

Inspection of St Marychurch Church of England Primary and Nursery School

Hartop Road, St Marychurch, Torquay, Devon TQ1 4QH

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

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
---------------------------	------

The headteacher of this school is Jane Bruten. This school is part of St Christopher's 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 (CEO), Jo Evans, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Bailey.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Marychurch are vibrant and confident individuals. They are proud of their school and the changes that it has undergone in the last academic year. Pupils reflect on why the school is a place they enjoy attending. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons, when moving around the school and during playtimes. They value the ways in which they are rewarded for positive behaviour and other achievements such as attendance and reading. This helps pupils meet the high expectations the school has of them.

Pupils embody the school's values of love, joy, peace and kindness. This is because they are modelled by the staff around them. The strong and nurturing relationships between staff and pupils can be heard in action across the school. Pupils say this is one of the best things about the school. Pupils get on well in the many opportunities they have to interact across the age ranges. They encourage and support each other in the many roles of responsibility that they are proud to hold.

Changes to the school have been very welcomed by parents and carers. They have high praise for the way in which the school now communicates with them and impacts their children's education. 'An army of angels' was one parent's comment about the staff.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has taken swift and significant steps to strengthen the curriculum. The appointment of the new headteacher, deputy and assistant headteacher, has strengthened the leadership team and led to rapid improvement in the quality of education. The low published outcomes in 2023 do not reflect how well pupils are currently learning.

Staffing is now more stable. As a result, the ambitious curriculum design, across subjects, is implemented well. The majority of pupils learn and remember more over time as a result of teachers' secure subject knowledge and knowledge of how pupils learn best. However, this is not the case for all pupils. Strengths observed in some areas, such as ongoing assessment, high expectations and understanding of how to get the best from pupils, are not fully embedded across the school. Where these aspects are not as well embedded, pupils do not learn as well.

The school uses assessment effectively in subjects such as reading and mathematics to check pupils' understanding of the curriculum. Any gaps in knowledge are quickly identified, and pupils receive the additional help that they need. However, in writing, some staff are not as consistent in how they address errors and misconceptions. Sometimes, expectations of some pupils are not as high as they need to be. When this happens, pupils do not get the support that they need to write with increasing skill and accuracy.

The youngest children in the school are excited about learning. In Nursery and Reception, staff encourage children to explore and be curious about the world around them. They develop children's language skills effectively through well-considered questioning. Staff support children in their early reading and number learning well. As a result, children are well prepared for learning in key stage 1. The school has worked to develop pupils' love of reading across the school. Pupils enthuse about the books they read and that are read to them. They appreciate the importance of reading in their learning of the full curriculum and know how the school is helping them to become increasingly fluent and confident readers.

This is an inclusive school. Disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are valued members of the school community. The school is quick to identify pupils with SEND. It provides staff with specialist advice to support pupils with SEND. Despite this, some staff do not use this as effectively as they could to adapt learning with precision. Support can, at times, be too generic to address pupils' individual needs. Consequently, some pupils with SEND do not make as much progress as they could.

Pupils, staff and increasing numbers of parents now hold a positive view of behaviour. Pupils who struggle to behave appropriately are supported with kindness and understanding. The provision in Dolphin Class has a critical role in this. Pupils know the 'chance, choice, consequence' approach to behaviour. They say that this is much more consistent this year because staff know them well.

The school encourages pupils to be aware of maintaining good mental health. Pupils are self-aware and can express their views and opinions with confidence. They are tolerant and respectful of the views of others because they are well informed about diversity and the world around them. Pupils contribute fully to school life which prepares them well for their next steps.

Governors and trust leaders have an ambitious vision for the school. There are clear systems in place to check that the actions leaders take to improve the school benefit all pupils. The challenge and support for the school have enabled the school to make the most impact in the short period of time since the last inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Expectations of pupils' writing are not consistently high enough. Additionally, errors and misconceptions are not addressed quickly enough. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress in their writing that they should. The trust should ensure that all staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' written work in

all subjects and that pupils get the support they need to write with accuracy.

- Adaptations to learning for pupils with SEND are not always precise enough. This hinders how well these pupils can maximise the learning opportunities offered to them. The trust should ensure that teachers have the expertise necessary to adapt the curriculum to meet the individual needs of these specific pupils so they make as much progress as possible.
- The curriculum is not as well embedded in some areas as it is in others. The strengths seen in some areas are not fully embedded across the school. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as others. The trust must ensure that the curriculum, in all phases, is as secure and established as where pupils learn the most successfully.

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	140644
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10322283
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	293
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Bailey
CEO of the trust	Jo Evans
Headteacher	Jane Bruten
Website	www.st-marychurch-primary.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of St Christopher’s Multi-Academy Trust, which is responsible for primary schools across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.
- The school has appointed a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher since the previous inspection.
- The school has a higher-than-average number of pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has its own nurture provision, Dolphin Class, to support the social, emotional and mental health needs of some pupils at the school.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. The school is in the Diocese of Exeter.
- The previous section 48 inspection took place in November 2023. The school’s next section 48 inspection is due to take place in 2028.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the school improvement partner, subject leaders from the school and leaders from the trust. In addition, an inspector met with members of the hub governing body and the CEO.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, religious education and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and trust leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, SEND, safeguarding and behaviour.
- An inspector listened to the views of parents at the beginning of both days of the inspection. Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments.
- Inspectors evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Carl Thornton

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Barton

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024