

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane, Askham Richard, York, North Yorkshire YO23 3PD

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2023

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	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff at St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School embody the school's vision of 'small school, big heart, learning and growing together'. The buddy relationships between Years 5 and 6 pupils and the children in early years and key stage 1 are warm and considerate. The older pupils nurture and care for the younger children at playtime, over lunch and in collective worship.

The school has clear behaviour expectations. Pupils understand the stepped approach and are proud when they achieve a 'wow' sticker. There are supportive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are safe and will approach any adult if they have worries. Pupils are confident that adults listen and help resolve their concerns.

The school provides pupils with leadership opportunities, such as collective worship monitors, play and digital leaders. This develops pupils' independence, resilience and organisation skills.

There is a strong connection with the local church. Pupils participate in community events, like the harvest festival and the Christmas service.

The school recognises that the community it serves is not diverse. Consequently, it ensures that pupils experience a range of cultures and world beliefs.

Years 5 and 6 pupils enjoy the opportunity to attend an outdoor adventure residential. Pupils speak positively about 'facing their fears', which they experienced when free falling from a high-wire swing!

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

As a smaller-than-average size primary school, the school is educating pupils from different year groups in one class. There are two curriculum cycles to ensure that pupils in the mixed-age class do not repeat units of work. The school is improving its curriculum offer following a review by leaders. In some subjects like history and geography, the school has carefully considered the sequence of learning. In other subjects like art and design, the school is beginning to formulate the sequencing. There is a lack of curriculum monitoring by the school. This means the school does not have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in each subject.

The school is not checking what pupils know in the wider curriculum. This means the school does not have a clear understanding of what pupils remember. In history, pupils speak passionately about their learning. They can make connections between historical events and place them in chronological order. However, in art, pupils struggle to remember the knowledge and skills they have previously learned.

The school puts reading at the heart of everything they do. There are reading corners in every classroom to promote reading. Pupils use their phonics knowledge

to read unfamiliar words. A small number of pupils need extra phonics support to keep up with their peers. The school provides catch-up sessions for these pupils at the start of each day. This helps to ensure that pupils read fluently and achieve highly in national tests.

The school has identified that pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts does not match the positive end-of-key-stage outcomes. For example, the school knows that some pupils in key stage 2 are not secure with fundamental skills like number bonds. As a result, the school is changing its approach to teaching mathematics, to focus on ensuring that pupils can quickly recall important mathematical facts. Children in Reception have opportunities to write numbers and apply this knowledge in their chosen play activity.

The school has a whole-school approach to teaching relationships and sex education. Pupils know how to stay physically healthy. They are aware of how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils speak positively about equality. The rules and opportunities are the same for all.

The early years environment is bright and attractive. Resources are accessible, enabling children to self-select equipment for their play. Children know the routines, such as wearing a helmet and tabard to ride a bicycle or scooter. In Reception, the school adapts the learning activities to consider the needs of the children. For example, there is an emphasis on improving children's fine motor skills, as this remains an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in some classes, the work for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not adapted sufficiently well. This means the work in pupils' books does not link to their termly target. This is slowing progress for these pupils.

Staff acknowledge the heavy workload associated with the multiple areas of responsibility they have in a small school. However, they are positive about the support and engagement they receive from leaders.

The diocese and local authority recognise the strength in the school's leaders and how successfully the staff work as a team. The governing body have link governor roles associated with curriculum areas. This enables them to understand how the curriculum is being developed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school do not have an effective system for checking pupils' knowledge across the wider curriculum. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are not

identified. The school should ensure that they use their checks on pupils' knowledge across the curriculum to influence future curriculum thinking.

- Some aspects of the wider curriculum are not fully developed. In some subjects, the school does not have a clear understanding of the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. The school should ensure that they refine their curriculum thinking so that pupils learn well across all areas of the curriculum.
- The school has not ensured that staff receive sufficient training and time to monitor the impact of their subject. As a result, the school does not know if the curriculum is being delivered in the way it intended. The school should ensure that more training and monitoring happens so they can make judgements about the quality of the education it is providing.

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	121547
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10290095
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	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Glynis Ashford
Headteacher	Richard Moss
Website	www.stmarysprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 July 2011, under section of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average size primary.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of the school was in October 2016. The timescales for reinspection have been extended because of COVID-19.

Information about this inspection

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

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, staff and pupils.
- Meetings were also held with representatives of the governing body, the diocese and the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 views of parents, carers, staff and pupils were considered from meeting with them and from the responses to Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sam O'Brien	Ofsted Inspector

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