

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

Brookpit Lane, Clymping, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 5QU

Inspection date:

5 March 2024

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This vibrant and happy school nurtures pupils to grow into independent and resilient learners with a thirst for education. Pupils immerse themselves in exciting learning experiences, such as trips to the local beach or building dens in forest schools. Here pupils practise important skills, such as teamwork, while extending their knowledge about animals in their habitats. Pupils explore a curriculum designed to prepare them well for the next stages of learning.

Pupils speak proudly of how everyone is welcome in their school. The school values of 'service, courage and respect' are evident in the kind way that pupils treat each other. 'Class Captains' speak confidently in weekly assemblies to share inspiring quotes and prayers that remind pupils to uphold these important values. Pupils know staff have high expectations of behaviour. Clear routines, such as 'legendary lining-up' and 'wonderful walking', make the school a serene place to learn well.

Pupils flourish in this school because staff know each individual extremely well. Staff take great care to provide precise support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps pupils with SEND to become happy and confident learners.

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

The school has designed a new curriculum to provide pupils with 'memorable moments' that develop pupils' knowledge and skills. Learning is commonly enriched through purposefully designed experiences, such as online workshops with the Royal Air Force and a visit from an airline pilot. Here pupils learn how mathematics applies when building aircraft. Consequently, pupils recognise how they can use their learning to understand real-world concepts.

Pupils regularly practise important skills, such as multiplication tables during 'smart starts' at the beginning of each lesson. This helps pupils recall knowledge with increased confidence. In some lessons, teachers do not always check how well pupils understand

what they are learning before moving on to new concepts. This potentially limits how well pupils understand larger and more complex ideas.

The school emphasises the importance of reading. As soon as children start in Reception, they receive the help they need to read with fluency and confidence. Story time is used to help children develop their imagination. They create their own superhero stories, which they act out with their teachers. In other classes, pupils read from a huge range of well-selected texts. These texts help provide context to the topics that pupils are learning, for example the importance of recycling plastics in The Gambia. Pupils who need help to read with fluency receive additional support. Consequently, most pupils use their reading skills to read and write well in other subjects.

Pupils enjoy school because they feel safe and well cared for. Consequently, most pupils attend school regularly. The school provides effective help for pupils and their families to overcome barriers that make regular attendance more difficult.

In lessons, pupils listen well to adults. They learn to help each other to achieve their best. Pupils form positive friendships. They told inspectors that bullying is very rare because staff take time to help pupils sort out differences of opinion. The school encourages pupils to show 'courageous advocacy' and stand up for what they know is right. There are plentiful opportunities for pupil leadership. Pupil leaders told inspectors that they are proud of the 'Buddy Bench' they designed, where pupils can sit if they need to find a friend to play with.

Assemblies are a time for pupils to celebrate each other. Pupils sing and dance together to the school songs. They joyfully clap for their friends when they receive rewards, such as the 'Golden Merit' or 'Dojo Cup'. Careful consideration ensures pupils' learning extends beyond the academic curriculum. Clubs and visits help pupils develop their talents and interests, such as playing rounders or joining gardening club. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe and healthy. Assemblies and workshops from charities and external agencies further embed key learning about how to be safe in the community.

Staff speak highly of the new leadership of the school. They feel well supported to provide the best education that all pupils deserve. Parents also recognise the valuable support that staff provide for pupils with SEND. They feel included in their child's education and they support leaders' actions to improve this small and very special school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always check how well pupils understand concepts before moving lessons on to new topics. This means gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always addressed and pupils do not learn as much as they could. The school must ensure that

staff have the training they need to identify and address any gaps in learning so all pupils can achieve well across the full curriculum.

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 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in October 2014.

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

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| Unique reference number | 126024 |
| Local authority | West Sussex |
| Inspection number | 10321909 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 96 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Kate Beacher |
| Headteacher | Justin Murray |
| Website | www.stmarysclyming.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 3 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in March 2023.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Chichester. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in October 2023.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The lead inspector met with senior leaders, staff and representatives, including the chair of the local governing body. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative from the local authority and from the Diocese of Chichester.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector 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. The lead inspector also listened to some pupils read aloud to familiar adults.

- 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.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life. They also took account of the views of parents, carers and staff through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Michelle Payne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Linda Culling

His Majesty's Inspector

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