

St John and St Francis Church School

Westonzoyland Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 5BP

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2017

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| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Despite several gains since the last inspection, a legacy of weaker teaching in several key stage 2 classes has not been resolved. This means that too few disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make sufficient progress.
- Assessment is not used consistently to plan teaching to help pupils catch up. As a result, many pupils have gaps in their skills and knowledge and too few pupils are working at the standards expected for their age.
- Subject leaders have not had sufficient time to develop their monitoring of teaching. Checks on the quality of teaching do not consistently secure good progress across the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is improving but there are variations in the level of challenge and support teachers provide. This limits pupils' ability to deepen their understanding and make the progress they are capable of.
- Absence for disadvantaged pupils, while improving, is higher than for other pupils.
- Governors' monitoring of the quality of teaching does not allow them to gain a clear understanding of the progress of different groups of pupils.
- The school website does not contain all the information recommended by the government. This limits what parents can find out about the impact of leaders' actions.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The headteacher and other senior leaders, supported well by the Bath and Wells multi-academy trust, have a secure understanding of the school's priorities.
- Leaders have taken decisive action to improve teaching. This has led to improved outcomes, particularly in phonics in Year 1 and mathematics in Year 6.
- Governors are fully committed to supporting the school.
- Early years provision is good. Children make good progress as a result of good teaching and are prepared well for Year 1.
- Parents are extremely positive about the care and support their children receive. Pupils behave well. They respect the school's ethos and are proud to be part of the school.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture at the school and all staff are fully committed to ensuring pupils' welfare.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the effectiveness of subject leaders' monitoring of teaching so that they rapidly improve teaching where it is most needed
 - continuing to tackle higher absence for disadvantaged pupils
 - governors fully developing their understanding of information held by the school, so that they can provide more effective challenge
 - ensuring that the school website is updated and compliant with regulations.
- Improve the consistency of teaching in all subjects by:
 - embedding more precise assessment, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they make more rapid progress
 - reversing the legacy of previous weaker teaching, particularly for older pupils, so that more pupils reach standards expected for their age.

It is recommended that the school undertakes a review of its use of the pupil premium.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- There have been considerable changes to leadership and staffing since the previous inspection and leaders have taken important steps to improve teaching. This has been particularly effective in improving outcomes in phonics in Year 1 and mathematics in Year 6. However, action taken by senior leaders to improve the consistency of teaching across the school has not had sufficient impact.
- During the past year, leaders have taken steps to secure more precise assessment but this is not yet reliable across the school. This means that teachers have not consistently set work that is sufficiently well matched to pupils' capabilities. Consequently, many key stage 2 pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, have not made enough progress.
- Senior leaders support subject leaders to improve the quality of teaching across the school. However, subject leaders have not had sufficient time to develop their monitoring of teaching. This hinders their ability to check that teaching consistently secures good progress for pupils.
- The special educational needs coordinator has a clear understanding of the different needs of pupils. Additional government funding is targeted appropriately to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and parents are delighted with the support their children receive. However, some groups of pupils are still not catching up. Leaders appreciate that the impact of teaching needs to be checked more rigorously so that pupils make better progress.
- Senior leaders use additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, to plan teaching interventions to support them to make better progress. While this funding is having a positive impact for some pupils, many disadvantaged pupils across the school do not make the progress they are capable of.
- The school's curriculum provides a firm focus on developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills. Although pupils develop knowledge and skills in other subjects such as history, science and geography, leaders do not routinely monitor these subjects. This limits their ability to check that pupils develop the necessary depth of understanding and skills and make sufficient progress.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a secure understanding of the school's weaknesses and make clear their expectations for teaching, learning and assessment. They have taken concerted action to improve the consistency of teaching across the school. For instance, they review teachers' assessment information regularly so that they can support teachers to help pupils to make better progress.
- There are well-established systems in place to manage teachers' performance. Leaders visit lessons and look at pupils' work to establish how well pupils are achieving. They swiftly identify when teaching needs to improve and use examples of stronger practice to support the development of more effective teaching.

- Staff respond well to challenges from leaders because they are keen to develop their roles. Staff welcome the training and support they receive and, as a result, staff morale is high. Staff who responded to the questionnaire were wholeheartedly positive about the leadership of the headteacher and improvements to the school.
- Leaders have taken the necessary steps to challenge the most able pupils and, as a result, pupils in all year groups are making accelerated progress. This means that more pupils are now working at higher standards.
- Achievement has improved in the early years, key stage 1 and upper key stage 2. Leaders are fully committed to sustaining this momentum of improvement and although teaching is not consistently good, it shows an upward trend of improvement.
- Leaders make good use of the physical education and sport premium to develop the teaching and assessment of physical education. Leaders take account of pupils' views and utilise the skills of external sports providers to support improvements in teaching. Therefore the school is able to promote active and healthy lifestyles and celebrate pupils' sporting achievements.
- Pupils receive good opportunities to secure their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British values. Pupils elect house captains who take their responsibilities seriously. They proudly wear the house captains' blazer, act as ambassadors for the school and role models for other pupils. Leaders are keen to gain pupils' views and carry out learning walks with house captains. The feedback pupils provide helps them to contribute to school improvement.
- The school has well-developed links with Bath and Wells multi-academy trust. The trust offers a range of support to senior leaders and teachers, which helps them to understand the actions they need to take to improve. School leaders have helped to develop assessment across the trust and local headteachers meet regularly to evaluate their work and share good practice.

Governance of the school

- Since the last inspection, there is now a full complement of governors who are committed to improving their knowledge. They have undertaken relevant training to improve their monitoring of teaching. However, while governors recognise that teaching needs to improve further, they are not clear about progress or attendance issues for specific groups. This limits their ability to provide sufficient challenge or fully understand how effectively leaders are driving improvements.
- Governors are visible in the school and have included relevant information about themselves on the website. This helps parents know who to approach if they have questions or concerns. However, some aspects of the website, such as the impact of funding expenditure, are missing and therefore do not fulfil government recommendations.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school takes its safeguarding responsibilities seriously. Leaders provide regular guidance and training to raise staff awareness of their safeguarding duty. Because of

this all staff are clear about their role in keeping pupils safe.

- Safeguarding records are detailed and secure. Leaders routinely evaluate referral and follow-up processes. This makes sure that all necessary steps have been taken to keep pupils safe.
- The single central record of checks on staff is well maintained and fulfils statutory guidelines. Leaders have undertaken safer recruitment training, which ensures that the process for recruiting staff is robust.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and understand how to keep safe in a range of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils know who to go to if they have any worries.
- The care and support provided for pupils is strong because all adults who work in the school see pupils' welfare as a priority. Parents speak very favourably about the nurturing support that pupils receive, commenting that the school is 'amazing' and 'very supportive'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching has improved considerably under the leadership of the headteacher and other senior leaders, it is not consistently good across the whole school. For instance, there is inconsistency of expectation, which leads to variability in presentation and pupils' responses to feedback.
- Weaker teaching is being eliminated and a greater proportion of teaching is now of good quality. However, variations in teaching have resulted in weaker progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in Years 3 to 5.
- More precise assessment over the last year has improved teaching and had a positive effect on progress for many pupils. However, the legacy of some poor teaching has not yet been reversed. This means that approximately one third of pupils in several classes are not currently working at standards expected for their age.
- At times, teachers do not plan effectively for pupils' learning or give clear enough instructions. This prevents pupils from fully developing their skills and understanding.
- Teachers do not consistently intervene early enough when pupils make mistakes, which limits the extent to which teachers can clarify misconceptions. When questions or tasks are not challenging enough to deepen pupils' understanding, pupil progress slows.
- Teachers often provide motivating learning experiences that fully engage pupils. For instance, Year 2 pupils created a tally of Roald Dahl characters and Year 6 pupils developed the use of formal language using phrases such as 'it is my opinion' when writing a letter to Roald Dahl's wife.
- When teaching is stronger, teachers set clear expectations and plan work that meets pupils' needs, which helps them to remain focused. Teachers explore pupils' understanding through well-targeted questions and quickly clarify misconceptions. This helps to inspire pupils to commit to their work.
- Teachers are embedding a new form of assessment in mathematics in Years 5 and 6.

This helps teachers to adapt their planning and teaching each day to meet pupils' needs. Mathematics teaching helps pupils to develop their problem solving and reasoning skills. Pupils say that feedback helps them to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

- Pupils have good relationships with adults in the school and clearly respect them. Even when teaching does not fully support pupils, they remain well behaved and keen to learn.
- Teachers generally plan activities for the most able pupils that are suitably challenging. Consequently, the most able pupils make better progress than other groups of pupils across the school.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their reading skills and very much enjoy reading. Pupils who read to the inspector read fluently, with good expression. They are able to recall events in stories and show a good understanding of characters' actions. A Year 6 pupil talked excitedly about plans to set up an Anderson shelter reading den in the classroom. They plan to use it as a quiet reading space and to link with their history work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All adults at the school prioritise the welfare of pupils and close links with parents help leaders to intervene when pupils require extra help and support. The focused support of the pastoral leader has been particularly successful in improving pupils' attendance, behaviour, confidence and emotional well-being.
- Pupils are positive about the work to promote the school's values. The 'flock code', which permeates the culture of the school, helps pupils to be fair and honest, listen to others, demonstrate positive attitudes, take care with property and be kind and helpful.
- Pupils know what is expected of them because adults set clear expectations of attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils move around the school in a purposeful and calm manner. They are keen to apply themselves to their work and are enthusiastic to learn. Pupils value their education and a recent 'aspirations week' motivated them to consider the career paths they would like to follow in the future.
- Pupils understand the need to be thoughtful and caring. They cooperate well with adults and their peers and are willing to help others. For instance, pupils help each other in lessons, raise funds for the NSPCC and provide food for a food bank during Harvest time.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school because they know who to turn to if they have problems. The work of leaders helps pupils understand how to stay safe online, including when using the internet. Parents are also supported to understand how to help their children to stay safe.
- Teaching helps pupils to gain a good understanding of different religions in modern British society. For example, they learn about different celebrations such as Hanukkah and Diwali and compare them with Christingle. Pupils in the school who follow different

faiths give talks in assembly to help other pupils gain a greater awareness of what it means to be a part of their religion.

- Pupils are motivated to come to school because of the exciting activities on offer. During the inspection, pupils and teachers dressed up as characters from Roald Dahl books and learning was linked to the author's stories. For instance, Year 5 pupils enjoyed creating crocodile stick puppets to use when acting out the story of 'The Enormous Crocodile'. Pupils also welcome the opportunity to participate in a range of clubs such as hockey, gymnastics and choir.
- Leaders and teachers have gained the confidence of parents, who speak highly of the support their children receive. Parents remark on how approachable staff are, noting 'they go out of their way to help' and 'nothing is too much trouble'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons because there are well-established routines and pupils know what is expected of them. This means that movement around the school is well-managed and orderly. Pupils are polite towards adults in school and to each other. Almost all parents who expressed a view said that behaviour is managed well.
- Pupils understand what constitutes bullying because leaders encourage pupils to consider the effects of their actions on others. They explain the effects of unkind words and deeds, which helps pupils to develop caring attitudes to others. Pupils say that bullying is rare but if it does happen adults in the school quickly deal with it.
- Determined action by leaders to tackle absence has led to improvements over time. Whole-school attendance is now close to the national average and attendance for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved. Higher absence for some disadvantaged pupils is still an issue, but leaders are taking the necessary steps to address this and attendance is improving.
- Discussions with leaders and evidence from behaviour logs confirm that the steps the school has taken to address poor behaviour are having a positive impact. As a result, behaviour incidents are reducing and exclusion is rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving expected and higher standards in reading and mathematics was lower than the national figure. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in mathematics had improved from the previous year. The proportion of pupils achieving expected standards in writing was similar to the national figure. Progress in all subjects was above the threshold set by the government.
- In 2017, the proportion of Year 2 pupils achieving expected standards in writing and mathematics declined from the previous year. The proportion of pupils achieving expected standards in reading was similar to the previous year, when it was in line with the national figure.

- Over time, too few pupils make good progress in all subjects, particularly in Years 3 to 5. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because assessment has been inconsistent and work has not sufficiently challenged or supported pupils. As a result, up to one third of pupils began this academic year at standards lower than might be expected for their age.
- More recently, progress for pupils in Year 1 and Year 6 has been stronger for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because additional government funding has been used appropriately to support them to make more rapid progress.
- Across all subjects, the most able pupils make better progress than other pupils in the school because they are provided with work that provides greater challenge.
- In 2017, 85% of Year 1 pupils met the national standard in phonics. Over the last three years, an increasing number of pupils have achieved the required standard.

Early years provision

Good

- Provision in the early years is effective and children benefit from a well-resourced and welcoming environment. During the inspection, children in the early years had been in school less than a week and adults had already established warm and positive relationships with them. As a result, children were happily settling into school routines, making friends and excitedly exploring the activities teachers had provided for them.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of early years is close to the national figure. Leaders have high expectations of children's achievement and regularly check that children are on course to meet the standards they are capable of. Because children make good progress during their time in early years they are well prepared for Year 1.
- The early years leader supports all adults in the early years to improve and develop teaching. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants have a consistent approach to assessing children, which helps them to plan future learning opportunities.
- Teaching is effective because adults challenge and support children to initiate their own learning and find things out for themselves. Teachers make good use of the environment, both indoors and out, to plan activities that motivate children to develop a range of skills. For example, halved apples and paint encourage children to make prints and musical instruments allow them to explore different sounds. Children enjoy developing their communication skills when making pancakes in the 'mud kitchen'.
- Children are well supported to develop reading and writing because adults model learning well. For instance, when demonstrating how to write the letter 'a', adults explain 'whoosh... go back round the apple and down the leaf'.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used effectively. For example, children enjoy 'Funky Fingers' sessions, which help them to practise moulding dough into letter shapes to develop their reading and writing skills.
- Adults in the early years are committed to children's welfare and the environment provides a safe and secure space in which children can learn and play. All adults have undertaken relevant safeguarding training and understand what to do if they have

concerns about a child.

- Adults in the early years set high expectations of children's behaviour, which ensures that they understand school routines and behave well. For example, children lined up sensibly when waiting to use the outdoor play apparatus.
- Close communication with parents and pre-school providers helps adults in the early years to have a precise understanding of the needs of each child. Parents of children in the early years are pleased with the support adults provide for their children.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 139338 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 10037071 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 408 |
| Appropriate authority | Academy trust |
| Chair | Major Yvonne Rouffet |
| Headteacher | Mrs Lisa Farley |
| Telephone number | 01278 456918 |
| Website | www.stjohnstfrancisbwmat.org |
| Email address | office@sjsf.bwmat.org |
| Date of previous inspection | 12–13 March 2015 |

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about accessibility or the school's use of sports funding on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about accessibility or the school's use of sports funding. The school's scheme of delegation is not on the website and there is no link to the Department for Education website.
- St John and St Francis Church School is a larger-than-average-sized school with two classes in all year groups.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is slightly below the national average.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or whose first language is not/believed not to be English is much lower than nationally.

- The proportion of pupils receiving support for special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- There are very few pupils being supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school has met the government's floor standards for the last three years.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes across the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, parents and pupils. A meeting was held with several representatives of the governing body. An inspector also held a meeting with the director of learning and achievement and chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors met with parents at the beginning and end of the school day and considered 25 responses to the online survey, Parent View, including 11 additional comments. Thirty-three responses to the staff questionnaire were considered.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's latest assessment information, self-evaluation and the school improvement plan. They also looked at attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.
- Several pupils' books from different year groups were scrutinised jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also met with a group of pupils and heard several pupils read.

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
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| Nicola Berry | Ofsted Inspector |
| Adam Morris | Ofsted Inspector |

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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