

Inspection of St Mary's Bluecoat CofE (VA) Primary School

Lodge Lane, The Grove, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV15 5EQ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The inclusive ethos is a strength of St Mary's Bluecoat CE (VA) Primary School. Pupils love their school and say friends and teachers greet them kindly each day. The school has a nurturing approach. Pupils are well supported by skilled and caring staff who understand them. This enables most pupils to achieve well.

Pupils talk about the school values of perseverance, compassion and respect. These values help children to become considerate members of the school community. Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. They play kindly together. Pupils know what bullying is. Incidents of bullying are rare, but when they do happen, the school is quick to sort them out. Pupils appreciate the 'worry boxes' found in classrooms. They say their teachers will help them with any concerns. As a result, pupils feel safe and cherished.

The school offers pupils a range of clubs. Ukulele, Lego and football are all popular with pupils. They enjoy the range of trips on offer. Older pupils are looking forward to the residential visit. Pupils take part in a range of sporting events.

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

The school has designed a well-thought-out curriculum. It clearly sets out what pupils are expected to know and remember. Pupils begin to build up their knowledge as soon as they start in the Nursery class.

Reading is a high priority. Staff receive regular training in how to deliver the school's phonics programme. Pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning in lessons. Staff check pupils' understanding carefully and provide support to address any gaps in learning. This means that pupils develop the skills needed to learn to read effectively. The reading curriculum places a strong emphasis on stories and poems. This enables pupils to talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about the books they have read. Pupils can choose from a wide range of interesting reading books in their classrooms and in the library. In the early years, skilled staff make effective use of a range of well-loved stories and rhymes. They create an environment that helps children develop their listening skills.

The school provides very effective support for teachers in identifying and meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Members of staff know pupils well. Adults provide adaptations and interventions, so that pupils with SEND access the same learning as their peers. As a result, they make good progress.

Leaders have ensured that staff have the expert subject knowledge to teach the core curriculum well. Staff revisit important information to ensure that pupils can recall key knowledge confidently and accurately. However, the curriculum in some of the foundation subjects is new and teaching in these subjects does not always support the school's intentions for the curriculum. At times, teachers do not check

carefully enough that pupils' earlier learning is secure, so pupils' misconceptions go unnoticed. This can make it difficult for some pupils to make sense of new learning. In some subjects, teachers and leaders have not checked what pupils know and remember well enough. This means that pupils do not make the progress they should.

The school has clear expectations of behaviour. Pupils respond positively to these. Most pupils focus on their work in lessons and are keen to learn. Adults manage the behaviour of those pupils who find it difficult to behave well with kindness and sensitivity. The school works closely with families to ensure that every pupil attends school as regularly as they should. This work has secured improvements in attendance rates.

The curriculum helps pupils to learn about different cultures and religions within their own local community and the wider world. In this way, pupils develop a deep understanding of respect and equality. Pupils undertake a wide range of leadership roles. This includes taking on the role of sports leaders and school councillors. The 'eco-warriors' entered and won a competition for a new school garden. Pupils are rightly proud of this success.

There is a strong sense of teamwork at the school. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their well-being and workload when new initiatives are introduced. For example, staff feel that the newly developed curriculum plans contribute positively to staff work-life balance.

Governors of the school are aware of the school's strengths and areas to develop. They hold leaders to account for standards in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in the foundation subjects is new. Pupils cannot demonstrate and recall learning from some aspects of this new curriculum. The school should ensure that the curriculum is implemented in a way that enables pupils to learn the intended knowledge in each subject consistently well.
- The school's use of assessment is at an early stage in some subjects. This means that gaps in pupils' learning are not always identified. The school needs to ensure that assessment is used effectively in all subjects to identify how well pupils learn.

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	123536
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10240721
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carl Steventon
Headteacher	Claire Gaskin (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.stmarysbc.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 November and 1 December 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school includes a specialist unit for pupils with autism and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. This unit provides education for up to 10 pupils between the ages of 7 and 11.
- The school is within the Diocese of Hereford. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in 2016. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within 8 years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school is part of a federation of schools. This is called The Trinity Federation.

Information about this inspection

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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, executive leaders of the federation and school senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the school governing body and the local authority and held a telephone call with a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans in a sample of other subjects.
- Inspectors visited lessons in the school's specialist hub and spoke to pupils who attend the hub.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, around the school and at lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their opinions of behaviour at the school.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. The inspectors also took account of responses to staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Karen O'Keefe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Amarjit Cheema

Ofsted Inspector

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