

Inspection of St Mary and St John Church of England Primary School

Meadow Lane, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX4 1TJ

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending and learning at this inclusive school. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning. The school values of 'love, respect, empathy, courage, aspiration, and curiosity' permeate the curriculum and wider activity in the school.

Pupils are happy and feel safe. On the rare occasion where unkindness occurs, staff deal with this swiftly and effectively. Pupils enjoy lessons and social time. They make good use of play equipment and enjoy creating their own games to play together. They take school leadership responsibilities very seriously. For example, older pupils look out for younger pupils at playtimes.

Leaders ensure that pupils attend regularly and achieve well. They work closely with parents and carers so that this happens and act quickly to support families when needed. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' achievement. Pupils rise to this challenge enthusiastically. They are rightly proud of the work they produce.

Pupils' behaviour at the school is good. They like the clear expectations for behaviour that are shared throughout the school. They are proud that everyone behaves well and focuses on their learning.

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

Leaders have high ambition for pupils in the school. They prioritise curriculum development and teachers' subject knowledge well. Leaders carefully select what they want pupils to learn. Staff create well-planned lessons across the curriculum that allow pupils to achieve well.

Reception children are taught at a nearby school. Leaders intend that staff at both schools support pupils to have a seamless transition, and they do this well in terms of behaviour and personal development. However, what pupils are taught is not joined up properly. This results in a lack of clarity. Staff are not clear what has been taught and which subsequent learning is needed for pupils to progress well as they join Year 1. This hampers pupils' learning.

Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have the same learning opportunities as their peers. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, are provided with support to meet their needs. This means that all pupils cover their full curriculum and enjoy their learning.

Leaders have developed a new approach to assessment. Most teachers check regularly how well pupils are learning. They spot when pupils have misconceptions and address these quickly. Where teachers are using this strategy consistently, pupils are able to make progress quickly. Leaders are aware that not all teachers are using the approach as they would expect. Where this happens, pupils' progress is slowed.

Leaders have prioritised making sure that pupils learn to read confidently and fluently. Teachers provide pupils with extra support where they struggle to keep up. This is effective and pupils keep up with their peers and become confident readers over time. However, the assessment of this extra support is not as precise as it could be. Consequently, some pupils do not necessarily learn exactly what they need to keep up.

Pupils behave well. They are focused and engaged with their learning. This means that teachers can teach and pupils can learn without interruption. Where there are instances of low-level off-task pupil behaviour, staff immediately address this effectively. Pupils behave equally well at play and lunchtimes.

Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular clubs, including art, music and sports. However, too few disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND attend these activities. Pupils enjoy the range of external visits that staff provide regularly to enhance the curriculum. Pupils are able to recall places they have visited along with what they experienced and learned.

Leaders have rooted character education in the school's values. Each term, one value is explored in depth. For example, in term one, pupils focus on the value of 'love'. Pupils proudly explained that they know that sometimes they have to try hard to get along with others. Leaders plan for all pupils to leave the school as 'curious lifelong learners' who have built up resilience so that they are better equipped to deal with any challenges they may face. They have constructed a curriculum that develops these qualities and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Leaders, including governors, are highly ambitious for the school and have identified the correct priorities. Governors visit the school regularly, including meeting with pupils, parents and carers. This provides them with first-hand evidence and, consequentially, they know the school well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are fully trained in safeguarding and are confident to identify potential signs of abuse. Staff are vigilant and report any concerns about pupils swiftly. Leaders take appropriate action in response to all concerns. They work closely with external agencies and families when needed.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, including when online, through the curriculum. They learn about appropriate and healthy relationships and how to identify risk.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a significant feature of all stages of the recruitment process.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff in early years and key stage 1 do not have a full understanding of each other's planned curriculum. This means that pupils do not build on their early years experience as well as they could when they begin Year 1. Leaders should ensure that staff work together to develop their knowledge of each other's work so that pupils achieve as well as possible in their first years at school.
- The assessment policy is not used consistently by all staff. This means that some staff do not identify quickly when pupils do not understand their learning. Leaders should ensure that staff are confident to apply this policy and associated strategies as leaders expect, so that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes.

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	123213
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10269163
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	390
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Franklin
Headteacher	Rebekah Stott
Website	www.ssmj.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2021.
- Reception children, although on the roll of St Mary and St John Church of England Primary School, are taught in Comper Foundation Stage School, one mile from the school's main site. Comper Foundation Stage School is inspected separately. It is not managed by St Mary and St John Church of England Primary School's governing body. However, children from St Mary and St John Church of England Primary School were visited in Comper Foundation Stage School's early years provision during this inspection.
- The school does not currently use 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.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other school leaders in St Mary and St John Church of England Primary School. They also met with leaders from Comper Foundation Stage School when discussing provision for children in the Reception classes. Inspectors met with governors, including the chair of governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors undertook deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art, science and history. They met with subject leaders, teachers and groups of pupils. Inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record, reviewed safeguarding records and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. Inspectors considered how well the school manages safer recruitment. Inspectors also reviewed how children in Reception are safeguarded in Comper Foundation Stage School.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View. Further views of pupils and staff were gathered through Ofsted's online surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including the school development plan, the school self-evaluation report, minutes of governing body meetings and attendance records.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at playtimes.

Inspection team

Paul Hemmings, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Toye	Ofsted Inspector
Gemma Piper	Ofsted Inspector

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