

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England (Aided) Primary School, Chipping Norton

The Green, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire OX7 5DH

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 June 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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this friendly and welcoming school. There is a strong ethos of mutual respect and support in all areas. Pupils know that adults will deal with any worries or concerns they have. They are happy and, they feel safe and well cared for. Pupils are keen to meet the high expectations that staff have for behaviour and achievement. They show positive attitudes to their work. Pupils behave kindly towards others and are thoughtful learners. In early years, children look forward to the interesting range of activities that help them develop their independence and self-confidence. Overall, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well and are prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of opportunities available. They relish visiting the local secondary school to make a trebuchet, taking part in theatre performances and meeting international authors. Pupils are proud of their leadership responsibilities such as being foundation buddies, play pals, librarians and school counsellors. They enjoy learning new skills and enthusiastically attend the sewing, gardening, art and sports clubs. Pupils are especially delighted about the talent show they hosted for their families and the community.

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

The school has a strong and compelling vision for pupils' success and achievements. However, historically some pupils, including those with SEND, have not achieved well in published outcomes. Previous weaker achievement was linked to poor attendance for a high proportion of pupils and some key inconsistencies in curriculum thinking. The school has worked tirelessly to ensure that all pupils benefit from a good-quality education. The impact of this work is clearly evident. The number of pupils who do not attend school regularly has reduced significantly and all pupils, including those with SEND, are moving through the curriculum more successfully than before.

The curriculum in all subjects is well constructed and ambitious. The school has set out precisely the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which it should be taught. Pupils build a broader appreciation of different subjects through a range of experiences such as visiting art galleries and the theatre. They learn about their local history through trips to Chipping Norton museum, the church and the railway station nearby.

Staff benefit from a well-thought-out programme of training and support. They provide pupils with SEND with the resources they need to help them access the same curriculum as their peers. Consequently, pupils with SEND make strong progress in their work. Staff use their effective training to explain new learning clearly. However, sometimes, they do not check what pupils know and understand carefully enough, including in phonics, before introducing new work. This means that any gaps and misconceptions are not addressed effectively. As a result, some

pupils do not learn as well as they could. One pupil said, 'Sometimes I get confused about what I need to remember because adults don't check what I don't know.'

Reading is central to the school's curriculum. Children are introduced to phonics from the moment they join Reception class. Pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds they are taught. They enjoy reading a broad range of books, which provide insights into different cultures and diversity. This promotes pupils' love of reading.

Lessons are calm and purposeful. This enables pupils to focus. Younger children take turns and collaborate with each other through play. They talk animatedly about the recycled 'watering bottles' they make to help keep their plants healthy. Most parents are full of praise about how 'staff go over and above' to help their children and families.

School leaders and governors know well what needs to improve further in the quality of education. Governors visit the school regularly. They provide challenge and support in equal measure. Staff morale is high. They feel greatly supported to manage their workload effectively.

The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. They have a well-rounded understanding of equality and diversity. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to discuss current affairs. For instance, they talk maturely and with consideration about the importance of mutual respect and individual liberty. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of different types of family and relationships. They understand and appreciate different cultures and communities. One Year 3 pupil echoed the views of her friends and said, 'We treat everyone how we want to be treated, with kindness and without prejudice. We are all equal and important.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, staff do not check what pupils know and understand carefully enough before moving them on to new learning. When this is the case, gaps and misconceptions, including in phonics, are not addressed effectively. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers assess pupils' knowledge consistently and accurately to enable them to make informed decisions about what to teach next.

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	123227
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10321874
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Nelson
Headteacher	Christine McQueen
Website	www.st-maryscofeoxon.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school is designated as having a religious character. Its last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place in May 2023, when it received a good judgement overall.
- The headteacher took up her post in January 2023.
- The school does not currently use 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics,

history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors 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 lead inspector met with the chair of governors and three other governors. She also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Oxfordshire.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during visits to classrooms, during breaktimes and as pupils moved around the school. They also considered the responses to the confidential pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents expressed in Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. They also considered the views of staff during meetings with them and through the staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ian Elkington

Ofsted Inspector

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