

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Silkham Road, Oxted, Surrey RH8 0NP

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and joyful at St Mary's. The Christian core value of 'koinonia' knits everyone together. Leaders set a top-notch benchmark that pupils must rise to as only the very best is accepted. This starts with pupils' behaviour. Pupils see the good in everyone. Kindness is found everywhere, meaning that bullying does not occur. Pupils are safe and protected.

Every part of school life excites pupils. Leaders go out of their way to develop each child personally. Leaders remove barriers so no child misses out. Pupils excel in performing arts and sport. They eagerly sign up for enrichment clubs. The school's facilities in acres of land are used to harness pupils' talents and interests. This includes an elite running track, sports courts and a swimming pool. Rock climbing, skating and fencing are also on the curriculum. Pupils have endless enjoyment in the two impressive central libraries that are brimming with books.

Pupils' character is exemplary. They beam with pride when they demonstrate the noble qualities that leaders instil across the school. Pupils are 'challenged to contribute' in all they do. They love writing the 'chit-chat' newsletters and taking part in charity fundraising. Pupils are conscientious and work hard.

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

Leaders and governors are ambitious. They are resolute in giving pupils the best education. Staff sing the praises of how leaders prioritise professional development. Teachers at the start of their career are nurtured and well supported so they quickly learn how to help all pupils learn. Parents are equally happy. They are delighted with everything the school does for their children. Not only that, leaders help other schools to be even better.

Governors' astute thinking focuses on the actions of school leaders and their impact. They are highly knowledgeable and carry out their functions effectively. Governors work transparently. They make sure that there is value for money when challenging leaders' plans. The right checks and balances happen so governors can be assured these decisions benefit pupils' education.

Teachers' knowledge of reading is impressive. Leaders' investment in staff training and a rigorous phonics programme means pupils learn to read quickly. Staff are teaching phonics with increasing flair. Leaders use a consultant trainer highly effectively to bring consistency to staff's practice. Each day, there are 'fast track' additional sessions for pupils who need further support. These are well implemented, ensuring that pupils get exactly what they need. Furthermore, leaders make sure that pupils read the right books when learning their sounds. Leaders are tackling gaps from the COVID-19 pandemic in younger pupils' spelling and handwriting.

Pupils access a highly ambitious and well-thought-out curriculum. This starts off strongly in some of the early years areas of learning. Leaders are clear about how the learning in each subject develops through each year. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they study a wide range of content from heart dissection to Canadian artists. Leaders' curriculum thinking shows they consider which is the right knowledge to learn first and then after. However, as yet, this work has not been completed for all subjects. The knock-on effect is that pupils miss out on reaching the highest standards across the whole of the curriculum.

Teachers check pupils' understanding well. Their questions, quizzes and discussions inform them on what pupils remember. This aligns closely to what has been taught. Frequent recall questions really help pupils secure knowledge to memory. In the strongest subjects, teachers make the best use of lesson time. This ensures that pupils get the most knowledge practice. Equally, pupils are focused and kept busy, with no moments wasted.

Leaders ensure that the ambition for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is just as high as that for their classmates. Teachers smartly adapt resources and provide additional layers of support. Pupils have high esteem and complete the same work as their peers. Where pupils may struggle, teachers explain concepts in smaller steps to help pupils understand better. Excellent transition work with feeder nurseries ensures that any additional needs of Reception-aged children are quickly identified so they can get the help they need.

Well-oiled routines lay the foundations for pupils' excellent behaviour. When in lessons or in the dining hall, pupils model perfectly what to do. Leaders make sure that adults uphold the school's rules consistently well.

Pupils are taught to be compassionate and to support one another. Leaders source ways for pupils to shine in society. Pupils look beyond disability, race or religion. They accept others, they look to help those in need, and they show remarkable resilience.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety is prioritised by leaders. Perceptive adults know how to spot signs a child may need help. Leaders train staff comprehensively and have created a culture where adults report everything. Each adult's role in school contributes to keeping pupils safe. Record-keeping is highly detailed, with a clear timeline of events. This helps leaders to unpick practice and actions. Governors play an integral part in checking compliance and staff's understanding of what to do.

Pupils know how to stay safe online and when out and about. They know they can lean on any adult in a time of need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders' curriculum thinking is not precise enough around the component knowledge that all pupils must learn. This has an impact on how well pupils achieve the ambitious end points. Leaders need to adopt the same rigour they have with other subjects so that all content is broken down into appropriately sized steps.

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	125194
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10241510
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	644
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Susan Gibbin
Headteacher	Sarah Lewis
Website	www.stmarysprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 December 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Previously, St Mary's was a Church of England voluntary aided junior school. In 2018, the school amalgamated with a community infant school. It became a primary school with a Christian religious character. The school has a published admissions number of 60 in Reception and key stage 1. In key stage 2, the provision doubles in size to four-form entry.
- St Mary's is part of the Diocese of Southwark. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in 2016.
- The school is currently using one alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met five governors, including the chair. He also spoke with the director of school improvement from the local authority and the assistant director of education from the diocese.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, history and physical education. To do this, they met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Pupils across the school were observed reading to a familiar adult by the lead inspector.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to examine records and actions. This included sampling a range of safeguarding documentation. A team inspector reviewed checks on the safer recruitment of adults.
- Inspectors talked to pupils from different year groups about their learning and experiences at school.
- The views of staff, pupils and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school. This included leaders' self-evaluation and school development priorities, policies, curriculum documents, published information about pupils' performance, pupil premium strategy and minutes of governors' meetings.

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Linda Appleby	Ofsted Inspector
Sam French	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Martin-O'Donoghue	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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