

Inspection of a good school: St Mary's C of E Primary School

Chapel Lawn Road, Bucknell, Shropshire SY7 0AA

Inspection dates: 18 December 2019

Outcome

St Mary's C of E Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like coming to this school and feel safe. They are friendly, polite and work hard. Pupils work well together, help each other and enjoy their learning. Staff and pupils welcome visitors to their school and they are proud of it.

Senior leaders' ambition is to support all pupils to do well in a wide range of subjects. Leaders provide a good range of opportunities to help pupils appreciate the wider world. Pupils undertake musical, art, sporting and other enrichment activities. Pupils benefit from forest school activities, which they thoroughly enjoy. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the survival club and the educational visits, such as the residential trip to York. During the inspection, pupils were playing a range of instruments to a good standard and performing a music concert. Pupils take pride in playing an instrument.

Strong relationships exist between pupils and between staff and pupils. Pupils listen well to each other and show respect. There is a calm atmosphere in classrooms and around school. This means that pupils can learn without distractions. Pupils have a clear understanding of the different types of bullying. Bullying is rare, but when it does happen, staff are quick to deal with it.

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

The school provides a good quality of education. The school is well led and managed by senior leaders. They know what the school does well and what it needs to do better.

Senior leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn and the sequence in which it is taught. This is well planned in subjects such as reading, mathematics and music. In other subjects, such as history, it is still developing. Leaders know that this is an aspect of the school's work that needs further development. They have already made a start and have clear plans in place to review subjects. For example, this term, leaders have begun work with staff to review and develop curriculum plans in history. Leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge and skills they want

pupils to learn.

Senior leaders are now prioritising the development of subject leadership across the school and federation. Teachers from each school in the federation have started to work together in teams to lead subjects. For example, in reading and mathematics this is working well. Leaders are aware that this is in the early stages in some other subjects.

Mathematics has been a successful focus area in the school. In mathematics, teachers plan well-structured lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have made good use of subject expertise among the staff team to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge. This has resulted in a more consistent approach to teaching mathematics throughout the school.

Reading has a high priority in the school. Staff teach reading well. They have received training and are keen to ensure that every pupil becomes a fluent, confident reader. Pupils quickly learn their sounds and begin to use them when reading and writing. Teachers give pupils reading books that match the sounds they know. Adults support any pupil who struggles to keep up. As a result, pupils achieve high standards in the Year 1 phonics check. Pupils develop the skills they need to read for meaning. Adults use a lot of ways to promote reading. Pupils talk with great enthusiasm about the reading passports and extreme reading challenge which encourage them to read a variety of books.

Adults form caring relationships with children in the early years. Children follow routines and mix happily with each other. Children's language skills develop effectively through using regular rhymes and stories. Children's mathematical understanding builds as a result of carefully planned activities.

Leaders make sure that the curriculum meets the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils with SEND are helped to develop confidence and independence, as well as building their subject knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

Governors are committed to the school. They visit the school to find about the school's work and are well informed. They are clear about what they have to do.

Senior leaders have built positive relationships with staff and are realistic about the pressures of workload. Teachers say that they feel well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a vigilant and caring ethos in the school. Leaders check staff are suitable to work with children before they start at the school. Staff receive regular and appropriate training. Staff are confident to report any concerns. Leaders follow up concerns swiftly. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe, including railway safety. The school is near a railway line and pupils have learned about the risks.

Governors know and carry out their legal duties regarding safeguarding well. They visit the school to check systems are in place as they should be.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Senior leadership is strong overall. However, aspects of subject leadership across the school could be further strengthened as some subject leaders are new to their roles. Looking to the future, leaders should continue to provide appropriate support and guidance to develop subject leadership expertise.
- Leaders are taking worthwhile actions, based on their well-considered plans to improve the curriculum. The school's curriculum has been well designed, but its implementation is further ahead in some subjects than in others. In reading, for example, practice is strong. In some other subjects, such as history, staff are still at an early stage of making sure pupils learn and can apply the right subject-specific skills. This needs to be enhanced.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Mary's C of E Primary School to be good on 29 February 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	123537
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10111803
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sandra Davies
Headteacher	Anna Cook
Website	www.bucknellschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 February 2016

Information about this school

- St Mary's C of E Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is one of three schools in the Blue Hills Federation. The federation was formed in September 2017.
- Children in the early years are taught in a class with key stage 1 pupils. All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors met with senior leaders, the governing body, including the chair, and a representative of the local authority. They also met with a representative group of teaching staff.
- The inspectors looked at reading, mathematics and history in depth. This involved meeting leaders responsible for these subjects and visiting lessons to observe learning.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. Inspectors looked at pupils' work to see how well the curriculum is implemented.
- The inspectors checked the school's records for safeguarding and systems for safe

recruitment. They spoke to pupils in class and at lunchtime.

- Inspectors considered 18 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, including written responses. The inspectors also took account of the views of five responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Sarah Somers, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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