

Inspection of St Oswald's CofE Primary School

Sion Avenue, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 2YL

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 May 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at St Oswald's CofE Primary School. Leaders have high expectations for what all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. Pupils become confident, articulate learners. They dress smartly and are proud of their school. There is a very good range of after-school clubs. Pupils benefit from visitors to the school and trips to places of interest, such as local museums.

There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms and corridors. Pupils are keen to learn. Their work is varied and interesting, and this helps them to concentrate well in lessons.

Pupils behave responsibly, for example using litter bins and tidying up without being asked. The school provides them with good opportunities for leadership. Older pupils act as role models for younger ones. Pupils get on well with one another, and bullying is infrequent. Staff resolve any disagreements fairly and effectively. Pupils feel safe and happy.

Learning is well planned and covers lots of topics well. Staff are well trained, and they work together as an effective team. This helps them to teach the curriculum effectively, including those elements that are relatively new. Everyone wants to improve the school further.

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

Leaders have planned learning well. They have made sure that children in the early years gain the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed in the older years. Starting with the two-year-olds, staff focus on developing children's communication skills and extending their vocabulary. The early years classrooms provide a vibrant learning environment which encourages children's curiosity about literacy and numeracy. However, the outdoor area lacks the same rich stimulation.

Across the school, pupils study and enjoy all the subjects in the national curriculum. In each subject, leaders have set out how a sequence of activities should build up learning over time. Leaders have provided effective staff training, so teachers have a clear understanding of how to plan the day-to-day learning for pupils. Staff are knowledgeable and draw on quality resources. Everyone knows the importance of using technical terms accurately. Teachers encourage pupils to make relevant links between different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 were able to relate their study of the history of Benin to their geographical knowledge of Africa. Leaders ensure that all staff know about the additional needs of pupils with SEND, and how best to help them. As a result, these pupils learn well.

Teachers check on what pupils have learned. They use 'smart start' questions at the beginning of lessons to reinforce previous learning. This helps pupils to remember key knowledge.

Leaders make learning to read a top priority. Starting in the Nursery class, a structured programme ensures that children learn about letters and their sounds in an effective sequence. Staff use resources in a consistent way. They make sure that pupils read frequently to an adult. Staff help pupils who find reading more difficult to keep up. Books for younger pupils are well matched to their knowledge of phonics.

Key stage 2 pupils enjoy a diverse range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Teachers pay due attention to different reading skills. This helps pupils to develop a strong appreciation of the purposes and joys of reading.

Pupils learn about different cultures and traditions. In celebrating the achievements of inspirational people, leaders identify those from different racial and social backgrounds. Pupils learn to become independent and have opportunities to take on responsibility. Staff provide good support for pupils' mental health. Year 6 pupils spoke of being very well prepared for their upcoming move to secondary school.

Pupils consistently demonstrate respect for each other and adults. They collaborate effectively in class when asked to do so. Disruption to learning is uncommon.

There have been several recent changes to the curriculum. Leaders have made some checks on how well it is being implemented and provided staff with further guidance as a result. However, staff are keen to do more to ensure that the curriculum is fully embedded.

During 2021, most members of the Local Academy Board (LAB) resigned. The trust that runs the school wants the LAB to play a major part in the governance of the school. It has appointed some new members, but two vacancies remain.

Since her appointment, the headteacher has led the rapid improvement of the school with determination and sound judgement. Staff appreciate the effective support that they receive from senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in safeguarding and provide helpful updates for staff and parents. They take the right actions to help children. Leaders take appropriate steps to involve other agencies that work with children and their families. They are persistent when the need arises. Teachers make sure that pupils learn about the risks that they may face, including those online.

The school keeps meticulous records. Leaders make the right checks on the staff who join the school.

Pupils know that there is always an adult to talk to. They feel safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have recently adapted the curriculum in several subjects and plan to modify others. As a result, there is some work to do to refine the curriculum and enhance its implementation. The COVID-19 pandemic and staff's absence have restricted the scope for subject leaders to monitor the quality of the curriculum. As leadership capacity increases, senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders have sufficient opportunities to check on the implementation of different subjects. Subject leaders should then make further refinements to the curriculum if needed and provide staff with additional guidance.
- Following the resignation of several members of the LAB, the multi-academy trust (MAT) has provided additional oversight and support for the school. In the longer term, the MAT wants to delegate most aspects of the school's governance to the LAB so that leaders are locally accountable. Leaders of the MAT should ensure that the LAB has a full complement of members and that they are fully trained in their roles. This will enable effective local oversight of the school.
- Although the early years outdoor area provides children with a good range of resources, it is not as well developed to support learning as it could be. Leaders should consider ways to improve this area to maximise children's learning and development in the prime and specific areas of learning.

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	144456
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10226946
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Hugh Richards
Headteacher	Carol Reece
Website	www.stoswalds.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Oswald's CofE Primary School converted to become an academy school in February 2018. When Ofsted last inspected the predecessor school, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is a Church of England faith school in the Diocese of Worcester. The religious character of the predecessor school was last inspected in February 2017.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Worcester MAT.
- The school now provides for two-year-olds.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

The 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The chair and another three members of the LAB met with the lead inspector. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer and another trustee representing the MAT.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils at social times, and with groups of pupils more formally.
- When inspecting safeguarding, the lead inspector looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff's suitability to work with children. He also considered the effectiveness of staff's training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' plans to improve the school and records of meetings held by those responsible for governance. They also reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. An inspector met with parents outside the school at the start of the second day of the inspection. The inspectors also considered responses to the questionnaires for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, history, physical education and science. For each deep dive, an inspector discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also met with pupils and teachers to discuss learning in these subjects. On the second day of the inspection, inspectors looked at curriculum plans and spoke to pupils about learning in other subjects.
- An inspector listened to a sample of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Anne Potter

Ofsted Inspector

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