

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: South Marston Church of England Primary School

Old Vicarage Lane, South Marston, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 4SH

Inspection dates: 21 January 2025

Outcome

South Marston Church of England Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Marie Hendry. This school is part of The Blue Kite Academy Trust which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gary Evans, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Pauline Miller.

What is it like to attend this school?

South Marston Church of England Primary is a school where inclusivity shines through. Staff ensure that each pupil is at the heart of everything they do. The 'South Marston Way' is understood by all. The core values of 'ready, respect and safe' support the warm and nurturing relationships between staff and pupils. Staff know and understand pupils' needs well. Pupils are happy and safe. They are extremely proud of their school and attend regularly.

The school has high expectations. Pupils are keen to learn and achieve well. They take pleasure in the rich opportunities on offer, such as jewellery making, cross country running and performing arts. These activities help develop pupils' interests and talents.

Pupils demonstrate positive behaviour in lessons and during social times. They exhibit high levels of respect and kindness towards one another. Pupils are extremely polite and well mannered. These expectations start in the early years where staff teach children the school routines quickly. Pupils welcome the range of activities available to them during breaks. They play together happily.

Many parents and carers praise the school and all it does to support their children. They comment on how the school allows their children to 'learn, grow, thrive and overcome obstacles.'

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

The school's work to resolve previous weaknesses in the curriculum has been thorough and effective. It has strengthened the teaching of phonics and early reading. The school has an ambitious curriculum. The key knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn and remember have been identified across all subjects. For example, in history pupils can identify Viking gods and goddesses. They can recall which countries the Vikings came from before coming to Britain. However, leaders are aware that some subjects are not as well implemented as in the more developed subjects. Where this is the case, pupils do not gain the depth of knowledge as in other subjects.

The school demonstrates a determination for pupils to develop a love of books and become fluent readers. Children begin their reading journey from the moment they start in the early years. Staff are skilled in the teaching of phonics and early reading. They carefully select books to ensure they are matched precisely to pupils' phonic knowledge. As a result, pupils develop into confident readers.

The curriculum in the early years provides children with a firm foundation on which to build. Children learn how to socialise as well as how to work independently. They start to build their early reading, writing and mathematical knowledge. Staff form strong relationships with children. Children rapidly learn the behaviours expected of them. This means that they are well prepared for Year 1.

Clear systems are in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. The school works closely with other agencies, such as speech and language therapists, to ensure pupils with SEND receive the right support and adaptations to learning. This ensures equal opportunity to enable all pupils to develop a broad body of knowledge. For example, in French lessons pupils are able to say simple sentences with confidence.

The school supports pupils' personal development well. It provides pupils with rich developmental experiences, such as the residential to Shropshire. These opportunities support pupils to build resilience, team skills and enhance their learning. Trips are carefully considered to enhance pupils' learning experiences, for example to local museums, Bourton on the Water and Stratford-Upon-Avon. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the plentiful opportunities to expand and develop their interests and talents. They welcome the opportunity to express their creativity through the performing arts. Pupils attend a range of clubs which are open to all and are well attended.

Pupils welcome the roles and responsibilities afforded to them. These include being elected to become librarians, house captains and members of the worship council. Pupils lead on lunchtime clubs to promote physical activity. These and other activities help build pupils' confidence, and develop organisational and leadership skills.

Pupils learn how to become thoughtful and caring citizens. They respect and appreciate the diversity of the world in which they live. They enjoy their involvement in and support of their local community. For example, through their involvement in coffee mornings and the local food bank. They are proud of the support they give to wider children's and cancer charities.

Staff are extremely proud to work at the school. They generally refer to the school as a place where 'real friends are made.' Staff welcome the support and consideration of leaders to manage their workload and well-being. The trust offers strong support, guidance and challenge which the school welcome and embraces.

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 subjects, the curriculum is not as precisely implemented as in the more developed subjects. As a result, pupils do not gain the same depth of knowledge. The trust needs to ensure that the school curriculum is implemented effectively so that all pupils know more and remember more.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection

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 for overall effectiveness in March 2013.

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	143494
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10344784
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pauline Miller
CEO of the trust	Gary Evans
Headteacher	Marie Hendry
Website	smcea.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined The Blue Kite Academy Trust on 1 January 2025.
- This is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Bristol. The school received its section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character in June 2018, when it was judged to be good. The next section 48 inspection is likely to take place during this academic year.
- The school provides before- and after-school clubs, overseen by the trustees.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, heard pupils read, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and staff.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO and the chair of trustees.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered key documentation, including the school development plan and trustees' minutes.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Inspectors met with school leaders to discuss and review how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys. They considered the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Hansen

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

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

© Crown copyright 2025