

Inspection of a good school: St Andrew's CofE Primary School

Sand Street, Soham, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 5AA

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

Outcome

St Andrew's CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Andrew's are enthusiastic, confident and determined. They are happy in a nurturing, supportive environment. Pupils display a readiness and eagerness to learn. In most subjects, pupils learn well and are able to describe their learning in detail. Pupils are proud of their achievements and their school.

Pupils know that staff have high expectations of how they should behave. Pupils learn from adults how to be well mannered and kind. Most pupils respond to these expectations and behave well in lessons. Pupils are respectful of each other and adults.

Pupils know what bullying is and recognise it rarely happens. Pupils trust staff and are confident that staff will resolve issues. Pupils look out for and care for each other. This helps them to be safe in school.

Pupils have access to a wide range of experiences to enrich their learning. Older pupils shine when they have the chance to get involved in leadership roles, such as by helping escort younger pupils to the local church. The 'Active Crew' plan and deliver a range of lunchtime events. These include organising sporting activities or leading group dance sessions. Younger pupils enjoy these activities and see the older pupils as role models.

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

Leaders prioritise reading. Leaders have ensured that all teachers are trained in the adopted phonics programme. Teachers deliver the programme with consistency. In Nursery, children learn to recognise sounds, syllables and rhyme. In Reception, children begin to sequentially learn the sounds that letters make. Pupils in Key Stage 1 progress through more complex combinations of letters and sounds. Pupils use their phonics knowledge when they encounter an unknown word.

Leaders are quick to identify pupils who may be falling behind. They ensure pupils receive support to help them keep up. Most are becoming confident and fluent readers. Pupils enjoy their class novels and the opportunities to explore stories. They can explain, in detail, plots, characters and the emotions created by events.

Leaders of the early years have worked with subject leaders to plan a curriculum that runs from Nursery to Year 6. Staff expertly weave knowledge and vocabulary with children's interests, helping children learn. Children are well prepared for Key Stage 1. Teachers in Year 1 use their understanding of what pupils have learned in the early years to help pupils build on existing knowledge.

In most subjects, leaders have consistently embedded the curriculum aims and delivery across the school. Pupils can describe what they have learned in detail, linking knowledge from different subjects together. In a few subjects, pupils know they have learned something, but they cannot explain what they have learned. Their knowledge is not secure, and they mix up different bits of information.

Teachers provide clear models that set out how pupils should complete an activity. They use assessment strategies to check that pupils understand, spotting and fixing misconceptions quickly. Consequently, pupils successfully complete tasks.

Staff have high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders involve teachers, pupils, parents and appropriate specialists to identify how to help pupils. Adaptations made by teachers to structure learning help pupils progress in line with their peers. Some pupils access learning in 'The Cam'. They learn and develop new skills in an environment that matches their individual developmental stages. Leaders ensure that these pupils engage in the full life of the school. They play with their classmates and they have access to the full extracurricular offer. These pupils learn in some lessons, such as art and physical education, with the rest of the class.

Teachers manage behaviour consistently and fairly. Pupils are generally respectful and talk kindly to each other. Bullying is rare, but when it happens, leaders deal with it in a timely fashion. Despite leaders' work, some pupils miss too much time in school. They miss elements of the curriculum which leads to gaps in their knowledge.

Pupils enjoy a range of experiences that enrich their understanding. For example, as part of science week, the Royal Ordnance Corps were demonstrating to pupils how they use robots. Pupils have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, creative arts and engineering, which nurture pupils' talents and interests. The 'Young Voices' group, where pupils learn to sing and prepare to perform at a large venue, is extremely popular.

Staff value the training that is offered by the school. The trust's subject communities support staff to develop their subject specific knowledge. Leaders are approachable and listen to concerns. Staff value the consideration that leaders, governors and trustees give, to how initiatives impact on workload. Staff are highly motivated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders oversee robust and effective training and reporting systems. Staff rapidly identify and report concerns to leaders. Leaders take action on these reports appropriately. Leaders proactively engage with families and appropriate external agencies. The trust and local governing body monitor leaders' and staff's work in this area diligently. There are suitable checks for adults working or volunteering in the school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils learn how to stay safe online through their computing curriculum and events, such as online safety day. All pupils know they can speak to a trusted adult if they need help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The intent and implementation of some curriculum areas is not as embedded as others. In these subjects, pupils' knowledge is not as secure as it is in other areas. Pupils are not able to explain what they have learned. They confuse bits of knowledge and build misconceptions. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers understand the aims of all curriculum areas and teach them consistently well.
- Too many pupils miss too many sessions in school. The result of this is that gaps appear in pupils' knowledge. These pupils fall behind their peers. Pupils who are absent are not able to consistently achieve the aims of the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and have access to the full curriculum offer.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good on 11 and 12 October 2017.

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	141552
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10268431
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	462
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Younger
Headteacher	Elizabeth Henderson
Website	www.st-andrews-pri.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up the role in September 2021, having previously been the deputy headteacher.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust.
- The school has a religious character, Church of England, and was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 on 19 September 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- There is childcare provision available on the school site. This is run by a separately registered and inspected childcare provider.
- The school does not use any 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 held a meeting with leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher, early years leader, special educational needs coordinator, the chair of the local governing body, and the chief executive and representatives from the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To further inspect the curriculum, the inspector reviewed curriculum documentation for history, computing, religious education and social and health education, as well as scrutinising pupils' workbooks from across the curriculum. He reviewed documentation setting out support for pupils with SEND.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to review safeguarding records and the office manager to scrutinise the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. To further evaluate safeguarding, the inspector also spoke to governors, staff, pupils and parents, and reviewed surveys.
- To gather pupils' views, the inspector spent time observing and speaking to pupils.
- To gather parents' views, the inspector reviewed the 96 responses and 48 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- To gather staff's views, the inspector spoke to several staff and reviewed the 49 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Dave Gibson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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