

# Inspection of a good school: Wakefield St Marys CE (VA) Primary School

Charles Street, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 4PE

---

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

## **Outcome**

Wakefield St Marys Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils flourish in this happy, caring and harmonious school. Pupils are friendly and keen to talk about what they like about the school. One pupil said that they liked that all pupils could express themselves; others described their school as unique. Older pupils reflected maturely on the diverse community that the school serves.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They engage in their lessons enthusiastically. At social times, there is a lovely atmosphere, as pupils interact well with one another. Bullying is a rare event, but pupils are confident that staff will deal with it promptly should it occur. A group of Year 5 pupils have been trained as mental health ambassadors. They are available to cheer up their peers, knowing to pass on to staff if anyone has a problem. They are very proud of their role and of their special uniform. Members of the school parliament are working hard to make St Mary's more eco-friendly. Pupils enjoy the clubs the school offers, including rugby, football and cheerleading.

Parents are positive about the education their children receive. The overwhelming majority of the parents and carers who completed the survey would recommend the school. All those who talked to the inspector had positive things to say. One parent commented, 'It's an amazing school, where each child is an individual.' This was typical of many.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have developed a wide-ranging curriculum. It is designed to reflect the diverse community the school serves and to ensure that pupils are

equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to progress. However, there is still further work to do in developing some subjects. Leaders have identified that there needs to be greater clarity in what pupils are expected to know. Leaders intend to use this information to improve how teachers check that pupils know more and remember more.

Reading is a priority at the school. A new scheme for teaching phonics was introduced last year. Staff are very positive about the training they have received. Pupils are taught phonics through a carefully sequenced programme, which starts in the early years. The school's library has been developed to supplement the reading material in classrooms. The books that early readers practise with match their knowledge of letters and sounds. As the school serves a community where in many homes English is not spoken, there is tremendous emphasis on speaking and developing verbal communication. This is a real feature of the strong early years provision. Leaders and staff are well aware that they need to give pupils a grounding in the spoken language before they will be able to move on to the written.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well provided for. Most are able to access, with support, the same work as their peers. When necessary, for instance in mathematics, a bespoke programme is created. Pupils enjoy mathematics, often saying it is a favourite subject. Teachers explain things well and expect pupils to be able to justify their answers. Older pupils have good knowledge of their multiplication tables. However, sometimes, opportunities to apply mathematical knowledge in problem-solving and reasoning activities are more limited.

The curriculum is ambitious and carefully planned from the early years upwards. For instance, in art, children in nursery learn how to mix colours. In Year 2, pupils learn to use collage techniques. Year 3 pupils have made some imaginative sculptures inspired by Barbara Hepworth, and Year 6 pupils have studied the drawings of Henry Moore. Pupils spoke about their appreciation of art. However, they were less adept at remembering key knowledge taught in these units. This was also reflected in other subjects, such as geography.

The personal development of pupils is a priority for leaders. There is a strong personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils enjoy this, talking maturely about what they have learned. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is enriched by trips. For example, Year 6 pupils were very positive about their residential visit to Kingswood, and Year 3 pupils visited the Hepworth Museum in Wakefield.

Leaders' emphasis on pupils' personal development supports the highly positive behaviour of pupils. Good behaviour is based on the excellent relationships between staff and pupils and on the clear routines that are consistently used by staff. Pupils are polite and courteous, and this is consistently acknowledged by staff.

Staff are proud to work at the school and feel part of a team. They support the vision of senior leaders, whose commitment and dedication are unflinching. Members of the governing body know the school well and provide support and challenge to senior leaders.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding and pastoral work, which is underpinned by the Christian ethos of the school. Leaders ensure that the correct procedures are followed when appointing staff.

Thorough records are kept of any concerns and, if required, prompt referrals are made. Leaders are prepared to be relentless in pursuing concerns if they believe that pupils and their families need support.

Staff receive regular training and understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Staff ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe both on and offline. There is very good pastoral support for all pupils.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to use and deepen their mathematical knowledge through reasoning and solving problems. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum gives pupils these opportunities so that they are able to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The curriculum in some foundation subjects does not clearly specify the key knowledge that pupils are expected to learn. This means that teachers are not always clear what pupils are expected to know and remember. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans clearly specify key knowledge that pupils are expected to learn.

## 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 in 21 and 22 November 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108269
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255834
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	268
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Janet Milne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Taylor
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmaryscephprimarywakefield.co.uk">www.stmaryscephprimarywakefield.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 and 22 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school was judged to be excellent at its most recent inspection of denominational education and the content of the school's collective worship under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in February 2020. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.
- The school does not use 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector met with the acting co-headteacher, subject leaders and other members of staff. The inspector met with those responsible for governance, including the chair of the governing body and four other governors.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. He gathered pupils' views from both formal and informal discussions.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The inspector checked the school's single central record of recruitment checks, met with the school's designated safeguarding lead, and reviewed safeguarding information.
- The inspector met with parents and carers. He took account of the responses to Ofsted's parent survey, Parent View. The inspector also took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Andrew Cummings, lead inspector

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023