

Inspection of St Matthias Church of England Primary School

Cromwell Road, Malvern Link WR14 1NA

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 June 2024

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	Not previously inspected as an academy converter

The headteacher of this school is Virginia Beale. This school is part of Spire Church of England Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Geraint Roberts, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rosemary Sara Shorter.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are welcoming, polite and respectful at St Matthias Church of England Primary School. Each day they try hard to live the school's ethos of 'aspire, achieve, believe.' Staff care, they do their best to make sure pupils achieve well, particularly in mathematics. There is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Pupils are safe here.

The school rules 'ready, safe, respectful' are consistently applied by all staff. Pupils know what is expected of them. They listen and engage well in lessons. At social times they are kind to one another. Older pupils support and encourage younger pupils to take part in games and make new friends. Pupils say that occasionally they fall out. They resolve minor disputes among themselves. On rare occasions when behaviour falls short of the school's expectations, restorative conversations help pupils to think about the impact of their behaviour on others.

Older pupils look forward to spending time with their friends and learning new skills at the yearly outdoor residential. Pupils enjoy opportunities to deepen their knowledge in subjects such as history, geography and science through visits to museums, fieldwork trips or visiting workshops in school. Clubs such as football, choir and cricket help pupils to widen their interests.

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

Pupils get off to a great start in their reading. This is because staff are highly skilled. They provide effective teaching and pupils apply their phonics knowledge well when reading books that match the sounds they learn. Any pupil that falls behind in their reading is quickly identified and supported to catch up swiftly. Pupils are passionate about reading. Visiting authors, storytelling festivals, a book sharing library, reading prizes and a reading cafe all help to instil a love of reading. Parents and carers value reading workshops which help them to support their child when reading at home. As a result, pupils read with the confidence and accuracy expected for their age.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. The school works tirelessly with a range of external agencies to ensure pupils' additional needs are identified swiftly and prioritised. Staff make sure pupils with SEND get the right help and support to be successful in school. Parents are extremely appreciative of the school's work in this area.

The school has created an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. Knowledge is carefully ordered so that learning builds on the things that pupils have learned before. Across most lessons, teachers make regular checks on pupils' learning. Where this happens, misconceptions are identified and addressed quickly so that pupils know what to improve and how to improve it. This helps pupils to make sense of their learning. However, in a few subjects, teachers do not always make sure gaps in pupils'

knowledge are closed before moving on. Where this happens, new learning does not build successfully on the things pupils already know. This holds pupils back.

Children in the early years achieve well from their starting points. Staff work with parents to carefully plan and meet each child's learning needs. Children learn to take turns, share and follow routines. Children have lots of opportunities to practise and use numbers. They develop a strong understanding of early mathematical knowledge. Vocabulary and communication are prioritised, and most make strong progress. However, a few children struggle to develop an effective pencil grip or form letters correctly. This means they do not learn to write with the fluency expected for their age.

The school has an effective personal development offer for all pupils. Pupils understand the importance of healthy and safe relationships. They know how to keep themselves safe online. Local police workshops enhance this aspect of the school's work. The school provides high-quality pastoral support for all pupils. The school's therapy dog contributes to 'Wellbeing Wednesdays'. Pupils develop a secure understanding of different faiths and different festivals through story, dance and shared experiences. This helps pupils to understand and respect difference. Pupils live the school's values such as 'courageous advocacy' by fundraising for a Leukaemia charity. They take on responsibilities such as Worship warriors and school council representatives. This helps them to develop their social and moral responsibility.

Leaders know the school and its community well. They identify the right priorities for improvement. Lots of work has gone into improving attendance rates and reducing persistent absence. However, there is further work to do to identify and overcome barriers to good school attendance for a few pupils. There is great rigour in how the trust holds leaders to account for the school's performance. It provides highly effective challenge and support. Staff feel well supported by leaders to manage their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers do not always use assessment well enough to check pupils' prior learning. This means that, in some cases, pupils cannot demonstrate and recall previous learning when needed. The school should ensure that teachers are clear on the specific prior learning pupils need to know and

remember so that essential learning is embedded into their long-term memory across all subjects.

- There is an inconsistent approach to the teaching of fine motor skills and handwriting in the early years. This results in variability in expectations and inconsistency, which impacts a few pupils as they move through the school. The school should set out clearly how early writing is taught so that pupils learn to write effectively from the start and build handwriting fluency effectively as they move through the school.
- Despite the school's work, a few pupils do not attend school often enough. This means they miss out on important learning. The school should continue to work with parents and external partners to overcome any barriers to good attendance and instil the importance of regular school attendance.

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	147903
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10322918
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	189
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rosemary Sara Shorter
Headteacher	Virginia Beale
Website	www.stmatthiasceprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy converter

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Spire Church of England Multi-Academy Trust.
- There are a higher than national proportion of pupils with SEND.
- This is a Church of England primary school. The most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in November 2017. Its next inspection will be approximately eight years from the date of the last section 48.
- The school runs its own breakfast club and after-school club.
- The school uses one alternative provision.
- St Matthias Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy in March 2020. When its predecessor school, St Matthias Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2018, it was judged to be inadequate overall.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography, science and mathematics. 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 samples of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at samples of pupils' work and held discussions with the leaders about the art, history and music curriculum.
- The inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult and reviewed reading resources.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation on the school's website.
- 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 inspectors observed pupils in lessons and at other times during the day.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leader and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the trust and spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Worcester.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, pupil surveys and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Steer

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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