Inspection of St Martin At Shouldham Church of England Primary Academy

Lynn Road, Shouldham, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE33 0BU

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Outstanding**
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Katherine Howe. This school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust (DEMAT), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Adrian Ball, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Jackson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils deeply understand their school values of 'respecting, generous and achieving'. They display these in how they treat each other. They see themselves as part of one caring and nurturing school family that extends beyond the school gates. For example, some pupils recently joined other trust schools for carol services at a local cathedral.

There are high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils learn a broad, interesting and ambitious curriculum and generally achieve well. However, they sometimes need more precise guidance about how to improve their writing.

Behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. Pupils follow routines and respect each other. Even the youngest children want to help, support and include others. The caring staff value pupils. This makes the pupils feel safe and excited to come to school each day.

Pupils participate in an extensive range of wider activities. These range from sports and art clubs to residentials and choir performances. These experiences help develop new skills and build confidence. For example, older pupils talked proudly about overcoming their worries about jumping into the water on a residential trip. This has helped them feel more confident about taking their next steps into secondary education.

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

The school's curriculum is well established and ambitious. This forms the basis of what pupils should learn. As the curriculum is secure, the trust and school have focused on how well the curriculum is taught. They have developed subject experts who work across schools. These experts support and train other staff in teaching each subject well. This includes in providing the support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need to access the curriculum fully.

Staff are skilled and knowledgeable. They enable pupils to learn the intended curriculum and achieve well. For example, in art, pupils talk enthusiastically about artists they have studied and their style. They apply this knowledge to produce eye-catching pieces of artwork, including in the style of Leonardo da Vinci. Exceptional foundations for the curriculum are built in early years. Children have access to a wealth of opportunities to explore colour, painting and sculpture. This ensures they have the foundations they need for more complex learning.

The school's approach to teaching early reading through phonics is well understood by staff. The foundation for this is again built in early years. Staff skilfully build pupils' communication and language skills through rich conversations. This means that children quickly become extremely confident in sharing ideas. Staff ensure that pupils get the support they need to keep up so they learn to read confidently. Pupils develop a love of reading. They speak enthusiastically about the range of books they read. Pupils with SEND receive the tailored support they need to become confident readers. However, the school's approach to teaching writing is not as well embedded. Sometimes teachers do

not give pupils precise enough guidance about developing their writing. This means that pupils' writing is not always of the standard it could be.

In early years, children engage in highly stimulating and well-structured activities. These provide the firmest foundations for Year 1. For example, children explore problem-solving with 3D shapes. Staff use these opportunities to draw out the depth of their mathematical thinking but also to support pupils to develop exceptional communication and social skills. Children with SEND have their needs identified at an early stage and staff precisely tailor provision to take account of these.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils demonstrate respectful and highly courteous behaviour. They are engaged and motivated to do well in lessons and actively show care and sensitivity to the needs of others. The school has a strong culture of respect and tolerance. As a result, pupils feel safe and supported.

Personal development is promoted extremely well. Pupils enjoy many competitions and tournaments where they learn about competing with moral integrity. The school offers wider opportunities that are exceptionally well matched to the social needs of the community, for example the military club. This supports families with links to the Royal Air Force, especially while on deployment. The school also provides emotional literacy and mental health support for anyone who needs it. Year 6 students benefit from an individual mentoring programme that gives them the support they need to be as well prepared as possible for secondary education.

The strength of leadership is the collaborative work that the partnership and trust have set up across schools. Governance challenges and supports this effectively. This work also supports staff's well-being. Staff feel enthusiastic about opportunities to grow as teachers. This benefits pupils, as they are taught by enthusiastic, caring and knowledgeable staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes teachers do not check the quality of pupils' writing precisely enough. Therefore, pupils do not consistently receive the guidance they need about how they can improve or develop their writing. The school needs to ensure that teachers consistently provide pupils with the support and guidance they need to develop their writing so that the writing that pupils produce is the best they are capable of.

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	140870
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10318624
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	162
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Jackson
CEO of the trust	Adrian Ball
Headteacher	Katherine Howe
Website	villagesaintspartnership.demat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Academy conversion took place in May 2014.
- The school has a religious character (The Church of England). The last section 48 inspection took place in January 2019. The next inspection is due within eight years.
- The school is part of the Village Saints Partnership, with one other school. The headteacher leads across both schools and they share one governing body. The partnership sits within the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust.
- The school's nursery provision is on the same site and run by the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 representatives from the local governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the board of trustees, who is the chief executive officer (CEO).
- Inspectors met with the trust director of education, trust hub lead for the area, headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and other staff.
- Inspectors conducted further meetings with staff regarding safeguarding, special educational needs provision, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art 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.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in a range of other subjects. This included writing, music, geography and personal, social, health and economic education.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and at social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and Ofsted's staff survey. They considered responses to the confidential online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Garrett	Ofsted Inspector

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