

Inspection of St Alban's Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Morthen Road, Wickersley, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S66 1EU

Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

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	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like their cheerful, welcoming school. Its distinctively Christian ethos contributes well to pupils' spiritual, cultural and moral development. Pupils are respectful and polite. They show a deep appreciation of the world around them.

Pupils say that they feel safe and happy. They are sociable and get along well with their teachers. Older pupils look after their younger friends in a caring manner. Pupils behave well. Bullying is rare, and attendance is good.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to their work. They find learning interesting and fun. Pupils like having visitors. They enjoy taking part in clubs and competitions and going on trips. Such opportunities excite their interests and strengthen their talents.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. Pupils achieve well. They do better than others nationally in phonics, writing and mathematics. Most curriculum leaders know their subject inside out. They plan and sequence learning effectively. New programmes of work are in place for some subjects, including art and history. These are helping teachers to know exactly what to teach and when to teach it.

Several governors are new. Some understand their roles and responsibilities well, while others are still learning. Suitable plans are in place to refine the effectiveness of governance.

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

The executive headteacher and head of school have built a strong team of happy staff. Staff and pupils are proud to work and learn here. There is a warm, convivial atmosphere. Adults and pupils smile a great deal at each other. Pupils say that teachers are kind and will listen to them if they have any worries.

Leaders want the best for every child. They take care to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as others. So too do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In 2019, all pupils in Year 1 met the expected standard in phonics. In each key stage, pupils' achievements in writing and mathematics are above national averages year on year.

Leaders prioritise reading. They know it is crucial to pupils' success across the curriculum. Appealing reading areas adorn classrooms. Books are all around. Staff read to pupils with enthusiasm. Most pupils read regularly to adults. Pupils' books are usually well matched to their phonics knowledge.

Children in early years are well looked after by calm, caring staff. Children love books and numbers. They get off to a quick start in reading. Phonics starts in Nursery and happens daily. Reception children write words such as 'rain', 'chain' and 'sprain' correctly.

Leaders found some achievements in reading in 2019 disappointing. In key stage 2, fewer pupils than predicted did well; 80% reached the expected standard. Leaders acted immediately. New resources and systems are in place. Pupils read more often. They practise, discuss and embed new vocabulary. Teachers frequently check pupils' understanding. Current pupils in key stage 2 read fluently, quickly and with appropriate understanding.

The curriculum enhances pupils' experiences. Pupils like many subjects. They enjoy competitions and after-school clubs. Physical education (PE), music and drama are favourites. Pupils' resilience, cooperation and stamina are well developed.

The school's Christian ethos encourages respect. Pupils' spirituality, morality and cultural awareness develop well. They grow increasingly curious about the world around them. Pupils are polite. They respond quickly to teachers' instructions and requests. There are few incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens. Leaders' systems for recording and managing incidents, however, vary in quality. This sometimes makes it tricky for leaders to spot trends and patterns.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain ideas and vocabulary well. Teachers use assessment effectively and build on pupils' existing knowledge well in most subjects. This helps pupils to learn the most important content as they move from one year to the next.

In most subjects, what pupils need to learn is clear. Subject leaders plan and sequence the most important vocabulary and concepts in each year group carefully. Most leaders know what is working well and what could be better. A few leaders are less confident to explain how well pupils are doing in their subject. In a few subjects, the connection with the early years curriculum is less evident.

In some subjects, including history and art, leaders are putting in place new schemes of work. These are helping staff to meet the aims of the national curriculum. Leaders know which schemes still need embedding and/or further work.

A recent review of governance is helping to increase its effectiveness. The chair of the governing body is supporting governors to further refine the quality of their work. Governors' understanding of the views of parents and carers, staff and pupils is growing. They are increasingly effective in holding leaders at all levels to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff get regular child protection training. They understand their duties to care for and protect pupils from harm. Staff know the signs of abuse and neglect. They know how to report concerns. Their training has helped them to understand the risks associated with county lines and female genital mutilation.

Leaders have a new system for recording incidents online. It is beginning to help them to track issues more systematically and to check for patterns.

Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after by teaching staff. They know what to look out for when they are using technology.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are embedding some new programmes of work, including those in history and art. They should ensure that pupils' existing knowledge is built on cumulatively in each subject. They should make sure that the most important vocabulary and content are spelled out clearly and sequenced effectively in teachers' planning. Leaders should ensure that each curriculum development plan takes the early years into account.
- Subject leaders have secure subject knowledge themselves. Most focus well on developing their area of the curriculum. Some leaders, however, have fewer opportunities to systematically check the quality of teaching and learning in their area of responsibility. Subject leaders should check regularly to make sure that pupils are learning and remembering the right things at the right time. They should ensure that pupils are storing the most important content and vocabulary in their long-term memories year on year.
- Several governors are experienced and confident in executing their duties of governance. Others are less so. Governors should build on their existing understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They should take care to explore the views of all stakeholders, including staff and pupils, holding leaders at all levels fully to account for the quality of education.
- Leaders record incidents and concerns. They have put in place a new online system. However, several systems are in use and records vary in quality. At times, it is difficult for leaders to see precisely what happened and what actions were taken; who did what and when takes time to unravel. It sometimes becomes tricky for leaders to spot patterns and to identify next steps. Leaders should make sure that systems are consistent. They should ensure that logs are meticulously well detailed and maintained, and stored chronologically in an easy-to-access manner.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	141455
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10121911
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	241
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	David Lewis
Headteacher	Alison Adair (executive headteacher)
Website	www.wsap.academy
Date of previous inspection	20–21 September 2011

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in 2014. It is now part of The Diocese of Sheffield Academies Trust (DSAT).
- Since the predecessor school's inspection in 2011, the headteacher has become an executive headteacher with responsibility for three other schools. A head of school was appointed in 2014.
- Most governors are new since the predecessor school was inspected.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place on 3 October 2017. It was judged outstanding.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

The previous 'outstanding' judgement reflected the school's overall effectiveness in September 2011 under the relevant inspection framework at that time.

The new judgement of 'good' reflects the current inspection framework as well as any changes at the school since the last inspection.

The school has not been inspected for eight years, which is longer than the five-year maximum interval between inspections under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. Changes in school effectiveness may have happened at any point in that period. The long time between inspections is because the law changed in 2011; it made outstanding schools exempt from routine inspection.

- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, art and history. This involved having meetings and discussions with senior leaders, curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils. We looked closely at pupils' work and I listened to pupils reading. We also visited lessons in each key stage across both days of the inspection. Some lesson visits were undertaken in partnership with leaders.
- We looked closely at matters of safeguarding and child protection. This included a scrutiny of documentation, including policies and records. We met with pupils and listened to their views. We talked with leaders responsible for safeguarding and looked at the training and updates provided for staff. Throughout the inspection, we checked adults' knowledge and understanding of their duties and responsibilities to keep pupils safe and free from harm.
- I met with the chief executive officer for the trust, governors (including the chair of the governing body), and trustees (including the chair of trustees).
- We met with a range of leaders and staff, including the executive headteacher, the head of school, newly qualified teachers and those responsible for the curriculum. We met the special educational needs coordinator and phase leaders, including the early years leader.
- We observed pupils' behaviour indoors, in lessons and outside. We talked with pupils formally in meetings and informally during lesson visits, and at lunchtime and playtimes. We considered the views of 46 parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Fiona Manuel, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rebecca Clayton

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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