

Inspection of a good school: St Marys C of E Primary and Nursery, Academy, Handsworth

Hamstead Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands B20 2RW

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 November 2023

Outcome

St Marys C of E Primary and Nursery Academy, Handsworth, continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Jo Booker. This school is part of the Fioretti Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Claire Grainger, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Phillip Wood.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school that wants pupils to flourish, and they do. Pupils are cherished. They know that they are valued and that everyone is welcome in their school. Strong relationships with staff encourage pupils to report any concerns, and pupils feel safe.

Pupils achieve well. They are full of enthusiasm for their learning. In lessons, pupils focus on their work and pay careful attention to their teachers. They behave well in lessons and around the school to meet the school's high expectations for behaviour and learning.

Pupils are considerate of the feelings and needs of others. Any unkind behaviour is rare and dealt with swiftly by members of staff. Pupils readily offer help and take care of one another. Pupils take up positions of responsibility with pride, through a democratic process, including the school council and learning ambassadors. The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to ensure that they can be part of this team of pupil leaders.

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

This is a school that wants the very best for all pupils. Leaders identify areas for improvement with precision, which keeps a sharp focus on the school moving forward. The school has constructed a very ambitious curriculum for pupils to build a sense of identity, culture and heritage. The school ensures that the curriculum builds logically across all year groups. This starts in the early years. Supported well by adults, children

explore learning with enthusiasm. They become independent learners, ready for the next stage of their learning journey.

As a result of high-quality training, teachers have a good understanding of what they teach. Teachers explain content clearly and use questions to extend pupils' understanding. Staff regularly check what pupils know and remember over time. They make sure that pupils have lots of opportunities to go back over what they have learned before. Teachers address misconceptions swiftly.

Pupils with SEND are swiftly identified, including in the early years. The school has made many recent positive changes to support pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers. However, the school has not yet evaluated the effectiveness of these new approaches. As a result, a small minority of pupils are not yet getting the support they need to achieve as well as they should.

Leaders have made reading a priority. All staff have received comprehensive training to teach reading well. The school regularly checks how well pupils are learning to read. Staff identify any pupils who fall behind in phonics and provide support so that they catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy and achieve well in reading. Carefully selected texts help to broaden pupils' vocabulary and knowledge.

Pupils are attentive, engaged and motivated in the classroom. They do not give up easily when they find tasks demanding. This starts in the early years, where children learn to share and take turns, promoting their social and emotional development.

The school has effective systems for ensuring that pupils attend school regularly. They ensure that attendance is carefully monitored and take effective action if there are patterns of concern.

Pupils learn how to make safe, informed, responsible choices. They recognise healthy relationships and understand and celebrate the beliefs, cultures and traditions of people from diverse backgrounds.

The school actively promotes pupils' personal development. It has thought carefully about the opportunities that it provides beyond the curriculum. The school provides pupils with a rich set of opportunities to develop their interests and talents. Many pupils, including pupils with SEND, attend a range of clubs and wider opportunities. These include a range of sports clubs, ballet scholarships, instrumental tuition and chorister opportunities through their links with the local church. Pupils develop as well-rounded citizens who contribute to society. For example, they actively contribute to the decisions made to support charities that are close to pupils' hearts.

The school seeks to engage with parents and carers through weekly workshops, coffee mornings and cultural surveys. A small number of parents raised concerns with Ofsted about bullying and safeguarding at the school. However, the inspector found that safeguarding systems are effective and that systems to act when perceived bullying occurs are robust.

Governors and trustees know the school well. With leaders, they ensure that staff workload and well-being are fully considered. A thorough programme of professional development, including school- and trust-based training, helps to keep staff up to date. They are proud to work at the school and they appreciate the high level of support from leaders and the trust.

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 has recently implemented a new approach for supporting pupils with SEND. However, it is at the early stages of implementation and a small number of pupils are not yet receiving the support that they need. The school should carefully assess the effectiveness of these changes to ensure that all pupils with SEND receive the support they need to learn well.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2018.

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	139041
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10294588
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	401
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Phillip Wood
Headteacher	Jo Booker
Website	www.stmryb20.bham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the Fioretti Trust in March 2021.
- The school is within the Diocese of Birmingham. The school's last section 48 inspection was in March 2018. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The inspector talked to a representative from the Diocese.

- The inspector met with representatives from the local governing body and the board of trustees.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer and the school improvement officer from the trust.
- The inspector talked to the head of operations from the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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 a sample of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. Minutes of local governing body meetings and reports from external reviews were also scrutinised.
- The inspector looked at records of pupils' attendance and behaviour. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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 inspector talked to parents at the start of the school day. The inspector also reviewed the responses to the staff and parent survey and gathered the views of staff and pupils through discussion.

Inspection team

Cathy Young, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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