

Inspection of a good school: St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mill Race, Stanstead Abbots, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 8BZ

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 November 2023

Outcome

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending St Andrew's Primary. They look forward to the interesting and exciting learning the school offers. The school's vision of 'learning to love and love to learn' links successfully to everything that happens at the school. This creates a caring and nurturing environment where pupils feel happy and safe.

Pupils enjoy studying a broad and interesting curriculum. It helps them to achieve well. They learn about what is special in the area where they live.

Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of them. They always try to do the best that they can. Pupils know how to behave well in school and how to be kind to each other. This creates a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils can learn and play without disruption.

Pupils appreciate the range of clubs, activities and trips they can experience. There are regular opportunities for the older pupils to have responsibilities. They can also compete in local sports events and take part in musical and drama productions. This helps them to develop their interests and become responsible citizens.

The school shares a lot of useful information with its community. Parents appreciate this and feel welcomed and supported by the school.

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

The school has considered what curriculum is best for the pupils. They have developed a curriculum that is broad and stimulating. The curriculum begins in the early years. The school has identified the important knowledge and vocabulary they want all pupils to

learn. They are ambitious and want pupils to be able to use this knowledge to be able to think like experts, such as historians, geographers, scientists, musicians and artists.

The school prioritises the learning of reading and phonics. The reading curriculum is well thought through. Children learn to read from the very start of Reception. They learn to read consistently well. Teachers identify pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge quickly. These pupils receive extra teaching from staff who are well trained and skilled in providing effective support. As a result, pupils gain the knowledge they need to read. The school promotes a love of reading effectively to the older pupils. These older pupils enjoy reading a range of diverse and culturally rich books. Pupils enjoy reading. They read regularly.

The school accurately identifies pupils who need support to access their learning. For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), teachers skilfully adapt the curriculum and activities. As a result, pupils with SEND successfully learn the same knowledge as their peers.

Teachers explain learning clearly to pupils. Learning is delivered step by step. This helps pupils to build on what they have learned before. The school has established clear systems for checking how well pupils are achieving at the end of a unit of work or topic. Staff use this information to adapt the curriculum to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, in lessons, teachers sometimes do not check thoroughly enough if all pupils have a secure understanding. This means teachers sometimes do not spot if pupils are ready to move on to new learning or have any misconceptions.

In the early years, the youngest children follow firmly established routines. This helps develop very positive attitudes to learning. Adults develop strong relationships with the youngest children. They maximise opportunities to engage with children to develop their vocabulary and thinking. As a result, children get off to a strong start in the early years.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. In lessons, they listen to their teachers and follow instructions. They do not disrupt the learning of others.

The school's strong ethos and values help pupils to become good citizens. Pupils believe in fairness and treating everyone equally. They know how to keep themselves safe and how to be healthy. The experiences and opportunities provided by the school help pupils to widen their interests and enjoy their days at school.

Leaders, including governors, are aware that pupils did not do as well as they should have in some of the national curriculum tests and assessments in 2023. Although these weaker outcomes were not normal for the school, leaders have looked carefully at why pupils did not achieve as well last year. In response, they have made changes to aspects of the curriculum. As a result, most of the pupils currently in the school are now achieving the high expectations set for them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- During lessons, some teachers do not consistently check pupils' understanding thoroughly. As a result, some pupils are carrying misconceptions forward and a small number of pupils are not ready for learning new knowledge. The school should ensure that agreed approaches for checking pupils' understanding of new learning are implemented consistently during lessons.

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 November 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

Unique reference number	117407
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10294981
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anne Pulford
Headteacher	Helen Gillingham
Website	www.standrews323.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is a Church of England School in the Diocese of St Albans.
- An inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school's denominational education and worship, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in January 2023. The next Section 48 inspection will take place within eight years of this date.
- The school operates a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school has provision for three-year-olds as part of its early years foundation stage.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- 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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, the leader with responsibility for the provision for pupils with SEND, and teaching and support staff. The inspector also met with the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector: discussed the curriculum with subject leaders; 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 also discussed the curriculum in some other areas, including physical education, geography and personal, social, health and economic education.
- The inspector considered the views of pupils, staff and parents. This included reviewing submissions and free-text responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Rod Warsap, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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