

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Petworth Road, Chiddingfold, Godalming, Surrey GU8 4UF

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

Outcome

St Mary's Church of England Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Sheila Buckley. The school is part of The Good Shepherd 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 (CEO), Paul Kennedy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by James Friend.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this caring school community. Older pupils are wonderful role models for younger ones. They take their roles and responsibilities seriously, such as being peer mediators, prefects, librarians and school councillors. Pupils' conduct matches the school's values of wisdom, hope, respect and community. For example, pupils independently organise peer-to-peer reading sessions in the school library. Pupils develop their character and resilience in an exemplary way and are well prepared for their next stage of education.

The school helps pupils to develop a sense of belonging and connection to their immediate environment and the world beyond school. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their local walks, and deep understanding of local history. Visiting speakers enrich the curriculum and pupils' lives, such as when they heard a first-hand account from a wartime evacuee linked to the pupils' history topic. Pupils also benefit from hearing inspirational talks from local artists and writers.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Staff apply the behaviour policy fairly and consistently. Pupils are happy, safe and are very proud of their school. Staff have high expectations for pupils' achievement. In most subjects and subject areas these expectations are realised.

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well, including in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

The school has an ambitious curriculum. In key stage 1 and key stage 2 it has identified the precise knowledge and skills that it wants pupils to learn. The school's curriculum builds pupils' knowledge in a logical order. Staff give pupils the chance to revisit and strengthen their understanding. Some pupils recall their learning very securely. For example, in science pupils could explain how streamlined shapes would encounter less water resistance. In history, some pupils explained definitions of 'pre-history' and 'the Stone Age' with remarkable depth of understanding.

Reading is a strength of the school. Staff deliver the phonics programme systematically and with strong subject knowledge. If any pupils fall behind in reading, they receive help and catch up with their peers quickly. Pupils with SEND have their needs identified quickly, where necessary, starting with children's effective transitions into the early years. In the Reception class, children adapt to their new school routines quickly. Children in early years focus and engage in their learning well.

Staff check pupils' learning of the curriculum and adjust their teaching appropriately. In most subjects, the school uses assessment information precisely to improve its delivery of curriculum content. For example, in reading, staff check pupils' knowledge closely, which helps them to give pupils the support that they need. As a result, pupils achieve well in their reading. However, in some subjects, staff do not support some pupils' learning as effectively. Some pupils have errors or misconceptions in their knowledge and understanding that are not identified as consistently as possible. For example, in some disadvantaged pupils' writing, repeated errors arise. This weakness highlights that the school's curriculum is not helping some pupils as well as it could.

Pupils attend school regularly. The school has very positive relationships with parents and carers. Where necessary, the school take appropriate, supportive action to manage any declines in pupils' attendance. In lessons and on the playground, pupils are calm and orderly. There is no low-level disruption.

Pupils enjoy the many extra-curricular activities that are available to them through the school's 'Enrichment Charter'. Pupils develop their talents and interests through music, arts and sporting activities including netball, football, cookery and gardening clubs. School visits, such as to an open-air museum that has reconstructions of ancient buildings, support pupils' learning and personal development strongly. Pupils learn about their physical, mental and emotional development, including healthy eating and how to stay safe online. Pupils spoke confidently about their understanding of 'digital footprints' and strong or weak passwords to keep information secure. Pupils learn about road safety and also build their confidence and character through residential stays. By the end of key stage 2, pupils are very well prepared for secondary school.

Trustees support the work of the school effectively. They carry out their roles diligently. They know the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders exemplify the values, caring culture and strong commitment to supporting staff with workload and well-being. This has helped to sustain high standards and to improve some aspects to now be exceptional practice. Trustees, and the school's local committee meet regularly to discuss the school's development. They visit the school to assure themselves that systems are working effectively, such as checks to ensure safe recruitment of appropriate staff. The school engages with parents incredibly well. This is a community and village that is rich in history and has the school, the committed staff team and pupils of St Mary's at its heart.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school does not check what pupils know and can do effectively. Sometimes, pupils do not understand key information securely before the school introduces new learning. The school should ensure that staff identify and resolve errors and misconceptions in pupils' understanding. In doing so, this will help pupils to build their learning more successfully over time.
- Sometimes, from the beginning of the early years, the school does not implement its writing curriculum in the ways that it intends. As a result, by the end of key stage 2, some disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that all staff receive the help and guidance that they need to support all pupils' writing skills successfully.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2019.

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	140026
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10341751
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Friend
CEO of the trust	Paul Kennedy
Headteacher	Sheila Buckley
Website	www.stmaryschidd.org
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Mary's Church of England Primary School joined the Good Shepherd Trust in November 2013.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school has a religious character. It is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Guildford. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 on 26 January 2024. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.

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 and other senior staff.
- The inspector met with the CEO and other trust officers as well as the chair of the local committee.
- Inspectors focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: English and mathematics, and history, and science. For each group of subjects, inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and, where possible, looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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' interest first.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at break and lunch time.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed from parents and carers through Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Carl McCarthy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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