

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

Court Orchard, Fownhope, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 4PG

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Inspection dates:

29 and 30 March 2022

## **Outcome**

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Family, friends, fun and foundations for learning are all found in this small school sitting in the heart of its community. Pupils are mature and enjoy conversing with each other and visitors. Pupils are eager to learn. Behaviour is mostly good. Pupils spoke of some occasional unkind words used now and again. Pupils are not always made aware that these things have been dealt with.

Pupils say there is 'a bit' of bullying, but were clear that staff get things sorted. They value that staff take the time 'to see things through our eyes' and appreciate that there is always someone to talk to.

Pupils have many ways to be active during the day. They like the recently installed trim trail. Tree climbing, log carrying and den building are all popular breaktime activities. Pupils know and follow the rules that are in place to help keep them safe. Older pupils enjoy helping younger pupils. They truly show the school values through their actions.

Staff's caring and nurturing relationships get the best out of their pupils. The learning environment helps every pupil to achieve well. These high expectations start in Rainbow Class and run throughout the school.

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

Pupils study the full curriculum. Leaders have thought about what pupils should learn across all subjects. Subject leaders are getting to grips with helping teachers to focus on individual subjects so that they are well planned and sequenced. Subject leaders do a lot of research and reading. This is improving teachers' subject knowledge and the way teachers use resources to support pupils' learning. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has hampered leaders' monitoring of the curriculum, which has limited their ability to identify where further curriculum improvements could be made. Teachers are using the recently introduced assessment systems well.

Teachers' skill, confidence and application of teaching the key knowledge in the right order are increasing. Pupils can talk confidently about what they know and remember. For example, in history pupils understand that civilisations existed in different places at the same time. One pupil said, 'Knowing about things that came before us helps us in our lives today.'

Pupils start their learning in the early years. The youngest children learn about their place in their family history and how they are growing and changing. They recognise a birthday and a church service as significant events. They develop their understanding of the world through carefully designed activities that help them to explore, ask questions and try out new ideas. Adults in the early years and across the school use specific vocabulary with purpose and clarity. Pupils pick up on this and use language well to explain what they know.

Staff teach early mathematics in a structured and sequential manner. Children in Rainbow Class receive a secure start to understanding number, shape, space and measures in practical and meaningful ways that form part of the everyday routines. Reception and Year 1 pupils build on this learning. They achieve well and are ready for the next stage of their education.

Most pupils are being helped to learn to read well. Routines that were in place before COVID-19 are on their way back. Leaders have high expectations for how often pupils should be listened to read. However, pupil and staff absence due to COVID-19 continues to hinder this being a reality. Some pupils, especially lower-attaining pupils, are not reading as fluently as they should. Staff give them extra support to help catch up.

Pupils enjoy reading and being read to. This love of reading stems from the early years, where adults are skilled at involving all pupils to join in with a story. Staff set high expectations in the choice of words that pupils use. Older pupils say they love the voices their teachers 'put on' and the expression they use. However, they say, rightly, that the choice of books on offer is not as wide as it could be. Each class has a reading corner, some more inviting than others, with some books looking old and tatty.

The leadership of special educational needs is very effective. They help pupils to show goodness, kindness and patience as they live and learn together. Pupils show tolerance for their peers, who may need time to complete their learning or need space to manage their feelings. Teachers' accurate identification of pupils' needs and targeted training helps all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to make good progress.

Pupils have good opportunities to move beyond the academic. A range of clubs, including sports, art, chess and craft, are now up and running. Swimming and a residential visit are also taking place.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils follow the rules of the playground to stay safe when playing actively. Leaders have effective first-aid systems in place that pupils know and use. Parents and carers are informed if a bump or scrape has happened.

Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe in different situations, such as when riding a bike, using technology or in case of a fire. Children in the early years use tools safely.

Leaders check that adults are safe to work with pupils. Staff show a deep knowledge of their responsibilities in raising concerns about and how to do this. They take action promptly when they have concerns.

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

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

- Pupils do not like it when a few pupils use unkind words. Although records show that adults deal with these incidents, pupils do not always see or know this. Leaders need to help pupils to be reassured that all incidents of unkind and poor behaviour are dealt with.
- Staff regard reading as important, but resources and routines do not fully support this. Pupils, especially lower-attaining readers, do not read often enough, and some reading resources are of poor quality. As a result, some pupils are not inspired to read regularly. This affects their ability to read fluently. Leaders should continue to update resources and re-establish reading expectations following COVID-19 disruptions. Teachers should improve the quality and organisation of reading areas and the regularity of hearing pupils read. Leaders should monitor that these changes are having the intended impact.
- Due to the pandemic, subject leaders have had limited opportunities to monitor their subject or to check how the assessment pilots are working. This means they are not able to check on what is going well and where further training and support should be directed in their subject. Leaders should strengthen subject leadership by providing carefully planned professional development that supports subject leaders to further develop assessment and to monitor the quality of their subject(s).

## **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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 25 April 2013.

## **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>	116880
<b>Local authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212430
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	138
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	James Potheary
<b>Headteacher</b>	Timothy Milne
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmarys.hereford.sch.uk/">www.stmarys.hereford.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a governor-led pre-school provision.
- A Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's CofE Primary School as a Church of England school took place on 25 June 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.

## 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and history. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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 considered early mathematics and spoke to leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work in geography.

- The inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and Hereford Diocese.
- The inspector met with five members of the governing body.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at breaktimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- The inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted's online parent, pupil and staff surveys.
- The inspector met with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures. She reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour, and attendance. Inspectors spoke to pupils, parents and carers, and staff about pupils' safety.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and information on the school's website.

### **Inspection team**

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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