

Inspection of a good school: Church Stretton School

Shrewsbury Road, Church Stretton, Shropshire SY6 6EX

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 July 2024

Outcome

Church Stretton School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is John Parr. The school is part of TrustEd Schools Alliance, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sarah Godden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Anderson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like the fact that this is a small secondary school as it means everyone knows each other well. This is why many feel a strong sense of responsibility to the school and local community. Many play a role in making decisions as school council representatives. Older pupils act as 'bus captains', supporting younger pupils on their way to and from school.

Pupils are keen to be successful in the future and want to achieve well in their examinations. They work hard in lessons. The importance of reading is valued, and pupils have access to a diverse range of books to read for enjoyment.

The majority of pupils meet the school's high expectations of behaviour. There are a few who take advantage of times when they perceive consequences will not be followed through. Pupils want there to be greater consistency in how behaviour is dealt with by all staff. The school is working on this.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of clubs on offer, mainly at lunchtimes. These currently include badminton, 'Stretton Singers' and creative writing. The school has made sure that pupils develop an understanding of the diversity of wider Britain. They enjoy a broad range of trips and visits to enhance their learning.

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

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. For example, all pupils benefit from a rich creative arts curriculum and can choose to study the triple GCSE science option at key stage 4. The number of pupils choosing the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects is increasing.

Pupils achieve well by the time they leave school and an impressively high number move into sustained education, employment or training post-16.

Learning in all subjects has been carefully sequenced to ensure it builds over time. The curriculum includes regular opportunities for pupils to apply their learning independently. These opportunities help teachers assess how much pupils have learned and identify any gaps in knowledge. Any gaps or misconceptions are revisited effectively in subsequent lessons. Year 10 pupils were revisiting key questions from their recent mock examinations to strengthen their knowledge.

There is a lot of good practice in how teachers deliver the curriculum. They have strong subject knowledge and explain new information clearly to pupils. They use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and move learning forward. However, not all learning experiences are of the same high quality. For example, there is some variation in how well vocabulary is reinforced and in the effective modelling of writing. Most pupils are keen to engage with the tasks they are given. However, some discussion activities are not structured in a way that enables pupils to deepen their thinking and understanding. Leaders know where pockets of inconsistency exist and are working to strengthen them.

The school provides well for any pupils who may require adaptation or additional support to succeed in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs identified and staff receive helpful, easily accessible information to help them adapt their teaching accordingly. Those pupils who are not yet secure readers benefit from equally strong support and make rapid progress.

Although most pupils behave well, there are a few who do not. This is because they know that not all staff follow the school's behaviour expectations to the same standard. The school is currently reviewing its behaviour policy to improve this.

Pupils know the importance of good attendance because the school makes it a priority. Attendance is in line with national averages. There has been a significant reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Trustees, governors and leaders work well together to ensure the school is meeting its responsibilities and pupils are enabled to be successful. Staff value the ways in which their workload has been reduced. Most parents and carers appreciate the education their children receive at school. Pupils benefit from high-quality careers education, which sets them up well for a successful future.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, there is variation in how well the curriculum is implemented by staff. Sometimes, the choice of task or method of delivery, does not encourage all pupils to be actively engaged in their learning. The school should ensure that best practice is shared so that the quality of education is of a consistently high standard across the school.
- There are not enough planned opportunities for sustained and meaningful discussion in lessons. This means that pupils' discussions do not always deepen their learning or enable more creative thinking. The school should ensure that pupils develop their oracy skills effectively to extend their ideas and deepen their learning across the curriculum.
- There are times when the school's behaviour policy and practices are not applied consistently. As a result, some pupils' inappropriate behaviour is not always tackled well enough. The school should ensure that all staff follow the school's agreed policy for managing pupils' behaviour.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2019.

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	139455
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10322850
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	541
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Anderson
CEO of the trust	Sarah Godden
Headteacher	John Parr (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.churchstretton.shropshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The head of school is Andy Wood. There is also an executive headteacher, John Parr, who has substantive responsibility for the school and holds other responsibilities within the trust.
- The school is one of nine academies in the TrustEd Schools Alliance multi-academy trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, other school leaders, trust leaders, including the CEO, the chair of the trust board, trustees and local governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in art and design, English and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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 visited other lessons.
- 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 staff and pupil surveys. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including comments submitted via the free-text facility.

Inspection team

Nicola Beech, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rob Bourdon-Pierre

Ofsted Inspector

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