

Inspection of St John and St Francis Church School

Westonzoyland Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 5BP

Inspection dates: 13–14 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils behave well. They are friendly to each other and polite to adults. They enjoy school. They attend well, and few are absent for any length of time. Pupils feel safe here. They told us that adults take good care of them. We found that this is true. Bullying does not happen often. If it does, pupils told us adults would help them sort it out.

Pupils enjoy sports activities and visits to places of interest. Pupils, parents and carers and staff all enjoyed the recent whole-school learning on a carnival theme. Pupils say that adults help them if they get stuck in their work.

However, despite some recent improvements, the quality of education that pupils receive is not good enough. Some pupils do not achieve as they should. This is because the curriculum is not planned in a way that helps pupils to build up what they know and understand securely.

There have been many changes in leaders and staff since the last inspection. This has slowed the rate at which the school has improved. It has also been a concern for parents. However, new leaders are driving improvement briskly.

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

Leaders have put a broad curriculum in place. The sequence of learning is well structured in mathematics and physical education. As a result, teaching is effective in these subjects and pupils learn well. In other subjects, the sequence of learning is not identified as clearly, so that pupils can learn more and remember more. At times, pupils cannot remember what they have learned earlier in the term or in the previous year. This limits the progress they make. For example, many pupils cannot remember their previous learning in science or history. In art, when pupils were designing masks during the recent learning about carnivals, the teaching did not build on what they already know and can do.

Pupils are keen to read. They have a range of good-quality texts to choose from. Pupils enjoy hearing adults read aloud to them. The new library space is an attractive place to read. Pupils are enthused by their roles as student librarians. However, changes to the teaching of reading are new. It is too soon to see their impact.

Phonics has not been taught well enough in the past. Leaders have recently introduced a new approach and teaching is improving. For example, in Reception Year, children are keeping pace with the ambitious expectations of the new phonics plan. Children are using the sounds they have learned to read, and write words such as 'wig' and 'wet'.

In writing, the teaching for older children builds on what they already know, and their work improves as a result. However, for younger children, too much is left to

chance. Teaching does not develop their spelling, punctuation and grammar through a clear sequence of learning. Consequently, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are keen to learn and want to improve their work. Occasionally, a few pupils find it harder to behave well. Adults provide valuable support for them. As a result, their behaviour improves. The school is orderly. Pupils follow school routines well.

Pupils are prepared well for life in modern society. They enjoy roles with responsibility, such as being team captains. Pupils are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. Many take part in after-school sports activities and in the weekly physical challenge.

In the past, children in early years have had many different teachers. Many children have entered Year 1 without the skills they need to learn further. The new leader, however, has improved provision in early years. There is greater consistency to teaching, particularly in phonics. However, the support given by other adults varies in quality. Often their questioning does not encourage children to extend their learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the help they need to make progress. The school works closely with disadvantaged pupils and their families and as a result their attendance, academic results and progress are improving.

Staff appreciate the training that they are given, including through the multi-academy trust. Staff say that leaders show a concern for their well-being, including their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff put safeguarding at the heart of their work. Leaders ensure that school staff, including new staff, know what to do if they have a concern about a child. The safeguarding team has strong relationships with external agencies to support children and their families. Leaders review plans regularly and make sure actions are followed up. They will challenge decisions to make sure pupils are safe. The academy trust and school leaders ensure that new staff are recruited safely. Governors check on the school's safeguarding arrangements regularly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of phonics has not been good enough in the past. As a result, pupils did not develop into fluent readers and those who needed to catch up did not do

so. Leaders have ensured that there is now a systematic plan in place for phonics. This has led to some improvements in the teaching of phonics, particularly in early years. Leaders must ensure that these recent changes have a sustained impact across the school on improving pupils' ability to read.

- Although the new leader for early years has improved the range of opportunities for children inside and outside the classroom, the provision is not yet good enough. This is because additional adults are still developing their skills in questioning and the modelling of learning. At times, they do not extend children's knowledge and learning. Leaders need to ensure that teaching provides children in early years with a solid foundation for later years.
- The writing curriculum is not supporting pupils to develop secure spelling, punctuation and grammar. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that hamper their learning. Leaders need to ensure that a coherent writing curriculum develops pupils' literacy more securely.
- Across a number of subjects, the curriculum is not clearly sequenced. As a result, pupils do not build secure knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that all subjects have a planned progression of knowledge and learning so that pupils learn more and remember more in each subject. Senior leaders and subject leaders should make sure that the curriculum is being taught consistently across the school.

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're 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

Unique reference number	139338
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10114293
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	413
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Daniel
Headteacher	Jenny Venning
Website	www.stjohnstfrancisbwmat.org
Date of previous inspection	13–14 September 2017

Information about this school

- The current headteacher and the early years leader joined the school in September 2019. The school has had two headteachers since the last inspection in 2017. The deputy headteacher joined the school in January 2019.
- St John and St Francis is a church school. The school is in the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust.
- At the most recent section 48 inspection of denominational education in January 2019, the school received a judgement of good.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector met with governors and spoke with officers of the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, science and physical education. We also looked at how well pupils learn in history and geography. We met with leaders to talk about curriculum design. We visited

lessons. We looked at pupils' books and talked with them about their work. We spoke with teachers from the lessons visited. An inspector listened to pupils read.

- We talked with teachers, teaching assistants and other members of the school staff. An inspector met with staff to talk about their workload. The 27 responses to the staff questionnaire were considered.
- We talked with pupils about their life at school. We observed pupils as they played outside at break- and during lunchtime.
- We looked to see how the school keeps pupils safe. We checked the school's records and procedures. We asked staff across the school how they keep pupils safe. We asked pupils what they would do if they had a worry or concern.
- We met parents on the playground at the end of the school day. We looked at the 52 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the free-text comments received.

Inspection team

Sarah O'Donnell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jen Edwards	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Bragg	Ofsted Inspector

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