

# Inspection of a good school: East Brent Church of England Academy

Church Road, East Brent, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 4HZ

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Inspection dates:

24 October 2019

## **Outcome**

East Brent Church of England Academy continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at East Brent love school. They show excitement and enthusiasm for their learning. The experienced, nurturing and caring staff share high aspirations for all pupils. Staff are determined that all pupils reach their full potential.

Children know the expectations of good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning from the early years onwards. This enables them to learn effectively. Older pupils listen to adults carefully and are kind towards each other. Pupils get along well during lessons and at social times. They are adamant that bullying does not exist. They are confident that staff help them all to keep safe at school.

Pupils experience a school that is the hub of a close-knit community. All parents who spoke with us sang the praises of staff. Moral values permeate the school. Pupils often fundraise for local and national charities. They say that the school is amazing and that since joining the trust, wider opportunities for pupils have increased significantly.

The curriculum extends beyond the classroom and the school gates. Visits and enrichment activities bring learning alive. Pupils learn about different cultures, in particular Kenyan cultures. Pupils have written letters to children in Kenya. This started when Kenyan children visited East Brent.

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

All staff, including governors, are ambitious for all pupils; there is a clear agenda that no pupil will be left behind. Collectively, they ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The teaching of phonics and early reading is a high priority. Children learn to recognise letters and sounds as soon as they start the Reception Year. Following training, staff are skilled in the teaching of phonics. However, phonics learning is not as well organised and sequenced as it could be.

Leaders have invested significantly in reading. More recently, the profile of reading in the school has increased. Pupils speak favourably about the new bronze, silver and gold reading challenges. Reading areas and displays around the school are appealing. Pupils enjoy the wide range of different books and authors they have available to them. Books are matched carefully to pupils' reading abilities. Most pupils read regularly and often at home. Teachers skilfully weave books through the curriculum. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 told us how their class book, 'Space Dog', helped them understand their science learning. Leaders have effective systems to support pupils who are struggling with their reading. Nevertheless, not enough priority is given to the teaching of reading skills in key stage 2.

Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. The well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils become secure in their knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. Engaging activities make lessons interesting and fun. In history, pupils learn about Egypt through the visit of an Egyptologist. Pupils say that this helps them to remember more and know more about Ancient Egypt, and they do.

The Reception class is a hive of activity. The high expectations of all staff help ensure that children achieve well. Children work well together in their mixed-age class. This is because staff plan activities that promote a thirst for learning. The Reception children aspire to be like the pupils in Year 1. The curriculum intention, 'bringing learning alive', can be seen throughout the school. For example, in history, Reception children used flat irons and Salter scales to gain an understanding of life in the Victorian era. They can recall kings and queens from the past and recognise a picture of the Queen.

Pupils' progress is checked closely. This enables staff to identify any pupils who are not reaching their full potential. Leaders recognise the challenges to pupils living in a rural community. Therefore, they have ensured that enrichment activities support pupils' cultural and social development beyond East Brent.

The small proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make strong progress. Parents and carers are very positive about the additional support that pupils receive. They say that staff go 'above and beyond' their expectations. There is a similar picture for the small proportion of disadvantaged pupils. Staff notice when pupils need extra help. This results in timely and tailored support which helps pupils to make strong progress.

Staff are extremely positive about senior leaders' investment in their well-being. They say that this has improved further since joining the trust. They said, 'Well-being was positive before, but the trust has put a big arm around us, like a cuddly bear.' Staff appreciate their senior leaders and the work they do. Morale is high.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained. Staff are kept informed of any national updates regularly. Staff can recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They know what to do if a concern arises.

Pupils say that they have been taught that if they have a concern, it is better to 'keep it on the outside than on the inside'. Pupils are adamant that staff would deal with any worries or concerns swiftly.

Governors are well versed in safeguarding processes. They check safeguarding procedures regularly to ensure that leaders take the right actions to keep pupils safe.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have worked tirelessly at improving the quality of reading. However, they have not considered sufficiently how pupils in key stage 2 gain more knowledge by building on what they already know and can do. Leaders need to ensure that the content of the key stage 2 reading curriculum is carefully sequenced and delivered.
- Leaders need to ensure that the approach to teaching phonics is systematic. This will help pupils to use the knowledge they gain during their phonics lessons to achieve greater success in their reading.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, East Brent Church of England First School, to be good on 5 December 2013.

## **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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143331
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111581
<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	82
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Brian Kirkup
<b>Executive headteacher</b>	Fiona Robertson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.eastbrentcofefirstschool.org">www.eastbrentcofefirstschool.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- East Brent Church of England Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It converted to become an academy school and joined Wessex Learning Trust on 1 November 2016. The work of the school is overseen by the board of trustees.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including pupils with an education, health and care plan, is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received its section 48 inspection in February 2017, when this aspect of the school's work was graded as good.
- The school has an executive headteacher.

## Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, subject leaders, the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND, the early years leader and a sample of support and teaching staff.

- The lead inspector held a meeting with four governors from the local governing body. This included the chair of the local governing body by telephone. The chair of trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust were also in attendance.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- A significant proportion of the inspection focused on ensuring that pupils are safe. Inspectors scrutinised records, tested staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils. They also considered the views of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The lead inspector considered 40 responses to Parent View. He also met with a group of parents at the end of the school day. The lead inspector considered 13 responses to the staff survey and 28 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's reading, mathematics and history curriculums. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, meeting with senior and subject leaders and discussions with teachers and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clair Harrington-Wilcox

Ofsted Inspector

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