

Inspection of a good school: St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Lodge Hill Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, West Midlands B29 6NU

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2022

Outcome

St Mary's Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their learning at St Mary's. Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning. Pupils know what teachers expect of them and work hard in lessons. Teachers make learning fun and exciting. Leaders are committed to bringing out the best in pupils so they can live 'life in all its fullness'. The well-planned curriculum and staff's high expectations help pupils to achieve well.

Pupils are polite, kind and respectful. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour successfully. Pupils behave well in lessons and their learning is rarely disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Staff deal well with the rare instances of bullying. Staff help to keep pupils safe in school. Pupils appreciate the way adults help them to keep safe.

Leaders encourage pupils to take part in a wide range of clubs. Leaders provide a range of musical opportunities for pupils. These include learning to play the ukulele or joining the string ensemble. Pupils enjoy singing in the school choirs.

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

Children get off to a good start to their education in Reception. They enjoy taking part in activities, including in the outdoor classroom. The skilled early years team supports children well. Children begin to learn the basics of reading as soon as they join the school. Teachers regularly read high-quality texts to the children, so children begin to develop a love of reading. Children are well prepared for the learning in Year 1.

Teaching pupils to read is a priority across the school. Teachers and other adults identify pupils who are falling behind in their reading. Extra support is then provided that helps those who have fallen behind to catch up. Leaders and staff promote a love of reading. During story time, staff bring books to life for pupils. These are times of the school day that pupils particularly look forward to. The effective teaching of reading enables pupils to become fluent and successful readers.

Leaders have constructed a high-quality curriculum with well-planned learning sequences set out clearly. Teachers know and understand the key knowledge pupils must learn. They check that pupils have remembered what they have learned before. This helps pupils to make links with new learning. When teachers identify gaps in learning, they plan activities to close these gaps. However, there is some inconsistency in how well teachers deliver the curriculum. This means that some pupils struggle to remember what they have been taught in some subjects.

Pupils behave well and are able to learn without interruption. Pupils understand the 'Sunshine Six' school values that are woven through the curriculum. However, the teaching of fundamental British values is not as well developed. This means that pupils do not have a clear enough understanding of values such as tolerance.

Leaders see the wider development of pupils as a vital part of school life at St Mary's. Pupils have opportunities to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Local projects, such as working with the Canal and River Trust, develop pupils' wider understanding of working in the community. Pupils enjoy displaying their high-quality artwork in the school art gallery.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified by skilled staff quickly. These pupils are then supported well by staff and through the work of outside agencies. The support helps pupils with SEND to achieve well and access the same curriculum as their peers.

Governors, school leaders and staff are ambitious for pupils to be successful. There is a clear strategic direction for improvement. Extra funding to support pupils has a positive impact on the success of different groups of pupils. Leaders and governors work well together with an appropriate level of professional challenge.

Staff workload has reduced. Staff speak about how carefully leaders consider their work-life balance. They appreciate the support they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a clear culture of safeguarding in school. Staff and governors are well trained in what they must do to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. Governors keep a close eye on safeguarding practices at school. Staff skilfully identify any pupils at risk. The learning mentor effectively supports families in need.

Leaders work well with a range of external agencies to provide children with any additional support needed. Safeguarding is woven through the curriculum so that pupils know what they should do to stay safe. All necessary checks are conducted before staff begin to work at the school. These are meticulously recorded.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not deliver the intended curriculum well enough. This means that some pupils cannot always remember the key knowledge they need to use in later lessons. Leaders should provide teachers with further support and training to ensure that they deliver the curriculum well in all subjects.
- The key knowledge about fundamental British values is not taught well enough within the curriculum. Therefore, pupils have a limited understanding of values such as tolerance. Leaders should review the curriculum and the teaching of fundamental British values to ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of them.

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 school to be good in January 2012.

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	103410
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10212438
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	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Down & Joanne Mason
Headteacher	Stuart Smith
Website	www.stmarys-sellyoak.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is now a two-form entry school.
- The last section 48 inspection of this school took place in May 2017. The school is not due to receive another Section 48 inspection until next academic year.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

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 has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers. The inspector met with six governors, including the co-chairs of the

governing body. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a school improvement partner who works with the school.

- The inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and a group of pupils with SEND. The inspector reviewed samples of their work.
- The inspector met with those responsible for safeguarding arrangements in the school. Training logs and records of actions taken to keep pupils safe were scrutinised. The inspector discussed arrangements for safeguarding with a wide range of staff to check the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff and pupils. The inspector also reviewed attendance records and behaviour logs.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, free-text comments and responses to both the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Declan McCauley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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