

Inspection of Shenfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Hall Lane, Shenfield, Brentwood, Essex CM15 9AL

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

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

Ofsted has not previously inspected Shenfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as Shenfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School as a result of conversion to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where every pupil has the chance to shine. Pupils flourish in every aspect of their intellectual, social and physical development. Staff are caring. Pupils are helped to overcome any barriers to learning they may have. They go on to view themselves as successful learners who can make a positive difference in the world. Pupils are happy and confident. Bullying is rare. Pupils are, and feel, safe. If pupils have a worry, they know that they can go to an adult who will sort things out.

Pupils are eager to learn. They take pride in their work and participate in fruitful discussion. Pupils' knowledge and skills build over time with the result that they can create unique artwork and write in detail. Lessons are exciting. Pupils, supported by their teachers, channel their energy into listening and working hard.

Pupils learn that it is good to be unique. They understand the school values of respect, forgiveness, trust, responsibility, thankfulness, justice and humility. They bring these values to life with kind words and deeds, such as through looking after younger pupils and participating in charitable events. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities provided for them to perform, play sport and learn from visitors.

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

The detailed curriculum is the product of many years of careful creation and adaptation. Skilful teaching ensures that pupils understand what is being taught. Teachers choose and design tasks that help pupils to remember. Leaders have made sure that there is a wide range of trips and visits to augment the curriculum. These provide memorable learning experiences for pupils. As a result of this approach, pupils learn a broad and interconnected 'web' of knowledge.

Teachers regularly check on pupils' learning. They use the information they gain from this to adapt lessons and provide very well-judged support for pupils. These checks also help pupils to realise that their achievements are the result of effort and determination. This boosts their confidence and motivation. Teachers provide opportunities for all pupils to use their knowledge to investigate and solve problems. There are no limits on what pupils can aspire to.

Leaders have taken decisive and effective steps to improve the early reading curriculum. Phonics lessons are much more rigorous than they were in the past. Pupils achieve well. Teachers quickly identify pupils who need to catch up. Teachers provide bespoke teaching and extra practice for these pupils. Pupils practise with books that match the phonics they have learned. Older pupils read a range of interesting books. They use what they have learned about characters, settings and vocabulary in their writing.

Children in Reception Year make a flying start in their mathematics, phonics and understanding of the world. Staff know the children well. They help children to learn new routines, make friends and communicate needs. Staff encourage children to

'have a go' at new things. They make sure that all children practise important skills that will help them in the future. Children are successful in their endeavours and more than ready for Year 1 when the time comes.

Leaders are knowledgeable about special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They use this knowledge to identify training opportunities for staff and to provide guidance to staff on how best to support pupils with SEND in the classroom. Teachers carefully adapt tasks, ensuring that pupils with SEND can access the full curriculum and achieve well. Staff know and support the talents and interests of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND flourish.

Staff teach pupils how to be kind and care for one another. Pupils often go out of their way to support each other. Teachers have high expectations, and there is no low-level disruption during lessons. This is because all pupils are taught how to focus and how to take pride in what they do. Leaders also involve pupils in the orderly running of the school. Pupils take on responsibilities at breaktimes and in assemblies. As a result, pupils are respectful, and the school is a calm place to be.

Pupils learn a great deal about British democracy and the way that society works. They understand and appreciate different cultures and religions. From a very young age, pupils are encouraged to reflect on many aspects of their own and others' lives.

Leaders, including governors and trustees, have created an environment in which every member of staff feels appreciated. Leaders take steps to reduce workload where possible and look for ways to grow staff's confidence and expertise. Leaders embrace parents' and carers' aspirations for their children and regularly communicate information about what goes on in school. Leaders have diligently worked together to bring their vision to 'Unlock every child's potential as a unique child of God' to fruition.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant and knowledgeable about the signs of harm. If they have a concern, they report it quickly. Leaders are swift to respond to concerns. They aptly secure additional support from external agencies. Leaders' checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are thorough. Pupils know what to do and whom to go to if they have a worry. They learn how to keep safe, including when online.

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	139763
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10242255
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Barton
Headteacher	Sally Taggart
Website	www.shenfieldstmarys.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is required to be inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The most recent section 48 inspection of this school was in December 2017. The school was rated outstanding. The next inspection will be within eight school years.

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, the deputy headteacher, and members of the governing body and the board of trustees.

- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with the school's improvement adviser and a representative of the Diocese of Chelmsford.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in art, early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans and sampled pupils' work in some other subjects.
- To inspect the safeguarding arrangements at the school, inspectors spoke with leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector spoke with governors and trustees responsible for safeguarding. The lead inspector also reviewed the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and records of safeguarding concerns.
- The lead inspector considered responses made by 273 parents to Ofsted Parent View, including 124 free-text comments. The lead inspector also considered responses made by 42 members of staff to Ofsted's staff survey. Inspectors also spoke with pupil groups and met with teachers and support staff.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
David Piercy	Ofsted Inspector

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