

Inspection of St Mary's, Prittlewell, CofE Primary School

Boston Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 6JH

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2025

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They are enthusiastic about the curriculum they learn and the wide opportunities on offer. Pupils work in a happy, friendly school where everyone's uniqueness is celebrated and accepted. Relationships are very trusting, positive and warm.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils know the importance of being ready, respectful and safe. They understand the rules and follow them. Pupils try hard in their work. They behave well and respect others.

Ambition, belonging, courage and discovery are the centre of school life. Pupils value the caring and cohesive community that staff create. Pupils learn to help one another. The school has made necessary changes to the curriculum. As a result, pupils are achieving better than is reflected in the school's published results.

Pupils trust adults to keep them safe and help with any worries or problems that may occur. Pupils make strong friendships and say that the school is a kind and friendly place.

Pupils love the wide range of opportunities that enable them to develop personally. They take pride in the responsibilities they hold, such as eco warrior and pupil governor. These roles enable pupils to make a difference to their community.

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

The school has developed an ambitious learning programme across all areas of the curriculum, beginning in the Reception Year. Pupils build on previous learning over time. Staff teach the curriculum confidently because they are trained effectively. They teach pupils to use key vocabulary accurately. This helps pupils to explain their learning through high-quality writing.

Staff generally check that pupils have remembered important knowledge. However, this is not consistently the case in all subjects. As a result, some pupils are left with gaps in their knowledge.

The positive impact of the school's curriculum is not always reflected in national tests and assessments, as pupils join and leave the school more regularly than in most schools. Pupils achieve increasingly well the longer they are in the school. Many pupils are new to learning English. These pupils get the support they need to access the curriculum successfully.

The school prioritises reading when pupils start school in Reception. Pupils enjoy reading. They quickly learn sounds and combine letters to confidently read and write words. Older pupils become fluent readers. They talk confidently about favourite authors and stories. They enjoy 'flying solo' and finding information independently from the texts they study. Pupils are proud of their reading achievements. Staff identify pupils who need support to

keep up with their reading. However, for a few pupils, the support they receive to keep up is not as effective as it needs to be to help them catch up quickly.

Children in the early years get off to a positive start. They learn to listen well in whole class sessions and work collaboratively with others. They follow familiar routines and develop resilience and independence. Staff prioritise the development of children's language and vocabulary in their interactions. However, staff do not consistently use the outdoor learning area effectively to help children learn the content of the early years curriculum.

Pupils talk about their learning enthusiastically. They are excited about what they know and can do. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Learning is not interrupted by poor behaviour. If lessons become too noisy, this is quickly addressed by staff. As a result, pupils behave and learn well. The school ensures that pupils attend regularly and on time. Where pupils have challenges with regular attendance, the school provides support. As a result, their attendance improves.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Pupils' individual needs are identified quickly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the curriculum alongside their peers. The adaptations, resources and, where needed, additional adult support help pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the personal development opportunities available. They take part in art trails, beach cleans and the very popular 'belonging day'. Pupils take pride in their charity support and the positive relationships with the local community. These opportunities contribute very well to pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils become responsible, active, reflective community members.

Leaders, including governors, work together to identify priorities that benefit all pupils. They collaborate positively with staff to implement changes and check progress in ways that support staff well-being and manage workload. Staff feel respected and are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, staff do not always check whether pupils have remembered key knowledge. When this happens, pupils develop gaps in their understanding. The school must ensure that staff consistently check for gaps in pupils' knowledge and address them through teaching.

- For a few pupils, the support that is in place to help them keep up with reading expectations is not consistently implemented. As a result, these pupils do not make the progress leaders expect. The school should ensure that additional support for pupils who need to keep up with reading is consistently effective.
- On occasion, staff do not use the outdoor learning area well enough to help children learn the content of the early years curriculum. Children sometimes do not practise or build on what they have learned in the classroom in some areas of learning. The school should ensure that staff use the outdoor area effectively so that children can practise and build on their learning across all areas of the early years curriculum.

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	115145
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10378456
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary-aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	642
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Saxon Cronin-Garrod
Headteacher	Aleishia Lewis
Website	www.st-marysprittlewell.com
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has high mobility. Pupils leave and join the school more frequently than in most other schools.
- There are a larger number of pupils than usual who speak English as an additional language.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school, within the Diocese of Chelmsford. As a school designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of the school was in March 2025.
- The school runs on two sites, Boston Avenue and East Street.

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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading; mathematics; science; history; art and design; and design and technology. 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, parents 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 examined a range of documents provided by the school. Inspectors looked at records related to attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and pupil movement. Inspectors met with senior leaders and a selection of subject leaders, teaching staff and support staff.
- The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the Diocese of Chelmsford.
- Inspectors spoke with the head of the alternative provision the school uses.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of governors, other members of the governing body and the school's school improvement partner.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent view. They also took account of the online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Debbie Rogan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Shadbolt	Ofsted Inspector
Craige Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Alice Early	Ofsted Inspector

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