

Inspection of St Swithun's CofE Primary School

Grundy Crescent, Kennington, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX1 5PS

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong sense of community and togetherness in this friendly church school. Pupils feel secure, included, happy and well cared for. They have great trust and confidence in the adults around them, so positive relationships flourish.

Leaders expect all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve highly. This is reflected in the ambitious curriculum they have put in place. Leaders have thought carefully about what is important for children to experience in the early years, and how this learning is built on over the coming years. This means all pupils are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

The idea that everyone should be included at this school is shared by both staff and pupils. Occasionally, when pupils need extra support to learn to manage their behaviour, leaders make sure they get it. Pupils are very clear that no one here tolerates bullying. This means that everyone is able to concentrate on learning, and behaviour is calm and settled.

Assemblies provide pupils with enjoyable and memorable opportunities to perform. This could be playing a musical instrument or getting into costume to bring a Bible story to life.

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

Children get off to a very strong start in the early years. In the nursery and through into Reception year, they are provided with well-planned activities which invite them into play and learning. The skilled adults seize every opportunity to promote learning and develop children's curiosity. They patiently teach children how to share and take turns. This helps children to cooperate on problem-solving or creative tasks, such as the new 'woodwork workshop'. Adults sensitively provide appropriate additional support for those children who need it both to overcome barriers to learning and to extend opportunities where children show they have a talent.

Building on these foundations, leaders have put in place a clearly organised curriculum. Detailed plans across all subject areas are well ordered. They clearly outline the key knowledge that pupils need to know. Subject leaders have had some training to develop their expertise. They are passionate about what they aspire for all pupils to achieve. In the foundation subjects, however, there is not yet a clear process in place for teachers to check which parts of the curriculum pupils have learned and remembered. This means that some gaps in learning may go unnoticed.

Staff are equally ambitious for pupils with SEND to achieve highly. Identification of any additional needs is prioritised, and leaders collaborate with specialists and families to put appropriate provision in place. Pupil profile plans detail the additional strategies some pupils need so that staff can support their success.

Leaders make sure reading is a priority. The teaching of phonics is a strength, and this starts from the beginning of Reception. Top quality daily teaching helps pupils to learn their sounds and read new words. They practise their reading in books that match the sounds they know. The staff are well trained and knowledgeable, so they quickly notice if pupils need extra help at any stage. These pupils get targeted expert support so that they learn to read. Leaders aspire for all pupils to develop a love of reading.

Pupils appreciate the school trips and residential which help them to grow their independence. Opportunities to apply to take on a responsibility, such as school councillor or sports leader, are held in high esteem by the pupils. They enjoy assemblies when they learn about the different religions of their friends in the school. Leaders have created an environment which has nurtured pupils' inquisitiveness and interest about the diverse wider world. Leaders know they need to build on this curiosity and embed even more richer opportunities for pupils to engage with views and beliefs that are different from their own.

Behaviour around school is generally calm, and there is an atmosphere of purposeful focus in lessons. The respectful culture established in school means that pupils listen to adults and are considerate of their classmates. Pupils are taught about how to build positive friendships. This means that it is unusual for pupils to fall out or have friendships issues. If this happens, pupils trust adults to resolve things kindly and quickly.

Staff are proud to work here. There is a great team spirit, and they feel valued by leaders. Governors have a strong understanding of their roles. They know the school well. Governors share leaders' dedication to high expectations, and they work together effectively on school priorities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, staff and governors take safeguarding seriously. Records are detailed and accurate, and demonstrate close working with other agencies when this is needed.

Pupils learn through the curriculum about how to stay safe. Well-trained staff recognise when a child may be at risk from harm or may be vulnerable. When urgent help is needed, leaders are swift to put support in place within school. Complex situations are handled with sensitivity and depth of care for the pupils and families involved.

Leaders have effective systems to support the safe recruitment of staff. They complete methodical checks on potential employees.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment in the foundation subjects is not consistently in place. As a result, teachers and subject leaders do not always know how secure pupils are in their knowledge acquisition. Leaders now need to monitor the effectiveness of assessments across all subjects to ensure that pupils embed knowledge and use it fluently.
- Pupils' depth of knowledge and understanding about different religions and ways of life could be further developed. Leaders now need to weave enhanced experiences throughout the curriculum, so that pupils have even more opportunities to considerably question and debate at a deeper level, and engage with beliefs and ways of life that are different from their own.

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	123177
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10227022
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Claire Gilbert and Clare Nurton (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Caroline Knighton
Website	www.stswithunsprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2017

Information about this school

- St Swithun's Church of England Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Oxfordshire. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in 2016.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead, other senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the co-chairs of the local governing body. Inspectors also spoke with a representative from the local authority and from the diocese.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and outside during social times.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records, speaking to staff and governors, and discussing this with pupils.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including school improvement documentation and governing body minutes.

Inspection team

Jo Petch, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Katherine Russell	Ofsted Inspector
Mandy Watts	Ofsted Inspector

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