

Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Crewe

Dane Bank Avenue, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 8AD

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to be members of this caring and nurturing school community. They get on well together and make lots of friends. Pupils benefit from the strong relationships that they have with staff. They know that staff care about them. Pupils who are new to school are warmly welcomed. They settle into school life quickly.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. In lessons and around school, pupils behave well. Any occasional arguments are sorted out quickly. Pupils said that there is always someone to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. When bullying does occur, it is dealt with effectively by staff. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Leaders have high expectations for what pupils should achieve. In the main, pupils achieve well. Staff provide effective support, including for pupils who are new to the country and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils enjoy the clubs that they attend such as French, art and sports clubs. They talked excitedly about the choir performances that they take part in. Pupils are proud to make a positive difference to their local community, for example, by supporting a local food bank. Pupils contribute to school life by taking on leadership responsibilities. They relish becoming school councillors, librarians or digital leaders. They are excited to be involved in creating and designing the school's planned peace garden.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. In 2022, the proportion of Year 6 and Year 2 pupils meeting the expected standard in reading was significantly lower than the national average. The proportion of Year 2 pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics was also lower than the national average. However, this data does not reflect the progress that many pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and those who join the school later than other pupils, make. In addition, leaders have taken action to improve outcomes, including strengthening the curriculums for reading and mathematics and the help available for individual pupils. As a result, current pupils are supported to achieve well.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. All pupils benefit from a carefully constructed phonics programme, delivered by well-trained staff. Children begin to follow the phonics programme from the Nursery class. They learn the sounds linked to letters. As children enter the Reception Year, children gain the knowledge that they need to read words and simple sentences.

New arrivals to the school, including pupils who speak English as an additional language, quickly begin to learn phonics. Staff are quick to identify those pupils who

need extra help in reading. The support that these pupils receive helps them to become fluent readers.

Books are carefully matched to the sounds that pupils know. Older pupils talk about the books that they are reading. They understand the importance of reading and how it will help them in later life.

Recently, school leaders have made changes to some subject curriculums. Teachers have mainly adapted well to these changes. Most teachers know what they need to teach and when they need to teach it. They design activities that help to deliver the curriculum effectively.

In a small number of subjects, however, these changes to the curriculum are not consistently implemented across the school. This means that a few pupils' learning is a little uneven in these subjects. Leaders' checks on how well these new curriculums are being delivered are not sharply focused enough. Therefore, leaders are not fully aware of the variations across these subjects. They do not ensure that some teachers receive sufficient guidance and support to deliver these curriculums well.

Teachers usually explain new learning clearly. They often use leaders' assessment systems effectively to check whether pupils have understood and retained key knowledge and concepts. In a few subjects, leaders' systems to check pupils' learning do not allow teachers to identify with sufficient precision whether pupils have learned the essential subject knowledge and concepts that they should. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and understanding in these subjects.

Pupils with SEND are identified quickly and accurately by leaders. These pupils benefit from a range of carefully planned support. As a result, most pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Where required, leaders have put in place individual learning plans for some pupils with more complex SEND. These are delivered well by staff.

Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils cooperate well when learning and are well mannered. Their positive behaviour reflects their understanding of the importance of respect.

Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of the world beyond their school and local community. Through the curriculum, and in assemblies, pupils learn about people with different faiths and those with different types of families.

Governors know the school well. They hold leaders to account effectively and provide appropriate support when required. Staff share leaders' determination to provide a high-quality education for all. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff receive suitable and regular safeguarding training. Staff understand their important role in keeping pupils safe. Leaders and staff know the pupils' families well and have built strong relationships. They are alert to any subtle changes in a pupil's behaviour and/or character. Any concerns are recorded and reported promptly. Where necessary, leaders work with external agencies to support pupils and their families.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe. They are clear about how to stay safe online and they know what to do if they have any concerns. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and fire safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders do not focus sharply enough on how well changes to the curriculum are being implemented. In these subjects, some teachers do not receive sufficient guidance to deliver these curriculums as intended. Leaders should ensure that monitoring is sharply focused on ensuring that the amended curriculums are taught consistently well and that support is provided for teachers where it is needed.
- In a small number of subjects, leaders' systems to check pupils' learning do not allow teachers to identify with sufficient precision whether pupils have learned the essential subject knowledge and concepts that they should. As a result, a few pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders should ensure that they refine their assessment systems in these subjects so that teachers are well equipped to check that pupils' knowledge and understanding are secure.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government

pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	111342
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10256065
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	614
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	James Duncan
Headteacher	Cathryn Wright
Website	www.stmaryscrewe.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The governing body is responsible for a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2023.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, design technology and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.

- Inspectors also spoke with subject leaders, spoke to pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors talked with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour, pupil premium, early years, SEND and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe. They discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff. They also checked the single central record.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about safeguarding and their wider experience of school. They looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and education. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke to parents/carers by telephone.

Inspection team

Rebecca Jewitt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Schelene Ferris	Ofsted Inspector
Amanda Edwards	Ofsted Inspector
Frith Murphy	His Majesty's Inspector

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