instance, some pupils have worked with local police as police cadets. This has helped them understand how the rule of law benefits everyone in the community.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, work hard to promote staff well-being. The majority of staff are very happy in their work. They are well supported and valued. Staff are eager to support leaders in continued work to develop the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have clear roles and responsibilities. They follow the school's safeguarding procedures closely. Adults know what to do if they have concerns about a child and they take quick action when necessary. Leaders work well in partnership with external agencies to ensure that families receive the help they need.

Pupils learn ways to protect themselves from potential harm. For example, in computing, pupils learn how to work safely on the internet. In addition, older pupils have received specific information about websites that may pose potential risks to children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not well planned and sequenced in a number of subjects. This means that pupils do not build up their knowledge and skills as well as they might. Leaders should continue work to develop curriculum plans so that, in all subjects, pupils build their knowledge logically over time.
- Curriculum leaders have not yet set out the end points that pupils are expected to know and remember in a number of subjects. This makes it difficult for teachers to check the progress that pupils make. Leaders should ensure that end points are clear so that teachers can accurately assess the knowledge, vocabulary and skills that pupils know and remember.

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 December 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

Unique reference number	123536
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10205170
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carl Steventon
Headteacher	Claire Gaskin (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.stmarysbc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 – 7 December 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school includes a specialist unit for pupils with autism spectrum disorder or behaviour, emotional and social difficulty. This unit provides education for up to 10 pupils between the ages of seven and 11.
- The school is within the Diocese of Hereford. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in 2016.
- The school is part of a federation of schools. This is called The Trinity Federation.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.
- Leaders introduced single year group classes from September 2020. Previously classes had included mixed year groups.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, executive leaders of the federation and school senior leaders.
- The inspector met with representatives of the school governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history.
- For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also looked at curriculum plans in a sample of other subjects.
- The inspector visited lessons in the school's specialist hub and spoke to pupils who attend.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, around the school and at lunchtime. He spoke to pupils about their opinions of behaviour at the school.
- The inspector looked at documents related to safeguarding procedures. This included reviewing records of pre-employment checks carried out on staff.
- The inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. The inspector also took account of responses to staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jonathan Leonard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021