

Inspection of a good school: St Katharine's CofE Primary School

Savernake Forest, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3BG

Inspection dates:

7 December 2021

Outcome

St Katharine's CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this small rural school. There is lots of space to play and enjoy the outdoors. Pupils champion the school's values of honesty, effort, respect and friendship. Most become self-assured and confident.

The curriculum is broad. Pupils learn a lot and most remember it well. Older pupils like the many opportunities to apply their previous learning. Pupils debate important things like equality and diversity and give presentations about their work. Some like the addition of Latin to the curriculum.

Pupils learn how to be resilient, resourceful and take risks safely on residential and adventurous activities. Additional visits and visitors make learning exciting. Recent highlights include visiting a London museum and having a visit from an Olympic gymnast. Pupils know that giving back through charity work is important, for example by providing Christmas boxes for a local charitable trust.

Pupils are good ambassadors for the school. They are polite and well-mannered in lessons and at social times. Everyone has lunch together. There is a real 'family feel'. Pupils are safe. They are adamant that if they fall out with their classmates, staff would be on hand to help. They say that bullying only happens rarely.

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

Leaders are at the final stages of revamping curriculum plans in each subject. In the past, some subjects did not have sufficient focus. This is not the case now. New curriculum plans are very clear. For example, the history curriculum identifies precisely the essential concepts that pupils need to know and when they need to know them. This means that pupils build on prior knowledge to progress through the curriculum. Pupils remember a wealth of knowledge about people and key events in the past. They discuss what has happened in the past and how it shapes the world today.

Staff plan lesson sequences precisely so that pupils learn a lot. For example, leaders expect all lesson sequences in design and technology to include a clear progression from the design brief, designing and making a prototype, through to making, testing and evaluating. All staff follow this structure. Teachers expect pupils to use subject-specific technical vocabulary. As a result, pupils in Years 5 and 6 know how to apply their knowledge of moving cogs and parallel circuits so they are successful in their current unit of work. Pupils produce high-quality work.

There is a sharp focus on getting children reading right from the start. Staff have secure subject knowledge. The books that pupils read match the sounds that they already know. Pupils who need to catch up receive extra reading support. Consequently, these pupils are becoming more confident readers. However, some teaching is not adapted astutely to give pupils the precise support they need. A minority of pupils do not get the additional practice they need to apply their phonics to spell accurately and form letters correctly.

Leaders have created a mathematics curriculum that it is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are reteaching any essential knowledge that was not secured during the national lockdowns. Most pupils are doing well in mathematics. However, teaching is not always adjusted precisely. This means that a very small number of pupils who need to catch up move through sequences of work before they have grasped new knowledge.

Central trust staff organise the subject training staff need. Leaders use the advice they receive from trust staff to update the actions on the school's development plan. The academy board checks how the school spends additional funding. They check staff workload through well-being surveys. However, trust leaders have not checked that staff implement their agreed policies and processes.

Leaders ensure that staff use the advice they receive from external professionals to provide additional teaching for pupils who need to catch up, including pupils with SEND. Most pupils with SEND learn well.

Staff have high expectations for behaviour and attendance. Year 6 prefects show pride in their work and rise to the challenge of their responsibilities well. Staff encourage pupils to reflect wisely, learn eagerly and cooperate consistently well with others. The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep physically and mentally fit and healthy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school completes all the necessary recruitment checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in safeguarding practices. As a result, staff identify concerns quickly and confidently. They follow the procedures in place to refer on any concerns in a timely way. Staff have confidence that leaders deal effectively with any concerns they raise.

Pupils say they feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Trustees and leaders' systems to quality assure the work of the school are not stringent. Some systems and policies that the trust expect to be in place are not. Leaders and trustees must ensure that quality assurance arrangements improve so that trustees are accurately informed about the school's work and all systems and policies are in place.
- Some teaching is not adapted precisely enough to meet pupils' needs. A minority of pupils who need to catch up do not consolidate and deepen their knowledge before they move on through some sequences of work. Leaders need to assure themselves that teaching builds on what pupils already know.

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 predecessor school, St Katharine's CofE (VC) Primary School, to be good in October 2012.

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	144454
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10212128
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Toby Watson
Headteacher	Niki Jones
Website	www.stkatharinesprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has four classes. Reception children are taught together in one class. All other classes have two year groups in each class.

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.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other staff and members of the local academy board.
- An inspector also met with the chief executive officer and the head of primary education of Excalibur Academies Trust.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and considered samples of pupils' work.

- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator to consider the quality of provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted staff survey alongside responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses from parents and carers.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Spence Allen

Ofsted Inspector

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