

Inspection of a good school: St Mary's CofE Controlled Primary School, Byfleet

Hart Road, Byfleet, West Byfleet, Surrey KT14 7NJ

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

Outcome

St Mary's CofE Controlled Primary School, Byfleet continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

A warmly inclusive ethos ensures high ambitions for all in this joyful and successful school. Consistently high expectations are fulfilled through caring relationships which support exemplary behaviour. Pupils proudly showcase school values of kindness, trust and courage. They are supported to achieve well across the curriculum and thrive emotionally as a result of exceptional pastoral care.

Well-being and mental health are prioritised for everyone. One parent commented, 'The nurturing environment makes the school feel like a family.' Outdoor learning, play therapy, counselling and lunch time nurture groups boost the welfare of pupils every day. Pupils adore the well-being dog, and families appreciate the valuable support of the home school link worker. Disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit particularly well from the school's rich offer of support.

The school's bespoke lessons on 'life skills' equip pupils for life beyond the academic, teaching them to be helpful and active citizens. A wide range of leadership roles enable pupils to make a tangible difference to the school community. 'Peer mediators' help younger pupils to resolve any fallouts. The enthusiastic 'play leaders' lead physical activities to increase lunch time enjoyment. 'Eco leaders', 'collective crew' and 'tranquillity team' deliver projects to further enhance and enrich the school environment.

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

Children are thriving in the caring early years provision. In Nursery, children are immersed in language and creative opportunities to socialise, learn and develop. In Reception, children learn phonics enthusiastically through purposeful activities to practise their skills with new sounds. As pupils move through the school, they become fluent and able readers. Staff check pupils' recall to identify gaps, then swiftly provide help to anyone who needs extra support. Knowledgeable staff provide one to one reading practice with well-matched texts to ensure that nobody is left behind. Also starting strongly in early years, mathematics and writing are taught well. Pupils acquire impressive knowledge of

mathematical concepts through a consistent and effective approach. They succeed well in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Support for pupils with SEND is a strength of the school. Leaders and staff regularly meet to evaluate pupils' needs. Pupils benefit from precise support to help them access learning with independence. Everyone accesses the school's broad curriculum. Pupils with SEND achieve well, and particularly strong progress has been achieved with writing. Every classroom is inclusive and responsive to pupils' sensory and emotional needs. Pupils with autism or dyslexia blossom with consistent help across all classes.

The school curriculum has been planned with meticulous detail and high ambition for all. These aspirations are met for many, with pupils often remembering key content over time. For example, in history, pupils can connect their learning across different historical themes to develop rich understanding of the past. Teachers check for pupils' misconceptions and adapt tasks to include and engage all pupils. Sometimes in foundation subjects, pupils remember memorable activities better than detailed knowledge. Leaders have identified this, and are redesigning tasks to boost pupils' long term retention and understanding across every subject.

Behaviour is brilliant. Pupils are friendly, kind and respectful. Leaders and staff show compassion and care, helping pupils to feel special, valued and safe. If pupils need help to regulate their emotions, the care they receive is transformative. Pupils learn to understand and manage their feelings, so everyone can succeed. As a result, learning is not disrupted. Classrooms are consistently calm and industrious. Attendance is in line with the national average, and persistent absence is now well below average, because of diligent work by the school.

There are extensive opportunities to boost pupils' personal development. Relationship education and online safety provision help to keep pupils safe and prepared for modern Britain. Spiritual development is enriched through links with the church. Pupils' learning about a range of faiths is enhanced by visits to places of worship, including a local mosque and synagogue. Pupils are also proud to represent the school in an array of sports competitions. There are clubs, trips and events for everyone, including music and theatre opportunities, and the school always ensures that the low numbers of disadvantaged pupils benefit especially well. Specific experiences and opportunities for pupils with SEND strengthen wider development for all.

Leaders are inspirational, compassionate and reflective. They give unwavering support to the whole school community. Staff are unanimous in their praise for leaders. Everyone feels highly supported. Professional development is prioritised to ensure that staff expertise continually advances. This success has been achieved with the diligent support and challenge provided by knowledgeable, insightful and dedicated governors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, lesson activities do not consistently ensure that all pupils learn key knowledge securely. As a result, some pupils have not yet developed long term retention of key content. The school must ensure that tasks enable all pupils to securely learn and build key knowledge and skills over time.

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 March 2019.

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	125150
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10341574
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	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Geoff Hurst
Headteacher	Jacque Chambers
Website	www.stmarys-byfleet.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Guildford. The school last received a section 48 inspection in February 2024.
- The school has a nursery for three-year-old children.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this graded 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. 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 the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteacher, SENDCo, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.

- The inspector met with four governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke by telephone with representatives from the diocese and the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors 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 inspector also discussed and evaluated some pupils' work in geography, English, science and design and technology.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read. He observed catch-up interventions to evaluate how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- The inspector gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer, and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- 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 considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspector evaluated responses to the pupil survey and spoke with a range of pupils in meetings, lessons and break times.
- The inspector took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Scott Reece, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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