

Inspection of a good school: St Mary's C of E Primary School, Dilwyn

Dilwyn, Hereford, Herefordshire HR4 8HR

Inspection date: 11 January 2023

Outcome

St Mary's C of E Primary School, Dilwyn continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

'Living, loving and learning together' is at the heart of St Mary's C of E Primary school. Pupils speak positively about the support they receive from staff. Pupils want to come to school every day, and they do. This is because they enjoy learning, feel safe and are happy in school. Parents say that the school 'nurtures' their children. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are highly respectful and positive. If bullying happens staff deal with it firmly.

Pupils achieve well. They develop secure literacy and numeracy skills. This gives them great confidence when learning other subjects. Pupils study a broad range of subjects. Leaders have set out precisely what they want pupils to learn in most subjects. However, in some subjects, there is more work to do to ensure that the learning is clearly set out.

Leaders support pupils' wider development well. Pupils learn about their health and well-being. Pupils also speak confidently about online safety and being safe in the community. Pupils develop their understanding of democracy, equality and diversity. They take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sports and music.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. Pupils successfully achieve their academic potential. They also develop their emotional well-being and cultural knowledge. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. In the early years, there are positive relationships between staff, children and parents. This helps children to be confident and happy.

Leaders have set out the key knowledge and skills pupils learn in most subjects, including reading and mathematics. Pupils confidently talk about what they know, remember and understand in these subjects. For example, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils explained how their knowledge of times tables has developed. They also explained how they use this knowledge in other subject areas. However, in a few other subjects what pupils should

learn is less clear. In these subjects pupils are not able to speak in depth about what they know and understand.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Most teachers check that pupils understand the activities given to them. This means pupils avoid gaps in their knowledge or making mistakes. However, occasionally teachers do not check thoroughly enough that pupils understand how to complete their work. When this happens, pupils do not start or complete their work and develop gaps in their learning. This makes it harder for them to remember key subject knowledge.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as other pupils. Teachers use 'pupil profiles' effectively to adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND can access the learning. Staff then provide pupils with effective, targeted support to help them successfully improve their learning.

Leaders identify any pupil with weak literacy as soon as they join the school. The precise sequencing of phonics ensures that all pupils receive rapid and effective support. Staff make sure that books match the sounds that pupils learn. Leaders make sure that pupils who are at the earliest stages of reading receive support quickly. Pupils improve their literacy skills quickly and, as a result, are confident and fluent readers.

Leaders prioritise pupils' and staff well-being. Parents and carers say the school is a 'positive and supportive environment' where their children do well. Pupils are polite and respectful. Their behaviour rarely disturbs learning because they are positive and want to learn.

Pupils enjoy a wide variety of extra opportunities. Many pupils undertake leadership responsibilities as such as being house captains. Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, such as guitar, crochet, baking and sports. Pupils appreciate trips and visits to places such as Birmingham to hear the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and residential trips to Wales.

Leaders know their school very well and have developed a rich, broad and ambitious education for all pupils. Leaders act swiftly to improve any aspects that do not meet their high expectations. Leaders carefully consider staff's workload and staff welcome this. Governors and trustees know the school's strengths and areas for development. They are well informed about the curriculum and hold leaders to account for the decisions taken.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made safeguarding everyone's responsibility. The principal and lead teachers are all designated safeguarding lead trained. They ensure that all concerns are dealt with swiftly and appropriate support is given to pupils where needed. Leaders make sure that all staff receive regular training to identify pupils who are at risk of harm. Where leaders identify that pupils and families need early help, they quickly contact external agencies to get support for them.

Due to the small size of the school, all safeguarding leaders meet and talk with pupils every day. Pupils know how to report any concerns they have. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not sequenced the key learning in some subjects clearly enough. This means that pupils are unable to build successfully on what they have already learned. Leaders should ensure that key learning is precisely sequenced in all subjects.
- Some teachers do not check carefully enough if pupils understand what they have to do. This means that pupils do not always start or complete their work, and so develop gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that all teachers check that pupils know what they have to do and address any gaps in their knowledge.

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 April 2017.

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	139241
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10227072
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rev Matthew Burns
Principal	Peter Kyles
Website	www.stmarysprimarydilwyn.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 and 5 April 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- St Mary's C of E Primary School is part of the Diocese of Herefordshire. The school received its last section 48 inspection of church schools on 1 October 2019. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors focused on the following deep dives: early reading, mathematics and humanities (history and geography). Inspectors looked at leaders' curriculum planning, visited lessons, heard pupils read to a familiar adult, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also looked at how incidents that are reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the principal, lead teachers, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Evans

Ofsted Inspector

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