

Inspection of St Marys Church of England Primary Academy

Church Street, Hunslet, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS10 2QY

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Elizabeth McDonagh. This school is part of the Collaborative Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Janet Sheriff OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ian Bond.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is welcoming and inclusive to all. It has a genuine spirit of community. Pupils enjoy school life and form strong friendships with their peers. Staff provide pupils with the social and emotional support they need. The school has developed trusting relationships with parents and carers. It works with them in the best interests of pupils.

The school has high aspirations for what pupils can achieve. A new ambitious curriculum reflects this. However, too few pupils meet those high aspirations. There is still much work to do, to improve both the quality of teaching and pupils' attendance.

Pupils behave well. They are polite, friendly and inquisitive. From Reception, the school has established a clear set of routines that promote positive behaviour. Pupils show kindness and respect to each other. They form positive relationships with staff and feel safe. This is a calm and orderly school, but also a school where pupils can play and have fun.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. They participate in clubs including football, dodge ball and dance. There is a school choir and a school council. Pupils take on roles as buddies to younger children, worship leaders and house captains.

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

The school has developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. It has identified the essential knowledge and skills it wants pupils to know and remember. In Reception, the curriculum prepares children well for Year 1 and beyond. There is a central focus on children's language and communication. The curriculum also prioritises children's physical development and social and emotional development. However, in some subjects at key stage 1 and 2, the school has not adapted the curriculum well enough. The curriculum does not build on what pupils have learned before in a clear and logical manner. Sometimes, pupils do not have the foundational knowledge they need to understand new learning.

In Reception, there is a purposeful learning environment. Adults use appropriate activities to consolidate children's phonic and mathematical knowledge. They support children's language development well through songs, rhymes and conversation. This helps to build children's vocabulary and communication skills.

At key stage 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Sometimes, teachers select activities that do not support pupils' learning well. Sometimes, they do not adapt learning to meet pupils' needs. Some pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not gain a coherent body of knowledge. However, there are strengths in the school's provision for SEND. The school identifies pupils' needs well. It also provides effective support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.

From the start of Reception, pupils learn to read using phonics. Teachers teach phonics well. Most pupils in Year 1 are reading at an age-appropriate level. The school is quick to identify those pupils who need extra help with their reading. This includes older pupils who need help in building their reading fluency. However, sometimes, adults do not provide the expert help that pupils need. They do not focus with enough precision on pupils' needs. Some pupils do not catch up with their peers quickly enough.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond well to these expectations and show positive attitudes to their learning. The school is quick to identify barriers to pupils' attendance and works with pupils and their families to remove those barriers. There has been recent improvement in pupils' attendance. However, levels of persistent absence remain high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils benefit from a comprehensive and age-appropriate personal development programme. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. They learn about important issues such as relationships and equality and diversity. The school promotes pupils' physical and mental health through sport and outdoor activities. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

The school is working in a context that provides significant challenge. It is experiencing the ongoing impact of the pandemic. Also, there has been instability in school leadership and staffing. The trust has supported the school well. It has provided additional leadership capacity and significant support with school improvement. Trustees, supported by governors, perform their statutory responsibilities with appropriate rigour.

The school has improved pupils' behaviour and attendance. It has established positive relationships with parents. It engages well with staff on matters of workload and well-being. However, professional development has not yet had the desired impact on the quality of teaching. The attainment of many pupils at key stage 2 remains low.

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 school has not adapted the curriculum to ensure that it builds coherently on pupils' prior knowledge. This means that, sometimes, pupils move on to new learning without the foundational knowledge they need to secure that learning. The school should ensure that it adapts the curriculum in these subjects, so that the curriculum builds on pupils' prior knowledge and provides pupils with a coherent body of knowledge as they progress through the school.
- Sometimes, teachers do not select activities that are well-matched to pupils' needs, including pupils with SEND. This means that some pupils find it difficult to access

learning, while other pupils do not move on to new learning quickly enough. The school should ensure that it provides teachers with the training and development in pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge that they require to adapt learning to meet the needs of all pupils.

- Sometimes, the extra help pupils at an early stage of reading get is not focused precisely enough on their specific reading needs. This means that some pupils do not catch up with their peers quickly enough. The school should ensure that it gives teachers and other adults, who provide extra support to pupils at an early stage of reading, the training and development they need. In particular, this training and development should focus on how best to build and secure pupils' reading fluency.
- Levels of persistent absence are high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. This means that some pupils miss out on too much of their education, have gaps in their knowledge and do not achieve well. The school should continue to reduce levels of persistent absence so that more pupils benefit from the school's recent curriculum changes.

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	147633
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10323117
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Bond
CEO of the trust	Janet Sheriff OBE
Headteacher	Elizabeth McDonagh
Website	www.hunsletstmarys.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened on 1 February 2020.
- The school is part of the Collaborative Learning Trust.
- St Marys Church of England Primary Academy converted to become an academy in January 2020. When its predecessor school, Hunslet St Mary's Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate for overall effectiveness.
- The current headteacher has been in post since May 2024.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Leeds. It is due to have its first section 48 inspection during this school year.

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.

- 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.
- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the chief executive officer of the trust and other trust leaders, including the director of school improvement (primary). They also met with the chair of the board of trustees, members of both the board of trustees and the local governing body, and with a diocesan representative.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education, and geography. For each deep dive, the 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.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in English and science. They looked at samples of pupils' work in these subjects.
- 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 considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff, and to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Ian Rawstorne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jane Wilson

Ofsted Inspector

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