

Inspection of a good school: St George's C of E Academy, Clun

School Road, Clun, Craven Arms, Shropshire SY7 8JQ

Inspection date: 21 September 2022

Outcome

St George's C of E Academy, Clun continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at St George's C of E Academy. They feel safe, and they very much enjoy life at school. Staff care for them as individuals. Pupils like reading, and they read widely. The school is very much part of the local community. Parents and carers share their children's enthusiasm for the education provided.

Leaders have high expectations for staff and pupils alike. They have given careful consideration to every aspect of the school. Leaders have planned a broad and ambitious curriculum, identifying clearly what pupils should know at each stage. From Nursery onwards, staff focus on developing pupils' independence. Staff identify any additional needs promptly.

Pupils are kind to each other and polite to adults. They dress smartly and behave well in lessons. At social times, there is a wide range of outdoor equipment, and pupils play happily. They have positive attitudes towards their work. Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility, for example as school councillors or digital leaders. Bullying is very rare, and staff resolve any disagreements quickly.

Visits to places of interest, such as the Thinktank museum in Birmingham, add to pupils' enjoyment and understanding of the curriculum. Pupils take part in a variety of after-school clubs.

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

Leaders have prioritised learning to read and the enjoyment of reading. They have provided a wide range of books, both fiction and non-fiction, taking good account of pupils' preferences. Children start their reading journey in the Nursery Year, and from Reception they follow a structured phonics programme. Teachers ensure that they learn about letters and sounds in a logical order. Staff use resources in a consistent way, and help all pupils to keep up. Books for pupils to read at home are well matched to their knowledge of phonics.

The school makes sure that children's activities in the early years are a sound preparation for their later studies. For example, during the inspection, children in the Nursery were learning some of the basic vocabulary of mathematics. In key stages 1 and 2, leaders have planned learning well in the different national curriculum subjects. They have identified clear milestones for what pupils of different ages should know.

Teachers are knowledgeable. They ensure that pupils' work builds on what they can already do. Teachers help pupils to fit new learning into their broader understanding of a particular subject. The attention to detail with which staff put the curriculum into practice reflects their ambition for all to do well. For example, during the inspection, all Year 2 pupils were wearing watches to help them learn to tell the time. In mixed-age classes, teachers take care that all pupils are taught the knowledge that leaders intend. Occasionally, teachers do not make sure that pupils' knowledge is entirely secure. This means that, at times, some pupils are not as well prepared for what comes next as they might be.

Starting in the early years, staff are skilled at assessing pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use their knowledge and training to help these pupils to learn effectively alongside their classmates.

Staff establish effective routines for pupils' behaviour from the start. In response, pupils behave responsibly. They show consideration for each other, and courtesy to adults. Pupils are keen to be helpful, and they are willing to take initiative. They concentrate well in lessons, and disruption to learning is very rare. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils make good use of the well-maintained site.

Leaders plan effectively for pupils' broader development. Pupils follow a planned programme of social and personal education. They learn about a range of traditions and cultures, for example through their reading and through the curriculum in art and music. Trips, for example to the centre of Birmingham, offer pupils new experiences. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to take responsibility. They can stand for election for roles such as playground friends, eco-warriors or librarians. Pupils take part in after-school clubs devoted to sports, creative activities or engineering.

Senior leaders and governors review how well pupils are learning in different subjects. To date, they have prioritised a number of academic subjects, while others have received less attention. In the longer term, leaders have plans to review learning in all subjects.

The headteacher's clear expectations and consistent implementation of agreed policies have been key drivers of the school's improvement. She has an accurate view of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. Staff believe that the school's leaders are considerate of their workload. Leaders communicate effectively with parents, so that they are well informed about how to support their children's education. The multi-academy trust (MAT) that runs the school has provided effective support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff are trained in safeguarding. Staff are vigilant, and able to identify pupils who may be at risk. They use an electronic system for record-keeping effectively. Leaders ensure additional support for those who need it. Pupils know who to turn to if they are worried, and this helps them feel safe. Parents value the care their children receive. Teachers make sure that pupils learn about the risks that they may face, including when using the internet.

Leaders make the necessary checks on the staff who join the school. The MAT provides effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers sometimes do not make sure that pupils have grasped all the necessary knowledge they need before moving on to the next topic or activity. In these circumstances, pupils do not remember everything they need to be in the best position for their future learning. Teachers should make every effort to ensure that pupils have learned and can recall the essential learning that they will need to make sense of what comes next.
- To date, when evaluating how effectively staff are implementing the curriculum, leaders have placed an emphasis on the core subjects, geography, history, and religious education. Other subjects have received less attention. As the capacity for subject leadership grows, senior leaders should extend their monitoring and evaluation to the whole curriculum, drawing on the strengths of other schools in the trust as appropriate.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St George's C of E Primary School, to be good in June 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.

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	145673
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10241473
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Will Finn
Headteacher	Rebecca Manning
Website	www.clunprimarieschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St George's C of E Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. There is considerable variation in the number of pupils in each year group.
- The school is a Church of England school within the Diocese of Hereford. The religious character of the school was last inspected in October 2016. 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.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Hereford MAT.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first onsite inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The 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 also held with curriculum leaders and advisers from the MAT.
- Directors of the MAT and representatives of local governance met with the lead inspector.
- The 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 suitability to work with children. He also considered the effectiveness of staff training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans to improve the school, and records of governance meetings. They also reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. An inspector met with parents at the start of the inspection. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, an inspector discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- An inspector listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mike Cladingbowl

Ofsted Inspector

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