

Inspection of Studley St Mary's CofE Academy

New Road, Studley, Warwickshire B80 7ND

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Rebecca Gordon. This school is part of the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Michael Cowland, and overseen by the board of trustees, chaired by Paula Whitfield.

What is it like to attend this school?

Studley St Mary's CofE Academy is a school where pupils and families receive a warm welcome. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils are polite to adults and each other, and they readily welcome visitors to their school. Pupils are well cared for. The school makes sure that all pupils are supported, both academically and emotionally. Pupils feel safe here.

The school has high expectations and wants the best for all pupils. Expectations for the way that pupils will behave are clear. All staff uphold the rules consistently and, as a result, pupils behave well in lessons and on the playground. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens, but when it does, staff deal with it quickly. Those pupils who need additional help to succeed in school are very well supported.

The school has introduced a number of changes to improve the education that it offers. Parents and pupils recognise and appreciate the improvements. After an unsettled time, staffing is now stable and those changes are taking effect, but more still needs to be done to further improve the curriculum.

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

Reading is a real priority. The school has developed an effective approach to the teaching of phonics for those pupils who join the school in Year 3 and need more help with their reading. This well-planned approach to reading helps pupils to achieve well.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Good-quality resources support teachers to know what to teach and in what order. This helps pupils to build on their learning over time. For example, the curriculum for physical education (PE) clearly sets out what pupils are to learn. Regular checks on the development of skills mean that pupils get the help they need to improve quickly. Subject leaders are available to help teachers plan or, sometimes, to teach alongside them. In addition, leaders ensure that staff have the support they need to improve their own skills and knowledge. Staff appreciate this and work very well together as a team. However, not all subjects are so well developed. In a few subjects, the precise knowledge that pupils are expected to know and remember is not always clearly identified. Teachers then find it difficult to check learning, or to build effectively on pupils' knowledge. Senior leaders are aware of this.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and say that they enjoy their lessons. Teachers develop pupils' independence well. For example, if pupils find work tricky, most know how they can try to work things out without asking the teacher straight away.

Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Pupils say that behaviour is usually good, and any poor behaviour is managed well by staff. If they have any concerns, they can talk to the adults in school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers consider their needs and make any necessary adaptations. This supports pupils with SEND to achieve well.

The school has considered pupils' personal development. For example, pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities in school. However, the personal development programme does not fully prepare pupils for the next stage of their education or life beyond their own community in modern Britain. Some pupils, for instance, express concerns about moving to secondary school. Furthermore, while pupils are aware of school rules, too few demonstrate a secure understanding of the rules that operate outside of school, or of roles, responsibilities and opportunities in the wider community.

School leaders, supported by governors and the multi-academy trust, continue to improve the school. Many improvements have been made and these are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. They are determined to improve the curriculum further and their plans are being put into action now that staffing is more stable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not ensured that some elements of personal development are taught explicitly, or at an appropriate time. This means that pupils are not fully prepared for the next stage of education or for life in modern Britain. The school should continue to improve the provision for pupils' personal development, ensuring that pupils are prepared for the transitions in their school journey, are aware of the diverse nature of Britain and understand fundamental British values.
- Some subjects are not yet as well defined and sequenced as others. Where the school has not identified the precise knowledge and skills it wants pupils to know, use and remember, teachers find it difficult to check what pupils are expected to know and retain. As a result, pupils do not always have secure knowledge on which to build new learning. The school should ensure that, in all subjects, teachers are clear about the specific content pupils need to know and remember.

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	141000
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10268313
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Caroline Taylor
Headteacher	Rebecca Gordon
Website	www.studleystmarys.covmat.org
Date of previous inspection	5 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staffing changes. Following an interim headteacher being in post, the current headteacher took up the post in October 2020 and the deputy headteacher took up the post in summer term 2023. There are a number of other staff new to role.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in 2018.
- The school joined the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust in July 2014.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, PE and modern foreign languages (Spanish). 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 pupil's work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. They also met with the CEO, deputy CEO and academy improvement partner of the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the curriculum, training, governance and school improvement planning. They also looked at the school's website.
- 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.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class, at lunchtime, on the playground and at other times during the day.
- Inspectors observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils, parents and staff to gather general information about school life. The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parent free-text responses. The inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Anne Potter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Stuart Evans

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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