

Inspection of a good school: St Mary and St Margaret's Church of England Aided Primary School

Southfield Avenue, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham West Midlands B36 9AX

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 November 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Parents and pupils are full of praise for this caring and friendly school. Pupils enjoy learning and the additional opportunities the school provides. Parents appreciate the approachability of staff and say they go 'above and beyond'. Pupils are safe and well cared for.

The five school values and school motto, 'To be the best I can be', underpin the school's ambition for pupils. Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils achieve well. Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have risen impressively, particularly in mathematics. However, pupils in key stage 1 do not yet achieve as well, particularly in English.

Pupils like school and attend regularly. They behave well in lessons and at breaktimes. They know that staff will sort out any problems quickly and fairly. Pupils understand and know the importance of treating others equally and with respect, as this is developed from the early years.

Pupils enjoy the educational visits and school events which extend their learning. Key stage 2 pupils learn Latin and to play a musical instrument. Pupils take part in school productions and represent the school at sport and choir events in the local community. Many activities help build pupils' confidence beyond the classroom.

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

The school has designed an exciting and well-sequenced curriculum from the early years to Year 6. Staff have identified the precise knowledge and subject vocabulary they want pupils to know and remember in different subjects. Teachers recap on prior learning at

the start of most lessons. This refreshes pupils' memories before they move on to new learning. Staff check pupils' understanding and address any misconceptions that arise during lessons and at the end of each unit.

The school is committed to ensuring that pupils read widely and often and gain a love of reading. It has invested heavily in high-quality reading texts and a new phonics programme. Children learn early letters and sounds as soon as they join the early years. They build on this through daily teaching in key stage 1. Reading books match the sounds pupils learn. Staff identify pupils who are falling behind and provide additional support. Most pupils acquire the phonic skills needed in early reading. However, some pupils do not receive the right support to help them develop the comprehension and fluency skills needed to be confident and successful readers.

Pupils write for a range of different purposes. They are imaginative and creative in their writing. However, for some lower-attaining pupils, weak spelling and poorly formed handwriting mar the quality and presentation of their written work in some classes.

Mathematics is a strength of the school. Children get off to a good start in the early years by learning about numbers. Teachers use inventive ways to help children recognise, order and understand the value of early numbers. Teachers make adaptations in lessons to meet the needs of different pupils. Pupils have positive attitudes to mathematics. Most can talk confidently about the content and strategies used as they regularly explain their thinking during lessons.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) early and accurately. Staff work with external agencies to provide the specialist support individual pupils need. Pupils access the same curriculum as their peers. They receive additional adult help to ensure they achieve well, and many do, especially at the end of key stage 2. However, the school does not ensure that intervention support has the intended impact.

Pupils are respectful and behave well. Staff recognise and reward pupils' efforts and good behaviour, for example with class 'DoJo' points. Systems in place are followed consistently. These promote calm and orderly behaviour and ensure that learning is seldom disrupted.

To supplement pupils' educational and personal development, the school provides many extras. Pupils are encouraged to play an active part in school life, for example as librarians and worship leaders. They have a good understanding of fundamental British values, which prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Mental health is a key priority in the school. The local mental health support team provides strong support where needed. Pupils receive age-appropriate information to understand and develop healthy relationships through the relationships, sex and health education curriculum.

Staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school. They appreciate reductions to their workload and the support they receive from leaders.

Governors are well informed about the school and fulfil their statutory duties. They provide effective challenge and support for the school's leadership.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils with the lowest attainment in reading do not catch up quickly enough. This affects their progress in other subjects as they move through the school. The school should ensure that these pupils receive the right support to help them develop the skills needed to become confident and fluent readers.
- In some year groups, too many pupils lack a secure grasp of spelling strategies and cursive handwriting. This affects the quality and presentation of their writing in English and other subjects. The school should ensure that strategies in place are embedded and evaluated so that pupils are enabled to catch up quickly and all pupils attain well in writing.
- The school does not monitor the impact of the different intervention programmes in place sharply enough. As a result, the school does not identify when pupils do not catch up as quickly as they should and are out of the classroom too much. The school should evaluate how well intervention programmes meet the needs of pupils attending and make adjustments where necessary.

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 a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some 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 March 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	104097
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10240489
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	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Deborah Ward
Headteacher	Mark Street
Website	www.stmaryandstmargarets.com
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Birmingham. The last section 48 inspection took place in July 2016. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders and governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also had a telephone discussion with a representative from the service commissioned by the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- The inspector met with teaching staff to talk about the curriculum, staff workload, and the behaviour and personal development of pupils. She also met with groups of pupils to talk about their learning and well-being.
- The inspector observed a selection of pupils reading to members of staff. Other pupils were heard read their own work during lesson visits.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: checked the school's single central record; spoke to senior leaders about safeguarding procedures; took account of the views of 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.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement. Records of attendance and behaviour incidents were checked.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- The inspector talked to parents after school and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. She gathered the views of pupils and staff on site through discussion with these groups and from their online questionnaire responses.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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