

# Inspection of St Mary's CofE Primary School

Chapel Lawn Road, Bucknell, Shropshire SY7 0AA

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Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy life at St Mary's CofE Primary School. Staff quickly forge strong working relationships with pupils. They really get to know them as individuals in this small community. This helps staff to care for them and to make sure they learn well.

Leaders expect pupils to meet a high standard of behaviour. Children settle into good routines in the early years. Pupils are courteous and behave well in lessons. Disruption to learning is rare. Staff resolve any disagreements straight away. The school feels calm and purposeful. Pupils feel safe and play happily at social times.

There are high expectations for what pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. Across their different subjects, they meet these expectations. Pupils quickly become fluent and willing readers. Educational visits and guest speakers add significantly to pupils' experience.

Learning about cultures and traditions other than their own helps pupils to respect others. Pupils can show themselves to be good citizens and to serve others, for example, by helping younger pupils or singing to older people in the church café. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good use of a range of clubs.

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

Reading is a very high priority. Pupils follow a structured phonics programme. They learn sounds and letters in a logical order. Staff use the programme's resources in a consistent way. Staff check on what each pupil knows and can do, and track their reading skills in detail. Books for younger pupils are carefully matched to their phonics knowledge. The school makes sure that pupils read frequently to an adult. The school gives skilful support to any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Across the school, pupils enjoy reading and develop a personal taste in books.

The school has planned an ambitious curriculum carefully. Pupils study all the subjects in the national curriculum. All pupils in a mixed-age class generally study the same topic, but teachers make sure that learning for each year group takes account of what pupils already know. The curriculum balances successfully the different components of each subject. For example, pupils learn about how historians work alongside factual historical knowledge. Learning moves smoothly from one key stage to the next.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They understand what to teach and when. Day by day, staff keep a good check on what pupils are learning. They pick up any misconceptions early and help pupils to remember key knowledge in the longer term. Furthermore, teachers typically use resources well. For example, in mathematics, pupils' use practical equipment that helps them to understand new ideas. However, there are some inconsistencies in how clearly teachers present new knowledge.

The early years focuses effectively on children's language development. The school identifies the correct vocabulary for pupils of all ages to learn. Children in the early years

have good access to a wide range of resources. However, some of these are not adapted precisely to help them to learn. For example, activities do not always reinforce children's understanding of early English and mathematics effectively.

Starting in the early years, the school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND promptly and effectively. Staff draw on detailed guidance to ensure that they meet pupils' needs well. As a result, pupils with SEND make secure progress through the full curriculum.

The school rewards good behaviour and places a strong emphasis on social responsibility. Children in the early years follow well-established routines and learn important social skills. Pupils collaborate well in class and present their work with good care. When a pupil's attendance dips, the school works hard with parents to improve it.

Pupils follow an effective programme of personal, social and health education. This teaches pupils about how to stay healthy and relate well to others. They learn about other cultures and traditions, for instance, in religious education. The school encourages pupils to think about their aspirations and prepares them well for the next stage in their education.

The school works effectively with parents, for example, in supporting younger pupils' reading. The federation contributes significantly to pupils' learning. It allows the school to benefit from staff with specialist skills, and to take part more effectively in competitive sport.

Leaders are thoughtful and evaluate the school well before planning the next steps. Training plays a good part in improving the school. Governors carry out their roles effectively. Everyone works together as a team. Staff feel that leaders are considerate of their workload and are always ready to listen to their opinions.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Teaching is sometimes inconsistent in subjects other than English and mathematics. Where this occurs, pupils' learning is not always as effective as it could be. The school should ensure that teaching is consistently effective across the whole curriculum.
- Some of the resources in early years, especially in the outdoor areas, are not as well developed to support learning as they could be. Children, therefore, do not learn as much as they should when working independently. The school should ensure that early years provision is designed to maximise opportunities for children to develop strong foundations for future learning.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123537
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10343858
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	63
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Di Cosgrove
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anna Cook
<b>Website</b>	bhf.shropshire.sch.uk
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- St Mary's CofE Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. There is considerable variation in the number of pupils in each year group.
- The school is a Church of England faith school within the Diocese of Hereford. The religious character of the school was last inspected in October 2023. The next inspection will be within five years of the last section 48 inspection.
- This school, Clunbury CofE Primary School and Newcastle CofE Primary School are a federation with a single governing body. The headteacher serves as headteacher of all three schools.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator and with curriculum leaders. They also spoke with staff about their experience of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and five other governors. He spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority and with a representative of the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils at social times and with groups of pupils more formally to gather their views about the school.
- 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.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan, information about pupils' behaviour and attendance and the school's curriculum.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. An inspector met with parents at the start of the second day of the inspection. The inspectors also considered responses to a survey for staff.
- The lead inspector listened to a number of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.

## Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Anne Potter

Ofsted Inspector

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