

Inspection of St Matthew's Church of England Primary and Nursery Academy

1 Peregrine Road, Plymouth, Devon PL6 5FN

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They are happy and have a strong sense of belonging. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are no limits placed on what pupils can achieve. Leaders ensure that all pupils can 'let their light shine'.

Pupils are kind and friendly to each other. They ensure that everyone feels included during social times. Adults show pupils how to build and maintain successful relationships based on respect. Pupils say that bullying hardly ever happens. They are confident that adults would help them if it did. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about sending their children to St Matthew's. Many commented on recent positive changes in the school. Parents felt well supported throughout the pandemic. They value leaders welcoming them at the gates each morning. One parent, whose comment represents the views of many, said 'staff cannot do enough to ensure our children feel happy, safe and cared for.'

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

Children get off to a flying start in the early years. Teachers respond sensitively to their needs. They carefully plan learning opportunities to ensure children have time to explore, play and ask questions. Many children in the early years learn independently because learning interests and engages them. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that gives pupils the knowledge they need to be successful. They consider what they want pupils to know and remember. Leaders have recently made changes to the order that pupils learn the curriculum. This makes it easier for pupils to build on what they already know. In mathematics, teachers adapt learning to account for gaps in pupils' knowledge caused by the pandemic. Teachers have strong subject knowledge that enables them to do this well. Leaders have developed effective ways to check what pupils know and remember. However, this is not working as well across all subjects. Teachers are not always aware of gaps in pupils' knowledge. Some middle leaders are at the early stages of understanding their roles. They do not monitor aspects of their curriculum effectively to understand fully what is working well and what changes can make the curriculum even better.

Pupils love to read. They learn that reading is important as soon as they start in the early years. Pupils read books that are well matched to their reading ability. This supports them in becoming confident and fluent readers. Pupils receive regular high-quality phonics teaching. Teachers notice when pupils struggle and help them to catch up. They read to pupils regularly and share reasons for their book choices.

This helps pupils to develop a love of reading that stays with them throughout their time at school.

Leaders ensure that staff identify pupils with SEND quickly. Teachers make careful adaptations to learning so all pupils can take part in the full curriculum. Leaders work well with specialists to ensure that every pupil can experience success.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. They leave St Matthew's with a secure understanding of the world around them. Pupils understand equality and celebrate differences. Pupils know how to look after their physical and mental health. They take part in learning opportunities that support their development of character. Pupils build the skills they need to tackle setbacks with confidence. Leaders plan a variety of opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local and wider community. Pupils learn how to be responsible citizens through roles on the school council. They raise money for charity and see it as an important part of the school. Consequently, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils are proud of their school and have positive attitudes to learning. Learning is rarely disturbed. Pupils say that everyone knows the school rules. Most staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that leaders listen to them and consider their well-being.

Governors know the strengths of the school and what leaders need to do to make it even better. They challenge leaders on the quality of education to ensure the school continues to improve. Leaders communicate a clear vision that is understood by all.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. They are confident to share any worries with a trusted adult. Staff understand pupils' needs well. They receive training to identify concerns early. Clear systems are in place for reporting concerns. Leaders ensure pupils and families get the support they need when they need it.

Pupils learn how to keep safe online. They know what the possible risks are. Governors understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders follow safer recruitment procedures. They make the right checks on adults who work at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment is not used consistently well across the curriculum. Teachers are not always sure what pupils know and remember. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that assessment is used effectively in

all subjects to enable teachers to identify and prioritise knowledge that should be taught next.

- Some middle leaders are new to role. Some do not yet monitor the effectiveness of their subject effectively. As a result, they are not evaluating what the next steps of development should be. Leaders need to support middle leaders to accurately evaluate their areas of responsibility to enable pupils to be successful across all aspects of the curriculum.

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	140425
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10211717
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	483
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Bailey
Headteacher	Christian Conners
Website	www.stmatthewsacademyplymouth.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Matthew's Church of England Primary and Nursery Academy joined the St Christopher's multi-academy trust in September 2015.
- The school is a voluntary-controlled Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- There is an on-site breakfast- and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 met with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, members of staff, parents and representatives from the trust and governing body. The lead inspector had an online meeting with the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors checked the procedures for keeping pupils safe, including scrutinising the single central record.
- Inspectors visited the on-site after-school club.
- An inspector checked all survey responses, including 33 from staff and 104 from parents. This included considering the 77 responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text service.
- Inspectors met with pupils and staff to gather their views and find out what is it like to be part of the school.
- Inspectors met with parents at the school gates on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at the school's plans for improvement, minutes of governors' meetings, monitoring documents and reports from the trust.

Inspection team

Jane Dennis, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Shirley	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Baillie	Ofsted Inspector

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