

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Grace Mary Primary School

Hawfield Road, Tividale, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 1LD

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 November 2024

Outcome

Grace Mary Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Grace Mary Primary School are excited and ready to learn. Rigorous school routines help pupils settle quickly to their learning each day. Pupils enjoy learning new things and playing with their friends at their 'amazing' school. The school works tirelessly to ensure all pupils attend school regularly, which they do. Pupils feel safe.

The school's curriculum is consistently applied by staff. It consists of three pillars: exemplary behaviour, a knowledge-rich curriculum and explicit teaching. Pupils demonstrate these through their exceptional achievement, particularly in mathematics. Older pupils enjoy learning Latin. This helps to enhance and improve their English grammar and spelling. In lessons, pupils engage highly in their learning. The school's 'build, challenge, agree, disagree, track' approach helps them to learn well. Pupils want to do their very best. Pupils know and follow the Grace Mary golden rules. Pupils play kindly together at social times. They consistently meet the high behaviour expectations leaders set.

The exceptionally strong enrichment offer helps pupils to learn important life skills, such as managing money and thinking about future careers. Pupils value the vast range of opportunities to broaden their horizons. Orienteering, coding, chess, football academy and the 'Friday mile' are firm favourites.

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

The school's curriculum is impressive in its design. Important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember is carefully organised in a clear sequence of learning. Staff are

highly skilled in teaching the 'Grace Mary Way.' This is regularly updated and refreshed, drawing on best practice. New knowledge is carefully presented so that it builds on previous learning. Staff rigorously check on pupils' learning. They make sure that any misconceptions are addressed immediately. This is rooted in the school's pedagogy: 'practice, practice, practice.' Pupils' work is of a high standard. From pupils' starting points, the curriculum is taught in a way that highly engages pupils to know and remember more over time. All this means the curriculum is consistently delivered to an extremely high standard.

Early reading is prioritised. Staff are very well trained to teach early reading, including phonics. They guide and support pupils successfully. Pupils read books that match the sounds that they learn. Pupils who fall behind receive bespoke support to catch up. They develop a love of reading across the curriculum in all subjects. Pupils learn to read with the confidence and fluency expected for their age. Many exceed this.

Staff carefully consider the provision for the needs of two-, three- and four-year-olds. Language and communication are prioritised. Adults engage children in conversation well. They listen attentively, prompt and introduce new words. Speech and language support, for those children who need it, is highly effective. Early number is very well taught. Children join in eagerly when counting forwards and backwards to ten and beyond. Children learn to take turns and share. They develop independence and sustain high levels of concentration, for example during self-serve snack or working together in the mud kitchen. As a result, children get off to a great start.

The school does all it can to ensure pupils attend school regularly. Barriers to school attendance are identified swiftly. Pupils and their parents and carers get timely help and support. This means that pupils do not miss out on valuable learning. The school quickly identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They get the support they need to achieve well in school. Staff in the specially resourced provision for special educational needs and/or disabilities (specially resourced provision) carefully support pupils to learn. Pupils read, communicate and use mathematics in line with their personal plans. External specialists provide highly effective support for those pupils who need it. Pupils with SEND are successful in all aspects of school life.

The school's values of kindness, health, determination, aspiration, honesty and respect are carefully woven into all aspects of its enrichment offer. The school is aspirational for pupils and prepares them well for their next steps; 'Anything is possible.' Pupils learn to respect difference. They visit places of worship, including a gurdwara, mosque and synagogue. They know about a range of faiths, such as Islam, Sikhism and Christianity. Pupils actively support the well-being of others. They take on responsibilities such as safeguarding champions, class ambassadors and play leaders. Pupils are exceptionally well-prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders rigorously evaluate and review their work. Governors know the school well and are highly ambitious for all pupils. They hold the headteacher to account effectively for the performance of the school. Teachers value the superb professional development and highly positive well-being support from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 outstanding 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 outstanding 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	103945
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10343780
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steven Parkes
Headteacher	Clare Sturmey
Website	www.gracemary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers before- and after-school provision for its pupils.
- The school has recently started to offer a provision for two-year-olds.
- The school uses one registered local authority alternative provision.
- The school has a specially resourced provision, specifically for autism.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- 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 observed pupils during informal times of the day as part of their evaluation of safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector held meetings with the head teacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspector met with governors and held a telephone conversation with a local authority representative. The inspector also talked to pupils, staff and parents to gather information about school life.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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