

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

Yew Tree Road, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2AR

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 January 2025

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and nurturing school. Staff genuinely care about pupils and their well-being. Pupils have many ways to share any worries that they may encounter. The school provides wide-ranging emotional and mental health support from expert staff in school and from external professionals. The school makes sure pupils are safe and feel secure.

The many pupils who join the school partway through the school year receive a warm welcome. Pupils care about each other. At breaktimes, they make sure everyone has someone to play with. Pupils readily work with their peers to help them understand what the school expects. For example, older pupils act as role models to support younger pupils to play together safely. Typically, pupils behave maturely and responsibly. The school deals with bullying swiftly and effectively.

The school has high ambition for pupils' academic achievement. Most pupils meet the school's high expectations. The school also focuses strongly on providing experiences that pupils may not encounter in their everyday lives. It provides a range of extra-curricular activities to help pupils explore new interests. These include various sports such as football, fencing and curling. The school ensures pupils have equal access to what it offers.

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

The school places high importance on developing pupils into articulate speakers who can communicate well from the early years and beyond. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive effective support to quickly become proficient English

speakers. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive daily phonics teaching from expert staff. The school provides parents and carers with comprehensive information about ways to support pupils with reading at home. Pupils who fall behind receive help and support to help them catch up. Pupils read books at home and in school matched to their knowledge of phonics. This helps pupils to swiftly become confident, fluent readers.

The governing body and leaders ensure the school provides an effective education for pupils. Pupils study a wide range of subjects in line with the national curriculum. The school's ambitious curriculum sets out the knowledge and skills for pupils to learn. The school organises core knowledge so that it builds cumulatively from the early years onwards. Pupils regularly recall key information. This allows them to connect ideas together easily. For example, pupils learn methods to multiply numbers both orally and in written form. In Years 5 and 6, pupils use this knowledge to help them calculate the area of shapes.

The school ensures the curriculum is delivered securely. Staff make appropriate adaptations to teaching and resources to support pupils to learn subject content. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school identifies pupils with SEND swiftly. Teaching staff receive training from a range of experts to make appropriate adjustments for pupils' different needs. This helps pupils with SEND to learn successfully alongside their peers. School staff value the training they receive and leaders' engagement with them on matters that may have an impact on their workload.

Regularly, the school checks that pupils know and remember important subject matter. It uses the findings to spot any gaps in pupils' knowledge and adjust what pupils learn next. Typically, the school addresses pupils' misconceptions effectively. However, occasionally the learning activities used to address misunderstandings are not precisely focused. As a result, these gaps are not addressed as quickly as they could be.

The school takes appropriate action to reduce pupil absence. It shares clear messages with pupils and parents about the importance of regular school attendance. The school closely monitors pupils' absence and punctuality. It takes appropriate action where concerns arise. This includes working collaboratively with families to understand the reasons for non-attendance and find ways to help overcome any issues that are identified.

The school makes its expectations about conduct explicit. In the early years, the school uses stories, older pupils and staff role models to teach children to behave responsibly and safely. This helps pupils settle into school routines quickly. Across the school, learning takes place with little disruption.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is well organised. Pupils are taught important, age-appropriate messages about healthy relationships. The school provides pupils with information about how to stay safe, including when online. The school encourages pupils to value diversity. For example, pupils receive information about a range of religious traditions that are different to their own. The school encourages pupils to be confident and develop strength of character effectively. It urges pupils to speak up and share their opinions and suggestions. For example, elected pupil

ambassadors share their peers' opinions with leaders on how to improve the school. These include ideas and suggestions about environmental sustainability and some curriculum subjects.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, the learning activities used to address gaps in pupils' knowledge are not precisely focused. As a result, these misconceptions are not corrected as quickly as they could be. The school should ensure learning activities to address gaps in knowledge are targeted and precise.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2016.

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	109995
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	10341256
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	682
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rezaul Nuru
Headteacher	Pamela O'Brien and Saba Khan (Co-headteachers)
Website	www.stmarys.slough.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England School in the Diocese of Oxford. A section 48 inspection took place in June 2019. The next inspection is due to take place before June 2027.
- The chair of governors and the headteachers have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- The school has a before-school childcare provision for pupils registered at the school.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 held meetings with representatives of the governing body, the headteachers and other senior leaders. An inspector also met with a representative of the Diocese.
- Inspectors 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 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.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's online surveys from parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Andrea Bedeau, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jon Hills

Ofsted Inspector

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