

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

Shaw Lane, Albrighton, Wolverhampton, Shropshire WV7 3DS

Inspection dates:

30 and 31 January 2024

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mary's is a warm and friendly school where pupils enjoy their learning and feel safe and supported. There is a strong sense of community among pupils and staff. Pupils learn to embody the school values of perseverance, respect, generosity and friendship in their daily lives. As one pupil explained, 'When faced with challenges, we always persevere to overcome them.'

The school is ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy the learning that teachers provide and achieve well. School parliament provides many opportunities for pupils to have a say in key decisions. Pupils take pride in these roles and feel their views are valued.

Pupils are polite to adults and each other. They behave well and are eager to learn. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, especially on the internet. They know how to report any concerns they may have while online.

Parents and carers are very positive about the school. One parent, typical of many, said, 'This is a wonderful warm and caring school. The staff are kind, nurturing and always approachable.'

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

There is an ambitious and well-constructed curriculum in place. In many subjects, the school has sequenced the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn, and pupils achieve well. However, there are occasions when pupils are given work that is too easy because activities are not well matched to the intended curriculum. This does not help pupils deepen their learning.

Pupils develop a love of reading and enjoy reading novels in class and with their teachers. They talk confidently about their favourite books and authors. The school focuses on phonics and reading, right from the start in the early years. The phonics programme is

delivered effectively by staff who have undergone recent training. Pupils practise their reading regularly, using texts that match their phonics knowledge. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind have extra practice to help them keep up with their peers. This means that most pupils become confident and fluent readers over time.

In reading lessons, teachers provide pupils with high-quality texts and opportunities to explore vocabulary. Pupils enjoy reading and interpreting these texts. They improve their comprehension and vocabulary skills. However, in lessons, teachers do not use assessment well enough to identify gaps and misconceptions. At times, pupils are left waiting too long before they can start on the next task. When this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Pupils enjoy and take pride in their work. Teachers encourage pupils to explore what they are learning to develop a sense of curiosity. For example, pupils' sketchbooks show their creative exploration and development of ideas. They use these to explain how they have improved their drawing skills over time. Pupils also demonstrate their knowledge of different art pencils and techniques. As a result, pupils build their knowledge and skills over time.

Children in the early years follow well-established routines. They learn the habits of good behaviour quickly. Pupils across the rest of the school behave well during lessons and social times. Pupils are polite, courteous and cooperative. They show respect and care for each other and the adults who work with them. Pupils are taught to recognise what bullying is. They say that it is uncommon in their school. They know that leaders will act quickly if any instances of bullying occur.

Pupils with SEND have their needs accurately identified. Teachers use this information well to provide effective support. Teaching assistants provide well-tailored support to pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities, including choir, dance clubs and residential visits. Staff enrich pupils' learning through outdoor woodland learning where pupils engage in a variety of outdoor activities that promote skills, including teamwork, creativity and problem-solving.

Staff feel valued and well supported by leaders to manage their workload. Governors understand and carry out effectively their statutory duties. They maintain an accurate picture of the school through regular visits.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough in lessons to spot gaps or misconceptions in pupils' learning. In some lessons, pupils wait for too long before the teachers move them on to the next stage of their learning. This means that pupils do not build on their knowledge as well as they could. The school should ensure that all teachers consistently identify and promptly address pupils' misconceptions and gaps.
- The school does not consistently check that staff deliver the curriculum in the way it is intended. This means that pupils are sometimes given work that is not well matched to the intended learning outcome. Leaders should ensure that the delivery of the curriculum is aligned to its intended aims and has the desired impact on pupils' achievement.

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 June 2018.

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	123458
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10294537
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rev Mary Thomas
Headteacher	Nathalie Milhavy-Jones
Website	www.stmarysalbrighton.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2023.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Lichfield. The previous section 48 inspection took place in June 2017. 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 alternative provision.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, writing and art. For each deep dive, she met with leaders, discussed curriculums, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. She also observed pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, the other leaders and the staff.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. The inspector also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector spoke with different groups of pupils to gather their views of the school and held discussions about their behaviour and learning. She also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at playtime.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff to discuss how leaders support their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Kerry Rochester, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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