

Inspection of a good school: Syresham St James CofE Primary School and Nursery

High Street, Syresham, Brackley, Northamptonshire NN13 5HL

Inspection dates:

6 December 2022

Outcome

Syresham St James CofE Primary School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to this school. Pupils, parents and staff describe it as a family. The pupils are a credit to the school. They are respectful and kind to each other. They behave well in lessons. Pupils focus on their learning. Classrooms are calm.

Pupils say they feel safe. They say bullying is very rare. They are confident that any bullying would be sorted out quickly. If pupils have a concern or worry, they know how to report this to adults. Many use the 'worry monsters' to help them do this. Pupils know that staff will listen and help them.

Expectations are high for everyone. Leaders have designed the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have access to the same curriculum opportunities.

Pupils embrace the chance to lead. There is a head boy and girl. There is a school council and house captains. Pupils look for ways to lead. Some pupils have taken over the running of a book club, for example. Older pupils are buddies for younger children. They enjoy this role. They use it to get to know the younger pupils and what they are doing during the day.

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

The school has been well supported by the Warriner Trust. A well-thought-through curriculum has been developed. Alongside the trust, subject leaders have identified the key knowledge they wish pupils to learn over time. They have set out the order in which pupils will learn new knowledge. Teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are learning and how it builds on what they already know. Pupils in Year 6, for example, were able to explain how information they had learned in Year 5 about the Industrial Revolution helped them to understand the technological advances in the First World War.

Teachers use their good subject knowledge to explain new ideas to pupils clearly. They adapt their teaching during lessons to correct pupils' misconceptions should they arise. Pupils said that 'purple book' support helps them to correct their mistakes. It helps them to understand new learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and can clearly articulate what they have learned.

Leaders have made reading a high priority. Staff are well trained. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Children begin to learn the sounds that letters make early in their schooling. Staff quickly identify how well pupils learn their sounds. Staff support them effectively if they begin to struggle. Reading books are well matched to pupils' ability. Pupils say they enjoy reading. They recommend books they have read to each other. Pupils and staff alike enjoy story time.

The early years environment is stimulating and purposeful. Adults develop strong, nurturing relationships with children. They teach the importance of the patience needed to take turns. Leaders rightly recognise that further work is needed to develop the curriculum sequence within the Nursery to ensure it fully prepares children for Reception.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the school's curriculum was enhanced through various extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils took part in clubs, trips and residential. They learned from visitors to the school. While some of these activities have restarted, pupils do not have the same opportunities as they did before.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. Staff make effective use of resources to identify pupils' needs quickly. Pupils with SEND rightly learn the same curriculum as their peers. They succeed in school. Several parents commented on how much they appreciate the support their child receives.

Pupils learn about equality. They develop a mature understanding of the protected characteristics, for example. They explore various world faiths and religions and can speak confidently about them. Pupils' learning of fundamental British values is woven through the curriculum. Pupils use this learning to become responsible members of their school community.

Governors regularly visit the school. They are well informed. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel valued. They appreciate that senior leaders consider their well-being and take workload into account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Relationships between staff, pupils and families are built on mutual respect and genuine care. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including when online and while outside on the roads or near water.

Staff know the warning signs that a pupil may be in danger. They understand what to do if they have a concern. Leaders respond quickly. They keep records of the action they take to keep pupils safe. They work closely with external organisations when pupils need help.

Recruitment procedures meet statutory requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in Nursery is not yet as well sequenced as in the rest of the school. The precise knowledge that children should learn is not yet fully laid out. Leaders should ensure they identify the key knowledge children should learn in Nursery to best prepare them for their future learning.
- The variety of experiences for pupils, which go beyond the curriculum, is not as diverse as it was before COVID-19. Pupils miss out on a broad range of experiences. Leaders should ensure that pupils are provided with a wide range of clubs and opportunities to allow them to further develop their knowledge and talents beyond the curriculum.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 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](#)' 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	121993
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10240117
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Debbie Power
Headteacher	Katherine Clough
Website	www.syreshamprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection took place in September 2016.
- Since the last inspection, the school has opened a nursery which has provision for two-year-olds.

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 met with the headteacher, the senior teacher and other leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the three members of the governing body including the chair. She met with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese. She also met with three members of the Warriner Trust for which the school is an associate member.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the

curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.

- Inspectors spoke with parents. Account was taken of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to groups of pupils and staff.
- The lead inspector met with leaders to discuss safeguarding. Inspectors met with staff to discuss their understanding of the safeguarding risks and reviewed the school's procedures to keep pupils safe. Inspectors considered documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's single central record and the system for undertaking checks on new staff.

Inspection team

Heidi Malliff, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Caroline Oliver

Ofsted Inspector

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