

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Cundy Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S6 2WJ

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is an inclusive and welcoming school. Staff help pupils to feel safe and nurtured. The religious ethos sits at the heart of everything the school does. Pupils develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues in the wider world. Staff make sure that pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are supported well. Pupils enjoy enrichment activities, such as the 'READY breakfast' and Young Voices.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exceptional. Pupils appreciate and celebrate the diverse nature of the school community. Older pupils take care of younger pupils. Pupils show high levels of respect towards each other and to their teachers. They say that when incidents of poor behaviour do occur, adults sort them out fairly. Bullying is not tolerated. It happens rarely. Pupils know that they can talk to trusted adults if they are worried.

The school's mission permeates the ambitious curriculum. Leaders focus on pupils achieving 'excellence through faith and learning'. Pupils are proud of their school. They relish singing in collective worship. They value the opportunities to hold positions of responsibility.

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

Leaders are developing and improving the curriculum. The content of the curriculum for most subjects is coherently sequenced. In subjects such as music, mathematics and history, leaders identify the key knowledge that pupils need to know, from the early years to Year 6. Some curriculum subjects are not as well developed.

Where curriculum subjects have been well thought through, pupils learn well. Teachers are clear how pupils' knowledge develops over time. Teachers plan for pupils to revisit their learning so that they do not forget it. For example, in the early years, children can apply their mathematical knowledge to play games about shape. In history, key stage 2 pupils enjoy taking part in weekly quizzes. Excited pupils told inspectors that the quizzes help knowledge about ancient Egyptians to 'stick to their brains'.

Teachers provide suitable support for pupils with SEND and for pupils who speak English as an additional language. They adapt learning. They provide extra resources and adult support when needed. They make sure that pupils can access the curriculum and take an active part in school life.

Reading is a high priority. Phonics begins as soon as children start school. Children in the early years develop their communication and language skills from the Nursery Year. Pupils enjoy reading. They read often. They speak with enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors. They enjoy borrowing books from the school's library

to read with their family at home. They listen with awe as their teachers read texts to them.

Pupils who need help to keep up with reading receive extra phonics and reading sessions. Pupils learn to read with confidence and increasing comprehension. Yet, a small number of pupils in the early stages of reading read from books that are not accurately matched to the sounds they know. They do not have sufficient opportunity to practise their phonics to develop fluency.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development begins in the early years. It is designed to meet the needs of pupils. It supports pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Topics of learning prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Leaders promote the importance of good mental and physical health. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and sex education. They enjoy learning about the many different faiths and cultures that enrich the school community. They learn the importance of respect for those with protected characteristics. They begin to understand responsibility through their roles as play leaders and members of the junior leadership team. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. They are active fundraisers for local, national and international charities. They enjoy writing to their pen pals in Germany and Spain.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They work with trustees to provide leaders with appropriate challenge and support. Trust leaders maintain sharp oversight of leaders' work to improve the school. For example, they ensured that recent changes to senior leadership were positive and managed to good effect.

Leaders pay careful attention to the well-being and workload of staff. Staff, including those new to the school, appreciate the help they receive, including to improve their practice.

Most parents and carers think very highly of the school. Typically, they feel that teachers view their children 'as part of the family'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding children is at the core of the school's ethos. Leaders prioritise the care and safety of pupils. Staff are confident with safeguarding procedures. They are alert to the signs that could point to a child being at risk. Leaders keep staff informed about the welfare of pupils in their care. The curriculum supports pupils to understand the ways in which they can keep themselves safe. They know how to report concerns to a trusted adult. Leaders act promptly to respond to concerns raised by staff or pupils. They work closely with external agencies to get families the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of pupils do not read books that accurately match their phonics knowledge. They do not develop as fluent, confident readers as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers provide pupils with books that accurately match the sounds they know.
- Not all subjects in the curriculum are equally well planned or led. This means that pupils do not develop their knowledge and skills as well in some subjects as they do in others. Leaders should provide subject leaders with the training, time and support needed to ensure that the curriculum is of a consistently high quality across all subjects.

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	140341
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10241563
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Huw Thomas
Headteacher	Maureen Andrews (Executive Headteacher) Karen Miller (Head of School)
Website	www.st-marys.sheffield.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the leadership of the school. A new head of school and executive headteacher have been appointed. There is a new chair of the board of governors.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The school does not make use of any alternative education providers.

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 held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the assistant headteachers, the school business manager and several subject leaders.

They met with members of staff and some pupils. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and three other governors.

- The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer and the deputy chief executive officer from the Diocese of Sheffield Academies Trusts.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, history and science. Inspectors looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, including music, geography and personal, social, health and economic education. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to members of staff.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders and staff about the school's approach to safeguarding pupils in school. Inspectors checked the single central record and reviewed records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding. Checks were made on staff training and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Martindale	Ofsted Inspector

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