

Inspection of St. Marys CofE Primary School

St Mary's CofE Primary Academy, High Street, Burton Latimer, Kettering,
Northamptonshire NN15 5RL

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

St. Mary's is a welcoming and inclusive school, where there are caring relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are happy and feel safe in school. Leaders have secured a calm learning environment.

Bullying is rare at this school. Pupils have confidence that, if it did happen, staff would resolve it quickly. Pupils know the trusted adults they can speak to in school if they have a worry, as well as their peers who are 'kindness ambassadors'.

Staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well and concentrate conscientiously on their learning. Pupils enjoy lessons and pay close attention in class. The learning environment in Reception is purposeful and inviting. It is a place where children thrive. Staff teach children to regulate their emotions and take turns. As a result, children quickly settle into school routines.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They value the opportunity to visit the school on 'Walk in Wednesdays', where they can learn about different areas of the curriculum and see it in action. One comment, typical of many, was: 'There is a culture of positive encouragement in the school and a good environment for children to feel comfortable and thrive in.'

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

Leaders have undertaken considerable work to develop the curriculum. In most subjects, leaders have made sure that they have identified the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. However, in a very small number of subjects, leaders' curriculum design is at an earlier stage. The key knowledge that pupils should learn is less precise. In these areas of the curriculum, teachers are still refining the precise knowledge pupils need to learn and how they undertake the assessment of this knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not learn all that they could in these subjects.

Lessons have a consistent structure, so pupils always know what their teachers require of them. Pupils are keen to offer their ideas and suggestions and respect each other's contributions. Teachers frequently model and explain concepts clearly. Pupils have access to resources to support their thinking. However, very occasionally, teachers do not set the most appropriate classroom activities that will help pupils learn the most important knowledge. Consequently, pupils are not learning as much as they could.

Leaders have ensured that there is a structured approach to reading across the school. They have trained staff to deliver the programme well. Daily phonics sessions help children in early years to learn their sounds quickly. They learn to read and spell words confidently and quickly become fluent readers. Where pupils need extra support in reading, leaders make sure they get additional help to keep up.

Pupils enjoy reading and the stories that their teachers read to them. They read regularly at home and in school.

Pupils' well-being and their personal development are supported well through both the taught curriculum and a range of additional opportunities afforded to them. They learn about a range of faiths and show tolerance and respect for people's differences. Leaders have ensured that there is a school-wide focus on the school's values, such as kindness, perseverance, forgiveness and justice. Pupils can take on responsibilities, such as 'kindness ambassadors', librarians, 'values leaders', or being a member of the school council. Pupils learn the importance of mental well-being. They benefit from accessing a wide range of clubs, and they make good use of these. Pupils enjoy the trips they attend. Leaders ensure that these support the curriculum, such as visits to Warwick Castle, the Living Rainforest, and a museum to look at early human life. Pupils take part in sporting events, and staff ensure that participation is inclusive.

Staff take great care to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Systems to identify, assess and meet the needs of these pupils are clear. Planning for individual pupils is precise. Leaders check that the provision for all pupils with SEND is effective.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders, including trust leaders, know the school well. They have brought in lots of positive changes and work closely together to continually strengthen and improve the school. Leaders are determined that all pupils, particularly pupils with SEND or those who are disadvantaged, should be happy and successful in school.

Staff are happy at this school. They work well as a team and support each other well. Staff appreciate the training that leaders organise for them and the training and developmental opportunities that the multi-academy trust provides for them. Leaders ensure that the workload of teachers is manageable, and they are mindful of the well-being of staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and refer all concerns about pupils to leaders. Leaders work tenaciously to provide support for the most vulnerable pupils and ensure that they receive this as quickly as possible. Leaders work well with other agencies to support families.

Pupils feel safe in school. They learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Leaders ensure that pupils can communicate any worries or concerns that they have to staff, including children who are non-verbal.

Leaders carry out all the necessary pre-employment checks on staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is some variation in the implementation of the planned curriculum. This means there are occasions when teachers do not always choose the most appropriate approach for delivering lesson content or helping pupils to remember and build on the specific knowledge being taught. As a result, pupils' learning is not consistently secured. Leaders must ensure that they provide clear support and guidance to all staff so that the curriculum is implemented consistently well.
- Leaders' curriculum planning in a few subjects is still in development. In these subjects, leaders have not yet clearly identified all the important knowledge pupils need to learn and that teachers therefore need to assess. Leaders should ensure that, once developed, their new curriculum plans are implemented effectively and that teachers assess the precise subject knowledge in the curriculum that they want pupils to remember and use 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	146566
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10254751
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	291
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Holman
Headteacher	Erica Holt
Website	www.stmaryscebl.info
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Peterborough. The most recent section 48 inspection of this Church of England school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place on 4 December 2019. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school became part of the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust in October 2018. When the predecessor school, St. Mary's CofE Primary Academy, Burton Latimer, was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2017, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- Leaders do not currently make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- Trustees operate a breakfast club and after-school 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, English, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to some pupils about their learning.
- To further look at the curriculum, inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum plans in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record of pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors met with pupils from all year groups to gather their views about the school.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils during informal times, including break and lunchtime. An inspector also visited breakfast club.
- Inspectors met with support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and trust representatives.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of governance and documentation relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour. Inspectors also reviewed documents available on the school's website.
- The inspector took account of responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the pupil survey and the staff survey. Inspectors spoke informally with parents at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Anne Maingay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

John Craig

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