

Inspection of Swithland St Leonard's Church of England Primary School

Main Street, Swithland, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE12 8TQ

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 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	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 16 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempt by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspection under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. Staff know the pupils well. Pupils know they can speak to their teacher and other staff about any problems or worries. Pupils often use the multiple 'worry monsters' around the school to do this. Pupils feel safe and happy in this secure and caring environment.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils. The school has a high-quality curriculum. Pupils achieve well across many subjects.

There are ample opportunities for pupils to be role models. This includes being an active member of the school council, acting as a playground buddy or being a house captain, to name just a few. Pupils are proud to wear the badges that tell others what their responsibilities are.

Pupils benefit from the large number of trips and residentials this small school provides. They talked enthusiastically about a trip to Warwick Castle. Younger pupils have recently visited the beach at Hunstanton to learn more about the coast.

The significant majority of parents and carers would recommend the school. One parent summed up the views of many when they said: 'This school has an incredibly welcoming, nurturing and positive environment, where my child can thrive.'

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

The curriculum has undergone some changes to ensure that curriculum plans identify the essential knowledge pupils need to know and remember. The school has carefully developed curriculum cycles that sequence the curriculum for mixed-age classes effectively. This ensures that teachers can deliver content based on what pupils have learned before. This helps pupils to make connections and build on their previous knowledge.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. This helps them to deliver the curriculum well. There is consideration for both knowledge and skills in each subject. For example, in science, pupils can talk about their understanding of forces. They have also investigated how these forces work, using scientific methods and experiments. This helps pupils to build further connections and learn how scientists work.

The activities teachers choose are usually well matched to what pupils need to learn. This helps pupils know and remember more. In some subjects that have been recently adapted, occasionally, teachers present information too quickly. Some pupils do not secure knowledge firmly enough. Not all pupils are able to achieve the depth of understanding in these subjects yet.

Teachers know the needs of pupils. They adapt teaching and the curriculum skilfully to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum. This particularly supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils read widely and often. The school encourages pupils to develop a love of reading. Older pupils enjoy story time just as much as the younger ones. The books that teachers read to pupils help them understand the diversity they will encounter in modern Britain. These books develop pupils' understanding of protected characteristics.

Staff are early reading experts. They support younger pupils and those in the early years to get a firm grasp of the alphabetic code. The daily phonics sessions help pupils become speedy readers quickly. The books that pupils and children read match the phonics that they know. Teachers help children to develop a rich vocabulary, using stories that also help them develop their understanding of the world. On occasion, the resources and activities chosen to support pupils to follow the early years curriculum are not used precisely enough. This does not maximise meaningful learning.

Staff in the early years develop pupils to follow routines and self-regulate. Children are ready for the next stage of their formal education by the time they leave the early years. Older pupils also know the routines and rules they must follow. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils behave well. They can learn the curriculum without any disruption.

Pupils feel like they belong to this school. They play together and look out for one another. Pupils are eager to achieve house points and see which house will come out on top in the end-of-week assembly. Pupils achieve stars for demonstrating the school's Christian values. They pin these to their uniform with pride. Pupils contribute to the local and wider community. They raise money for charities. Pupils invite those who have supported the school to the end-of-year tea party. This is to show their appreciation for this support. This school develops each pupil in the widest sense.

Governors challenge school leaders to ensure that the school is the best it can be. Staff are proud to work here. They know all leaders consider their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, the resources and activities chosen to support pupils to follow the early years curriculum are not used precisely enough. This limits some children's opportunity to explore and be curious, and it does not always maximise meaningful learning. The school should ensure that resources and activities to deliver the early years curriculum consistently support meaningful learning.

- In a few subjects where the curriculum is new, teachers sometimes cover content too quickly. As a result, pupils do not always secure the essential knowledge needed to get the depth of understanding that is set out in the curriculum. The school must ensure that teachers allow sufficient time to present information and check that pupils remember the important knowledge so pupils are able to develop a depth of understanding.

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	120163
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10211858
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Duncan Keates
Headteacher	Christine Lethbridge
Website	www.st-leonards.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2007

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in May 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and a range of staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body.

- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed other areas of the curriculum with leaders and visited additional lessons. The lead inspector observed pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around the school.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received through Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered the results of the staff surveys. Inspectors met with pupils and parents to gather their views.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Barton	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Lowther	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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