Inspection of St. Mary's Church of England Primary School, Edwinstowe

Paddock Close, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG21 9LP

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
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 Jennifer Bailey. This school is part of the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi Academy Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Chris Moodie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Philip Blinston.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils speak proudly about their school. They are full of praise for the interesting lessons and the care that they receive from staff. Many pupils shared examples of when staff 'always listen' and 'sort things out' on the rare occasions that help is needed. Pupils say that this helps them to feel safe and secure in school.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners who are motivated and achieve well. Their positive attitudes to learning are reflected in their good behaviour in lessons and around school. Children in the early years settle quickly into the expected routines. They are well placed to succeed, because staff have designed a well-planned curriculum that provides a secure foundation for Year 1 and beyond.

Parents and carers typically appreciate the 'strong sense of community' in this small, vibrant school. Many also praise the school's 'caring and respectful culture', which they say enables their children to 'thrive'.

Pupils benefit from the school's idyllic location on the edge of Sherwood Forest. The outdoor areas have been purposefully designed to make the most of the natural environment. This aspect of the school's provision supports pupils' physical and mental health and well-being very well.

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

The school has responded successfully to the recommendations from the last inspection. The curriculum has been rewritten so that it contains the important knowledge and skills that pupils should learn, and when. The curriculum now reflects the school's ambition for all pupils to achieve as highly as possible, and to know and remember more as they progress through the school. This significant work is now complete across all subjects.

There has also been a review of how staff check pupils' progress through the curriculum. The revised system enables staff to have a sharper overview of how well pupils are doing, so that they can adapt their teaching accordingly. This benefits all pupils, and especially pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school is ambitious for pupils with SEND to receive effective support and achieve the best possible outcomes.

The school is currently partway through teaching the new, two-year curriculum cycle. For the most part, this is having a positive impact on pupils' knowledge and skills. However, there are some inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is being delivered across the school. Occasionally, when activities are not precisely matched to pupils' needs or where teachers' subject knowledge is less strong, pupils lose focus in lessons. This can affect their behaviour and hinder the pace of learning. Elsewhere, pupils demonstrate strong focus and attention in lessons. For example, in mathematics and French, pupils confidently apply what they know to new concepts. In a key stage 2 art activity, pupils were engrossed in perfecting their drawing techniques in the style of a famous artist.

Reading is a high priority for the school. There is currently a heightened focus on encouraging a love of reading and books. To that end, the school's library area and the class book corners are being restocked and refurbished. There is a systematic approach to early reading and phonics, which begins with the youngest children. By the end of Year 2, all pupils develop a secure foundation in reading and are well prepared for key stage 2.

The early years provision is a key strength of the school. The curriculum has been carefully designed to promote children's development across all areas of learning. Staff work as an effective team; they skilfully prioritise children's language skills and their personal development. Children are very well prepared for their next steps in key stage 1.

The school keeps a close track of pupils' attendance. There is an analysis of absence trends for all groups of pupils. Overall absence is typically low; however, the school is aware of the small number of pupils who are frequently absent. This is due to a range of factors, such as medical needs or unauthorised term-time holidays. The school is currently reviewing and strengthening its approach to handling persistent absence.

The school promotes pupils' broader personal development well. There are a range of popular extra-curricular and other enrichment opportunities that nurture pupils' talents and interests. Pupils have a mature understanding of the importance of respect and equality. They are well prepared as young citizens.

All those who are responsible for governance fulfil their roles effectively. They bring a good balance of support and challenge to the school. Staff praise the new leadership and the consideration shown for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the revised curriculum is not consistently strong in all parts of the school. Occasionally, teachers' explanations are not clear enough, and the work given does not enable pupils to understand and learn the curriculum. Consequently, pupils' behaviour sometimes becomes unsettled, and they lose focus or become confused about the purpose of the activities. On those occasions, pupils do not develop the detailed knowledge and skills they need. The school should ensure that the revised curriculum is implemented securely and consistently across the school, so that all pupils know and remember more over time.

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	144644
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10324194
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	109
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Blinston
CEO of the trust	Chris Moodie
Headteacher	Jennifer Bailey
Website	www.st-maryscofe.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 May 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2024. There was an acting headteacher in post at the school during the summer term of 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 and other senior and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with several members of the local governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector held a discussion with representatives of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a member of staff they know.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum, reviewed curriculum planning and visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at other times around the school.
- 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

Christine Watkins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Steve Tague	Ofsted Inspector

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