

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Link Lane, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 2AN

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The theme 'only one you' runs through every part of school life. Leaders and governors are passionate about celebrating difference and diversity. Pupils know that they are all valued and they feel part of the whole school community. Parents and carers appreciate the tailored support they and their children receive. As one parent said, 'St Mary's is a school that individually nurtures all of our children to ensure that they become the best version of themselves.'

Leaders have a clear ambition for every pupil to achieve well and enjoy their education. Pupils rise to these expectations and leave St Mary's well prepared for their future.

Pupils behave well at all times. Leaders help pupils to understand and follow the school rules. Pupils know why the rules matter and they build relationships based on respect. They trust staff to deal with any incidents of bullying or unkind behaviour. Pupils feel safe and well cared for.

Pupils are extremely proud of their school environment, which includes a swimming pool. They describe their forest school sessions with much excitement. Staff provide pupils with many activities to enjoy at play times. These include table tennis, a popular trim trail and a relaxing reading shack.

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

Leaders are clear about their overall curriculum aims and design. They carefully consider how they arrange learning in overarching topics to allow pupils to learn important content in individual subjects, as well as make links between them. In some subjects, leaders have methodically broken down what will be taught into the smaller steps pupils need to learn to build their knowledge over time. In other areas they are still working with subject leaders, who are often new to their post, to refine the content. Therefore, it is not always clear how learning starts in early years and develops over time. As a result, sometimes pupils do not find it easy to remember what they have learned previously. Leaders know this is a priority and are working hard to finish the review of the curriculum.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge across the curriculum. They present learning clearly and select resources carefully to support pupils. Teachers use assessment effectively in order to check pupils' learning and identify pupils who need additional support. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that staff have a range of strategies they can draw on to tailor teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, helping pupils to prepare for their learning with pre-teaching activities, including vocabulary lists. The SENCo is working with subject leaders to ensure that provision for pupils with SEND is further enhanced by considering their specific needs in each subject.

Pupils read well and develop a love of books. Well-trained staff support pupils with their phonics learning from the start of Reception. Pupils use their phonics strategies to develop reading fluency as they move through the school. Pupils with SEND are provided with appropriate support with their reading, if needed. Staff are quick to spot any children who need extra help. Carefully planned sessions allow these pupils to catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy visiting the school library. Staff challenge them to try new authors and widen their reading experiences. Pupils talk with passion about reading. They enjoy spending lunchtime in the reading shack, where they share books with their friends.

Pupils know and respect the school values. They describe them as being the qualities that make a good friend. Staff model the values and talk about them regularly. Pupils understand the link between the school's value of love and the spiritual and moral parts of their curriculum. They are keen to discuss moral and humanitarian dilemmas with empathy and kindness. Pupils learn about the importance of valuing difference. They show tolerance towards differing views and the way people live their lives around the world.

Pupils are provided with rich opportunities outside the classroom. In forest school activities, pupils explore the local environment. They are enthusiastic to learn about environmental issues in the school grounds. The solar and wind powered reading shack is a source of great pride. The eco-council pupils monitor energy use with care. Pupils consider these activities to help them to develop their skills for later life. There are many after-school clubs on offer. These include sports, music and reading opportunities. Leaders do not, however, fully monitor levels of participation for some groups of pupils. This means they cannot be certain why some pupils do not attend clubs.

Governors know the school well. They work closely with school leaders to identify strengths and areas to improve. There is a relentless commitment to continue to improve the school. At the same time, governors and leaders consider staff workload and well-being carefully. There is a shared sense of pride about the school's journey and how the school lies at the heart of the local community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders consider safeguarding in all aspects of school life. They ensure that staff are well trained in identifying and reporting any safeguarding concerns. Records show leaders' tenacity in securing support for pupils and their families. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. They are knowledgeable about online risks and know what to do if they have any worries. Pupils understand the concept of consent and what that means in the context of healthy relationships. Governors understand their statutory responsibilities. They routinely check the processes for employing new staff and how safeguarding systems look after children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some areas of curriculum thinking are not yet fully developed. This means that pupils do not always learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that in completing their curriculum review, it is clear how pupils' learning builds from early years and how it meets the needs of pupils with SEND in individual subjects.
- Much of the curriculum design has rested with senior leaders. They should ensure that subject leaders have the training and development they need to build their expertise in curriculum design and skills as a subject leader.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	126048
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10241207
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	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs of governing body	Andrew Clark and David Shepherd
Headteacher	Samantha Copus
Website	www.st-marys-pulborough.w-sussex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England primary school.
- The school's religious character was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 on 13 November 2019.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, computing and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders, including the special education needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including one of the co-chairs. She also held two separate meetings with an officer from West Sussex local authority and a representative from the Diocese of Chichester.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documentation, including the school's record of recruitment checks. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View and parents' written comments. An inspector also talked with groups of parents on the morning of the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential staff questionnaire.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times. Inspectors took account of pupils' responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Kate Redman	Ofsted Inspector
Nina Marabese	His Majesty's Inspector

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