

Inspection of a good school: Shinfield St Mary's CofE Junior School

Chestnut Crescent, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire RG2 9EJ

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Outcome

Shinfield St Mary's CofE Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this school. They behave extremely well and are polite and kind to each other. They feel safe and well cared for. This is because leaders ensure the theme of love is central to all school activities. Pupils recognise this and are extremely knowledgeable about the associated school values. They are proud to wear their pin badges, showing that they have been recognised for demonstrating these values. Leaders have high ambition for all pupils and their learning. Pupils are enthusiastic and attentive learners. They achieve well across the entire curriculum.

The school's ecology work is ambitious and exceptional. Sessions are carefully planned to develop pupils' understanding of the natural world. Pupils know how they are explicitly applying and making links with their learning in many subjects, including mathematics, science and geography. Additionally, these sessions allow them to develop their teamwork and leadership skills. Pupils enthuse about their 'eco-sessions'. They are extremely proud of their recently planted Miyawaki forest, the animals they care for and the local and national recognition of their achievements. Pupils are unequivocal in their views about why this environmental work matters. They see it as crucial for their and others' future.

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

Governors and school leaders share a united vision for pupils to be happy and successful at school. Their ambitious curriculum design reflects this vision, with careful consideration given to cultural diversity and rich experiences. Information from feeder infant schools is used to ensure Year 3 pupils get off to a strong start. Pupils in Year 6 feel ready for secondary school. They are confident that their learning prepares them, alongside their additional knowledge about how to travel safely on their bicycles and use public transport.

Pupils are confident and fluent readers, yet leaders show no complacency. They are determined to further strengthen the teaching of reading. In guided reading sessions, pupils show they can unpick texts and examine authorial intent. They respond to probing questions in a thoughtful and precise way. Pupils who need extra help with their reading

are identified quickly and provided with appropriate support to catch up.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They feel well supported by subject leaders, who share their expertise. Teachers break the curriculum down into small, sequenced steps when teaching. In many subjects, this means that pupils have strong recall about their learning. For example, in physical education, pupils recognise how their balance and throwing skills apply across tennis, cricket and hockey. In all subjects, teachers use a range of techniques to check how well pupils are learning. These include flashbacks and targeted questions. However, there are times when teachers do not use this information to move learning along quickly enough.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported to access the curriculum and, consequently, are successful with their learning. There are clear processes to identify these pupils and assess their needs. Information is gathered from parents and carers, as well as the children themselves. Teaching staff skilfully support pupils with SEND using resources, communication devices and appropriate adaptations to the environment. Nurture provision on the 'Thunderbus' provides tailored support to build pupils' social skills and strengthen their mental resilience.

Leaders use a range of assessment information to check how well pupils learn. These include assessments linked to the published schemes used in some subjects. In many subjects, this information allows teachers to adjust their teaching and fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, in some subjects, teachers find these assessment systems time-consuming and that they do not provide them with meaningful and useful information.

Pupils benefit from many leadership opportunities. Sports leaders and captains feel honoured to be democratically elected to their roles. They take their responsibilities seriously, including running clubs for younger pupils. The pupil librarian roles are well-sought-after positions, and they enjoy being reading role models. Pupils are proud to be eco-team members, tree ambassadors and head gardeners. They champion the school's work and are courageous advocates for ecology and sustainability.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff are well trained in identifying and reporting any safeguarding concerns. They are mindful of considering links between pupils' behaviour and attendance with safeguarding. Leaders refer concerns appropriately to other agencies. They check these referrals are followed up and that support is provided for families who need it. The governing body routinely examines the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures. It also shows tenacity in checking that families receive the support they need. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe, including online. If they have any worries, they know they can talk to staff who will help them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always make full use of their checks on pupils' learning during lessons. This means that in some subjects, pupils do not achieve as highly as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers use feedback in lessons to help pupils to further deepen their knowledge and skills.
- In some subjects, assessment procedures do not provide teachers with meaningful and useful information. As a result, teachers find these processes onerous and recognise that they have little impact on pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that the school's assessment systems are manageable and provide teachers with information which benefits pupils' learning.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2013.

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	109976
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10269111
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	361
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jessica Dye
Headteacher	Philippa Chan
Website	www.shinfield-st-marys-junior.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England school and is part of the Diocese of Oxford. The school's religious character was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in October 2019.
- The school does not currently 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior school leaders and members of the governing body. The inspector also had phone calls with representatives from the diocese and the local authority.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector studied documents and records, including the school's single central record and child protection referrals. She spoke with the designated safeguarding leads, staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and additional free-text responses were considered by the inspector. The inspector also spoke to parents on the morning of the second day of the inspection.
- The inspector met with a range of pupils to learn their views about the school. She also took into account the responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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