

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Market Harborough Church of England Academy

Fairfield Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 9QH

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 January 2025

Outcome

Market Harborough Church of England Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The co-headteachers of this school are Emma Tayler and Mark North. This school is part of Learn Academies Trust (Learn-AT), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jane Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jeremy William Benson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Market Harborough Church of England Academy is a welcoming and inclusive place. Pupils say they are 'noticed and known'. They respect the caring staff and value the nurture and support they receive when they need it. Pupils are happy and safe here.

The school is aspirational for all of its pupils. Most pupils achieve well, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics. They study a wide range of interesting topics and read books that enthuse them to learn new and ambitious vocabulary.

Pupils enjoy the enriching experiences that the school provides. These include residential trips, visiting experts and learning outdoors. Pupils appreciate the many sporting and arts opportunities. These activities help to nurture their interests and talents.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils behave well in lessons. At social times, they make sure that no one is left out. Pupils take seriously the school's 'golden threads', such as 'being a community of learners'. They are proud to make their own contribution to school life. For instance, some are conscientious members of the well-being team, while others lead on fundraising. Pupils are always keen to 'be ready' and do their best.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious and engaging. It is well structured. It sets out the core knowledge that pupils need to learn. Staff revisit important learning with pupils so that they can recall what they have studied and build on it successfully. However, on occasion, tasks do not enable pupils to make connections between different areas of knowledge, think critically and deepen their understanding. This means that some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.

Reading is prioritised. Phonics is taught well right from the start. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn the knowledge needed to become accurate readers. They receive effective support to catch up if they need to. Pupils read regularly in school. The school makes sure that reading books match pupils' ability. This promotes pupils' reading fluency.

Pupils learn demanding vocabulary through the wide range of texts at the heart of the curriculum. Subject-specific vocabulary is studied as part of every topic. This starts with communication and language being threaded through everything from the moment children join the Reception Year. Teachers support pupils to structure their written and oral responses well. Pupils use increasingly sophisticated language in their spoken and written explanations. They become confident communicators.

Teachers use their subject knowledge well to spot and resolve pupils' misconceptions. For example, in mathematics, pupils quickly receive feedback during lessons and extra support when needed. This means pupils progress well through the intended curriculum.

Staff receive effective professional development. This includes access to expert subject networks. The school has some talented leaders, including subject leads. They make a significant contribution to the school and benefit from opportunities to work within the wider trust.

The school takes seriously its role in providing an inclusive learning environment for all its pupils. It provides sensitive support to help pupils with SEND to be ready to learn successfully alongside their peers.

Opportunities to promote pupils' well-being and help them make safe choices are woven through everything the school does. Pupils learn to respect and appreciate difference, including different cultures, beliefs and family structures. The work the school undertakes to develop pupils' character and provide them with meaningful opportunities to contribute to their community is exceptional. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The school prioritises pupils' attendance and punctuality. The pastoral team members are a strong asset to the school. Their work with pupils and their families is tireless. Along with all staff, they ensure that pupils are in school and learning effectively. Pupils' attendance is high.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value leaders' actions to consider workload and to respect their health and well-being.

Trust governance is a strength. The school receives expert challenge and support. The local governing body conducts its role successfully. Governors show great commitment. They are knowledgeable and passionate about the school.

Market Harborough Church of England Academy is at the heart of the community. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of the school and the impact it has on lives. Leaders have taken appropriate action to continue the school's improvement. They have an accurate view of the school. They have identified the correct priorities to move the school further forward in its journey.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, tasks do not enable pupils to make connections and deepen their understanding. Therefore, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could. The school needs to ensure that the curriculum consistently supports pupils in making connections between different areas of knowledge, thinking critically and deepening their understanding, so all pupils fully achieve the ambitious aims that the school intends.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in July 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	141151
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10347599
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	396
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeremy William Benson
CEO of the trust	Jane Jones
Headteacher	Emma Taylor (Co-Headteacher) Mark North (Co-Headteacher)
Website	www.marketharboroughcofe.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Learn-AT multi-academy trust.
- A new co-headteacher took up post alongside a long-standing headteacher in April 2024.
- There has been a number of staff changes since the last inspection, including in key leadership roles.
- The school runs before- and after-school childcare on the school site.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the co-headteachers, the acting deputy headteachers and a range of other staff. She also met with the director of education, the chair of the board of trustees, the chair of the local governing body and other local governors.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. She also heard some pupils read with a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times of the school day.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including leaders' priorities for improvement.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 views of pupils, parents and staff were gathered through discussions, and responses to Ofsted's surveys were considered.

Inspection team

Mandy Wilding, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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