

Inspection of St Thomas Church of England Primary School

Great Colmore Street, Attwood Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B15 2AT

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of school of this school is Sarah Williams. This school is part of the Fioretti 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), Claire Grainger, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Philip Wood.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Thomas Church of England Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Thomas Church of England VA Primary School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as St Thomas Church of England Primary School as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff at St Thomas are proud to belong to their school. Everybody demonstrates the school's values of love, trust, friendship and faith through their kindness and care for each other. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe because they are part of a happy team.

The whole school community is united in having high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils are keen to learn and they persevere to produce high-quality work. They love to talk about their lessons and show impressive recall of recent learning. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get the support they need to succeed.

Pupils behave well and the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils enjoy warm relationships with adults. Pupils trust staff to listen and help them with any worries or concerns they may have. Children in the early years get off to a flying start. They learn to follow the school's routines quickly, share resources and cooperate with each other. They show great interest and enthusiasm in their learning.

The school provides a range of trips that widen pupils' experiences beyond the local area, including to the zoo, farms and museums. These successfully bring classroom learning to life for pupils.

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

The curriculum is broad and ambitious, with regular opportunities for pupils to revisit the knowledge they have studied. The school supports pupils to recall important facts and apply their knowledge confidently. For example, pupils use 'knowledge notes' to remind them of their learning. For instance, they can compare the Mayan lifestyle with the Anglo-Saxon culture they learned about the previous year.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and present new information clearly. For example, staff guide older pupils to solve algebraic equations by taking them through the process step-by-step and providing helpful resources. This helps pupils to solve these calculations independently. Teachers make sure pupils use and understand important vocabulary. This begins in the early years, where communication is prioritised. The early years setting is a vibrant environment where children are immersed in rich language and engaging activities. Activities in Nursery and Reception are exceptionally well organised to absorb children in learning. Skilled staff ensure that children make the most of every opportunity to learn. These strong foundations prepare children extremely well for Year 1 and beyond.

Pupils get useful feedback in lessons so they can address any gaps in learning. Adults regularly check what pupils know. They use this information to provide extra support where needed, enabling pupils to keep up. However, sometimes, pupils who are ready to move on to deeper learning are not provided with opportunities to extend their understanding further.

The school has a highly effective approach to teaching phonics that ensures pupils learn sounds quickly and read books matched to the sounds they know. Staff are well trained and teach new sounds precisely. This helps pupils to become more confident and fluent readers. Where needed, staff expertly deliver extra support so that pupils keep up with the phonics programme.

The school successfully identifies and meets the needs of pupils with SEND so they can learn and play alongside their peers. Staff reduce barriers to learning and make thoughtful adaptations to work so all pupils achieve well. Some pupils spend part of their day in the welcoming and calming 'Rainforest room', where they benefit from bespoke support to meet their needs.

The school's expectations for behaviour are high. Pupils meet these expectations and they trust adults to manage any occasional incidents of poor behaviour fairly and consistently. As a result, pupils have a secure understanding of right and wrong. They understand what it means to be a good friend and a responsible citizen.

The school has a well-structured personal development programme. It teaches pupils about keeping themselves safe and healthy and how to maintain effective relationships. Pupils have opportunities to explore different beliefs, and they experience them directly through visits to places of worship. Pupils become responsible and make a difference to the school through roles such as eco-warriors and as members of the school council.

Pupils have opportunities to develop their talents and interests through links with a local ballet company and football team and some after school clubs. However, these clubs are not well attended and the choice of clubs does not always reflect the interests of pupils.

The school is well led by the new skilled leaders, who have accurately identified areas for development to improve the school even further. Trustees and local governors have a clear process for checking what is happening in school. The trust team provides valuable support and challenge. Staff appreciate the highly effective individualised professional development they receive. This means that staff, just like the pupils and their parents and carers, are proud to be part of the St Thomas family.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not always ensure that learning is adapted so that pupils who are ready to move on with their learning have opportunities to develop their understanding even further. This means that some opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge and

understanding are missed. The school should ensure that staff are able to adapt pupils' learning and challenge those who are ready to move on.

- There are limited opportunities for pupils to try new games and activities at breaktimes, and pupils are not always interested in the clubs available to them. This means pupils do not get a wide range of opportunities to develop their interests and talents. The school should explore ways to offer accessible opportunities for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, so they can develop their talents.

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	142375
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10322880
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Wood
CEO of the trust	Claire Grainger
Head of School	Sarah Williams
Website	www.stthomasacademy.school
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Fioretti Trust in September 2024 when their previous trust, the All Saints Multi Academy Trust, merged to become part of the Fioretti trust.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Birmingham. The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place within the prescribed period.
- The head of school and deputy head of school were internally appointed to their new posts in September 2024.
- The school operates a before- 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to 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 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 met with the head of school, deputy head of school, other school leaders and trust leaders. This included a meeting with the CEO, who is also a trustee.
- The lead inspector met remotely with trustees, including the chair of trustees. She met with members of the local governing board. She also spoke with a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of governance, and documentation relating to attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of staff and took account of views shared through the staff survey.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with groups of pupils both formally and during less-structured parts of the day.
- The inspectors took account of responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector spoke informally with parents on arrival to school.

Inspection team

Corinne Biddell, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Justine Lomas

Ofsted Inspector

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