

Inspection of The St. Mary's CofE Primary School

Bellamour Way, Colton, Rugeley, Staffordshire WS15 3LN

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2023

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

The executive headteacher of this school is Jonathan Wynn. This school is part of The Staffordshire Schools Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Charlene Gethin, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Heather Bowman.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have created an exceptional educational experience for pupils. As a result, all pupils flourish, and achieve well. The school values of love, respect and friendship are rooted in all that pupils do. They are happy, and enjoy attending school. The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils live up to these. Pupils know what is right and what is wrong, and effortlessly know how to make the right choice. They actively support the well-being of their peers.

All pupils grow and thrive academically, socially and emotionally. They keenly and enthusiastically take part in all that the school has to offer. The wide and rich set of experiences range from dance and drama, archery, and care club, to football. They foster the interests and needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There really is something for everyone.

Pupils are eager to make a difference to their school community. They take on a range of exciting roles, from the 'chicken monitors', who lead on caring for the school chickens, to the 'funky food ambassadors', who teach younger children about the benefits of healthy eating. Younger children trust, look up to and are inspired by older pupils. Pupils have each other's best interests at heart.

The school motto of 'Believe and Achieve' is reinforced by the biblical quotation of 'they will mount up with wings like eagles'. Pupils live and breathe this throughout their time at school. They understand, and continually seek to reach, the school's high aspirations.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance have a clear and ambitious vision. This centres on providing a very high-quality education for its pupils alongside preparing them for life in modern Britain. They have achieved this. They have ensured that staff receive effective professional development so that pupils can benefit from expert subject knowledge. The strategy is clear in every aspect of the school's work. It revolves around ensuring that pupils who attend St. Mary's are equipped with all they need to prosper.

Children in the early years get off to a brilliant start. Staff are meticulous in their planning. The activities are purposeful and fun. Children learn through singing, rhyming, stories and so much more. They are confident and keen to talk about what they know and can remember. The environment is very well designed to support learning, and includes a host of natural resources. The garden and outdoor area are class favourites. Children are introduced to phonics very early on. They confidently sound out letters and regularly practise writing these familiar sounds. All of this gives children the strong foundations they need to transition into Year 1.

The school has created and developed an excellent and broad curriculum. It is underpinned by the national curriculum, shaped by pupils' interests and imbued with

the school's core Christian values of love, respect and friendship. It is enriched by a range of opportunities. Classrooms are full of pupils who are excited and passionate about their learning. They are eager to share their ideas with their peers and to engage in discussions. The school adapts the learning to meet the needs of all pupils. This means that all pupils, regardless of their need or starting points, succeed.

Pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as their peers. They are involved in all aspects of school life. They are accurately assessed and identified. Staff know their pupils well, and this means pupils get the help they need when they need it. The SEND clinics provide bespoke nurture and support. As a result, pupils achieve well, and have the skills to become increasingly independent.

Leaders have prioritised reading, and this plays a big role across all areas of the school. Pupils read a range of books avidly in school. The 'reading spine' includes a range of books linked to different subjects, diverse cultures and different families. Those who struggle to learn to read are given bespoke help. This enables pupils to catch up quickly and to read with increased fluency and confidence. Story time is interactive and a highlight of the school day. Staff create a real buzz, and the pupils fully immerse themselves into the world of literature.

The school has developed an exemplary personal, social and health education curriculum. Educational visits and enrichment are linked closely to the curriculum. For example, pupils learn how to plant and care for vegetables and flowers through forest school. The local football club leads teaching pupils about mental health, and they also promote an active lifestyle. Sports such as archery have been introduced to broaden pupils' horizons and to encourage them to try new things.

Parents and staff are overwhelmingly positive about all that leaders do. Staff feel valued and express their enjoyment of working at the school. The headteacher has worked relentlessly to create an outstanding education for each and every pupil. This has been accomplished. Leaders and staff are not complacent, and are constantly looking for new ways to make the school even better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142097
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10290621
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Heather Bowman
Headteacher	Jonathan Wynn
Website	www.st-marys-colton.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Staffordshire Schools Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school uses no alternative providers.
- The school has a Christian ethos. A section 48 inspection was completed in June 2022. The next inspection is due within eight years of their previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, directors from the trust, senior and middle leaders, the special educational needs

coordinator, the designated safeguarding lead, governors, trustees and the CEO of the trust.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, reading and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited lessons in English, and dance and drama.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Sultanat Yunus, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Vicki Shuter

Ofsted Inspector

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