

Inspection of St Alphege Church of England Junior School

Widney Manor Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 3JG

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending school. They form good relationships with each other and with the caring staff. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They enjoy much of their education and the wide range of clubs and other opportunities that leaders provide.

Since January 2023, a new interim headteacher has been in place. New leaders have, in a very short space of time, begun to address weaknesses at the school. Leaders have recently improved systems and procedures to help keep pupils safe. However previously, leaders had not maintained clear and precise safeguarding records. As a result, actions to address concerns about pupils' safety were not always followed up in a timely manner.

Pupils are polite and behave well, both inside and outside of the classroom. Pupils play nicely together at breaktimes and enjoy using the well-equipped playground and school grounds. Leaders respond to any concerns about bullying swiftly. Pupils told inspectors that there is always an adult they can go to if they are ever worried about something.

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

The newly appointed interim headteacher has worked in close partnership with the deputy headteacher to stabilise the school. She has started to get things back on course and has begun to address the weaknesses that exist within subject leadership and safeguarding. Nevertheless, there is still more to do so that pupils benefit from a consistently good-quality education.

Subject leaders have not received suitable training or support to equip them with the skills to find out how well pupils are getting on in the subjects they lead. As a result, they do not have a secure overview of their subjects. Plans to address this issue are in their infancy. The school's curriculum broadly matches the ambition of the national curriculum. However, the extent to which the curriculum is developed varies across subjects.

Assessment within some subjects, including history and physical education, is still being developed. Some teachers do not consistently use what they know about how well pupils are achieving to plan new learning accurately. As a result, they do not provide pupils with work that enables them to build on their prior learning.

Teachers help pupils to systematically improve their reading. Pupils read daily and there is a clear, structured teaching programme to help pupils who have fallen behind in reading to catch up quickly. Consequently, most pupils leave school being able to read accurately and fluently.

Leaders have ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified. They and other vulnerable pupils benefit from well-trained staff who address these needs carefully. Classrooms are inclusive. Pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers, accessing the same curriculum as everyone else.

Leaders' offer to broaden pupils' personal development is a strength. Pupils learn about being respectful of differences. They understand their school ethos stems from Christian values. However, they know that other religions and cultures have similar ideals, and this unites them. Leaders ensure that all pupils have fair and equal access to the after-school provision. Clubs ranging from football and dance to French and Spanish are well attended and appreciated by parents and carers. Leaders ensure that there is a strong focus on pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils value this provision as they know they can talk to someone if they are worried.

Governors are committed to the school and its pupils. They are regular visitors to the school and take an active interest in its work. However, they have not identified or challenged leaders about lapses in safeguarding processes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive appropriate training and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They remain vigilant and report any concerns about pupils' safety without delay. However, until recently, leaders did not maintain clear and comprehensive safeguarding records. Safeguarding incidents had not always been followed up with suitable, timely actions. Recent improvements in safeguarding systems have addressed these concerns.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. There is a well-planned programme of activities in place. These include keeping safe in the locality and how to use the internet safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Until recently, the school's procedures for sharing and recording information about safeguarding were not robust. Senior leaders did not have a clear oversight of safeguarding concerns. Consequently, leaders had not always assured themselves that pupils at potential risk were receiving the right support. Leaders, including governors, must ensure that rigorous systems to keep pupils safe are fully embedded.
- Some subject leaders do not effectively monitor, lead and develop their subjects well. As a result, the curriculum in these subjects is not as ambitious as it should be. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders have the skills and knowledge

they need to fulfil their roles, so that all subjects have a coherently planned and effectively implemented curriculum in place.

- Some staff do not use assessment effectively. In some foundation subjects, leaders do not know how well pupils are achieving. Leaders should ensure that assessments are effective in identifying how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum.

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	104092
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10240698
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided school
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pam Price
Headteacher	Ruth Worswick (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.stalphege.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation of two schools. The other school is St Alphege CE Infant School and Nursery.
- The school has had significant change in its leadership team since the last inspection in 2017. A new interim headteacher was appointed in January 2023. A substantive headteacher has been appointed and will start April 2023. A new deputy headteacher took up post in 2021.
- A breakfast club and after-school club operate on the school site. They are managed by an independent provider.
- The date of the school's most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) was 22 June 2018. The school was graded as outstanding. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the last one.

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 spoke to the senior leadership team and subject leaders. The lead inspector also spoke to members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, physical education, history and religious education. They spoke to staff, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with pupils about their learning. Inspectors listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during social times and spoke with some pupils.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation, including a variety of school policies, individual risk assessments for pupils and information about pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- The lead inspector met with the safeguarding leader to examine safeguarding records, the school's system for recruiting staff and the school's single central record of recruitment checks. Inspectors also spoke with governors, staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the parent free-text comments and the responses on Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Max Vlahakis, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Snooks	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Turner	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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