

Inspection of Stretton St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Stretton Road, Stretton, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 4NT

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Sian Simcock. This school is part of the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Neil Dixon, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Mason.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Stretton St Matthew's CofE Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Stretton St Matthew's CofE Primary School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as an academy. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to Stretton St Matthew's. They arrive each morning keen to see what the day has to offer. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and caring. Pupils show high levels of respect towards others. They enact the school's values of 'work together, aim high, shine bright'. Pupils are rightly proud of their school.

Pupils are encouraged to try their very best to succeed. The school has very high expectations of pupils' conduct and learning. From the early years upwards, children and pupils are highly attentive in class and demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve exceptionally well. They leave Year 6 very well prepared for secondary school.

Pupils enjoy choosing from the wide range of clubs on offer. These include Spanish, fencing, growing minds and football. Cookery club is especially popular. Pupils enjoy taking seasonal food home to share with their families. Older pupils are proud to carry out their leadership roles. For instance, the school's librarians eagerly organise the library. In addition, the school council led the school's anti-bullying week activities.

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

The school recognises that reading is the foundation for learning across the curriculum. Children in the Reception class quickly learn letters and their corresponding sounds. This helps them to start to read and write. The small number of pupils that need additional support get the help that they need to catch up. Pupils have a love of reading and older pupils talk confidently about literature that they enjoy.

The school has high aspirations for pupils. Careful thought has been given to the curriculum design. This meets the needs of pupils exceptionally well. Staff's strong subject knowledge enables them to teach confidently. Regular opportunities to practise skills and recall prior learning ensure that pupils develop an exceptionally secure understanding of the subject content that they are taught. For example, pupils in Year 5 understand the importance of trade across several periods of world history.

Staff are highly skilled at checking how well pupils learn. This enables staff to tailor future lessons and address any misconceptions. Within lessons, pupils are given regular opportunities to 'aim high'. This allows them to deepen their learning. In addition, pupils enjoy 'shine bright' experiences. These memorable activities spark pupils' excitement to learn.

In the Reception class, children learn well in reading and mathematics. Activities are well structured and staff model important vocabulary well. However, this is not as successful during more informal learning opportunities. Here, staff are less confident in deepening children's learning. This means that children do not make as much progress through the early years curriculum as they could.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified swiftly. Regular training, including that provided by the trust, allows staff to adapt activities so that pupils with SEND can learn the same curriculum alongside their peers. Pupils with more complex needs receive the additional support that they need. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve highly.

The academic curriculum is complemented by a range of opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning. For instance, pupils use the school garden and visit a museum to learn more about science. Pupils develop their musicality by learning to play a variety of instruments. They enjoy the opportunity to perform to parents and at the local church.

Pupils are helped to develop as young citizens. They take part in local and global fundraising activities. Pupils are taught about fundamental British values. They can discuss these values and relate them to their own experiences. Pupils develop an understanding of others, including those who hold different points of view or beliefs. Consequently, pupils welcome everyone equally.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They are polite and courteous when they speak to adults and to one another. In the playground, pupils of different ages enjoy the activities on offer. Pupils' attendance is high. When needed, the school effectively supports families in improving pupils' attendance.

All of those who are responsible for governance are committed to ensuring that pupils are successful. The trust and members of the local governing body know the school well. The school prioritises staff's workload and well-being. The school has created an environment in which staff are happy and proud to work.

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 areas of learning in the early years, staff are less confident in supporting children's learning. This means that some children do not learn as much as they could in these areas of learning. The school should ensure that staff receive the guidance that they need so that they have the knowledge and confidence to deliver all areas of learning equally well.

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	149613
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10378046
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Mason
CEO of the trust	Neil Dixon
Headteacher	Sian Simcock
Website	www.stmatthewscofeprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected.

Information about this school

- Stretton St Matthew's CofE Primary School converted to become an academy in September 2023. When its predecessor school, Stretton St Matthew's CofE Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding for overall effectiveness.
- The school is part of the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Chester and had its last section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, in May 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due in 2030/31.
- The school offers a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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.
- Inspectors also talked with pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- An inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, assistant headteachers and other leaders. An inspector also met with a trustee and members of the local governing committee, including the vice-chair.
- An inspector met with the CEO of the trust.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their views of school life. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspectors considered the views of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Mills

Ofsted Inspector

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