

Inspection of St Alphege Church of England Infant and Nursery School

New Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 3DW

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this warm and welcoming school. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils are confident and want to learn. They enjoy lessons because staff are enthusiastic and kind. Staff do not tolerate bullying and deal with it effectively. This helps pupils to feel safe and secure.

Current leaders know that their high expectations for pupils are not being met. Pupils achieve well, but leaders recognise that they could achieve even more. Until very recently, leaders have not fully supported teachers to enable them to deliver the curriculum consistently well.

Pupils behave well at play times. They are friendly and caring towards each other. They know they can get certificates for being kind. Occasionally, some pupils are not respectful to others. They talk over their friends or adults. Pupils are tolerant of their peers who may find it harder to manage their emotions.

Pupils regularly visit the local church and learn about other world faiths. They can attend clubs such as martial arts, football, French and Spanish. These help them to develop wider interests and talents. Sometimes, pupils help staff with jobs by showing parents around the school or taking messages. These opportunities help pupils to develop a sense of responsibility.

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

Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, this ambition does not translate well into consistent practice in all subjects or in all year groups. Current leaders have identified the next steps to move the school further forward and have acted swiftly to make many recent improvements.

The curriculum is well organised and identifies the information that pupils need to know. For example, in science, leaders ensure that pupils build their knowledge from Nursery to Year 2. Children watch how cress grows in Nursery. In Reception, children then grow their own plants from seed. Older pupils learn to name the function of each part of a plant. However, until very recently, leaders have not checked that teachers are delivering the curriculum as intended. As a result, pupils are not learning as much as they should.

Children are happy and behave well in early years. They enjoy their learning. However, staff are not always clear about what children should be learning, and some activities lack a clear focus. For example, staff give Reception pupils play dough for a mathematics activity but do not guide the children about what to do with it. This results in children making things such as pretend bowls of porridge rather than developing their understanding of number.

Leaders understand the range of special educational needs across the school. They have developed a range of early identification techniques to ensure that any gaps are identified quickly, and support is put in place. Pupils with significant needs receive effective support, so they achieve well.

Reading is a priority. Classrooms have reading corners, and pupils read regularly. They enjoy listening to teachers reading to them. Teachers use assessment well in reading. This ensures that pupils are reading books that match the sounds they know. There is some inconsistency in the teaching of phonics. Some adults are not pronouncing sounds accurately. This means that some pupils do not learn the correct sounds. As a result, some pupils with gaps in their learning are not catching up as quickly as they should.

Pupils are keen to learn. They are inquisitive and ask lots of questions. However, some teachers do not use assessment well enough to identify what pupils know and remember. As a result, they do not adapt their teaching well enough. This means that some pupils, particularly those who are achieving highly, are not successfully building on their prior learning.

Pupils benefit from a range of wider opportunities that enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about experimenting with slime during science week. They enjoy visiting synagogues, which enables them to see how people of different faiths worship. Staff encourage pupils to respect difference through the school's values. Pupils also understand how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy. While there is a range of activities and events, these are not planned in a coherent way. As a result, leaders cannot track how pupils are building on previous experiences in order to develop and build their character.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They care about the pupils and each other. They recognise that there have been positive improvements recently. They say that leaders are considerate and that the staff team works well together.

Most parents are positive about the school. They recognise recent improvements and say the teachers 'are great'. However, in the past, leaders have not always engaged with parents and carers effectively. Some parents feel that they do not receive enough information about how well their children are doing. They would like communication between home and school to be more effective.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Current leaders ensure that adults receive extensive safeguarding training. Staff know pupils well. They are alert to any changes that might indicate that pupils need help or support and report concerns swiftly.

There are clear safeguarding processes and procedures in place. Leaders respond swiftly and appropriately when staff raise concerns. Leaders make effective use of external agencies to provide help where it is needed. Governors and leaders ensure that staff carry out required checks on people who are working at the school.

Pupils learn about staying safe. They know who to talk to if they have a worry or a concern.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Until recently, leaders have not checked how well the curriculum is being delivered. Therefore, they do not have all the information they need to provide teachers with appropriate support to develop their practice and subject knowledge. As a result, there is considerable variability in how well the curriculum is delivered, including in early years. Leaders should monitor how the curriculum is delivered across the school and provide teachers with support and training to improve their curriculum delivery and subject knowledge.
- Leaders have not ensured that the phonics curriculum is delivered consistently by all staff. This means that some pupils are not making the progress they should in reading. Leaders should ensure that all staff are trained and supported to teach phonics well.
- Some parents feel that communication between home and school is not as effective as it could be. Some parents do not feel fully informed about how well their child is doing at school. Leaders should ensure that they engage with parents, share information with parents and improve communication between home and school.
- The curriculum for pupils' personal development is not planned in a coherent and organised way. Pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be. Leaders need to ensure that wider opportunities and enrichment activities are planned to support pupils' personal development more effectively.

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	104090
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10256876
Type of school	Infant and Nursery
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	263
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pam Price
Interim Executive Headteacher	Ruth Worswick
Website	www.stalphege.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	May 2009

Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation of two schools. The other school is St Alphege Church of England Junior School. The executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) work across both schools.
- The school has had significant change in its leadership team recently. A new interim executive headteacher was appointed in January 2023. A substantive headteacher has been appointed and will start in April 2023. A new deputy headteacher took up post in 2021.
- The date of the school's most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) was February 2020. The next section 48 inspection will be within the prescribed period.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with the interim executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders and the SENCo. The lead inspector met representatives of the governing body and spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with the leaders responsible for the early years, pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, behaviour and personal development.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including improvement plans and records of governance. Inspectors also looked at a range of documentation on the school's website.
- The lead inspector met with the designated leader for safeguarding to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- The inspector spoke with groups of staff and took account of views shared through the staff survey.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the pupils' survey. The inspector spoke informally with parents on arrival to school.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 read to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Corinne Biddell, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Price

Ofsted Inspector

Sue Parker

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023