

Inspection of Beechcroft St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Corporation Road, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 0LQ

Inspection dates: 15–16 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time at Beechcroft St Paul's. They particularly value the good friendships with other pupils and the relationship they have with staff. However, several pupils shared their concerns about the many changes of teacher that they have had and the fact that the work they do is often too easy, or they have done it before. Consequently, some pupils do not show good attitudes towards their learning and they do not finish the work that has been set for them. In key stages 1 and 2, the quality of education is not as good as it should be. However, children in the Nursery and Reception class get off to a strong start, although this is not maintained as pupils progress through the rest of the school.

Around school, pupils behave well. There is some bullying, but most pupils agreed that adults were good at sorting it out. A few parents disagree. All pupils feel safe in school. They comment that behaviour has improved and can identify adults who help them when they are worried.

Pupils, and most parents who shared their experience of the school, acknowledge the significant improvements since the new headteacher started in September 2019. The environment is calm and orderly. There is a clear vision and the school values are at the heart of the improvements. However, it is early days and many of the changes are only just being rolled out. It is too early to see the impact.

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

The last few years have been a difficult period for the school. Several different headteachers and many changes in teaching staff have resulted in a period of instability. The quality of education declined. There were some improvements in the previous academic year. However, since September 2019, the rate of improvement has accelerated.

Leaders are in the process of reviewing the curriculum and teachers are developing new plans for all subjects. In some subjects, these changes are only just being introduced, such as in geography. In others, such as mathematics, they have been in place for longer. The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. Generally, subjects are well planned, although some not sufficiently well thought through. They do not make sure that pupils have the knowledge they need before they explore more complex ideas. Too often, teachers do not put the subject plans into practice well enough in classes. This is because teachers and teaching assistants do not have a good enough understanding of these subjects or how to teach them effectively. Consequently, teaching does not build well on what pupils already know or consider the abilities of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders have prioritised improving pupils' reading skills. This has been a weakness for several years. Trustees have invested heavily in the number and range of books that pupils can read. This has raised pupils' interest. However, too often the books that pupils in Years 1 and 2 read are either too easy or too hard for them. This is

because teachers have not checked carefully enough how confident pupils are in using their phonic knowledge. Equally, leaders have not ensured that they monitor teachers' assessments effectively. Very few pupils read regularly to an adult at home.

Teachers expectations across key stages 1 and 2 are not high enough. Too often, pupils switch off in lessons. Although they do not disturb others, they do not focus on the tasks they are set. Consequently, work goes unfinished and often it is poorly presented. A larger-than-average proportion of pupils do not attend school on a regular basis. This has been the case for several years and is not improving despite the efforts of school staff.

In the Nursery and Reception class, the quality of education is much stronger. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum which children respond well to. The curriculum builds on children's experiences and takes them on imaginary journeys around the world. Adults check children's understanding and encourage children to try a range of activities to deepen this understanding. As a result, children quickly develop in what they know and can do and how they behave. They follow adults' instructions quickly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are generally effective. However, there are some shortcomings in the checks carried out to confirm the suitability of staff before they start work. Also, the arrangements to check on the welfare of pupils who are educated elsewhere are not strong enough. These are easily remedied, and leaders began to improve these during the inspection.

Nonetheless, staff have had the training they need in a wide range of risks that pupils may face. This is regularly updated. Staff are vigilant to the indicators that children may be at risk of harm. They also teach pupils how to be safe. For example, children in the Nursery were very clear about the risks of going outside without an adult.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders, including trust leaders, are aware of many of the shortcomings of the school. Although some positive signs can be seen, these are not yet commonplace. Leaders, including trust leaders, should ensure that where actions to improve the quality of education have been identified, staff are supported, and actions are monitored effectively so that they bring about the changes needed.
- Pupils' reading skills are not as well developed as they should be. Those who have fallen behind are not catching up quickly enough. In part, this is because pupils are not confident in their application of their phonic knowledge. Furthermore, many pupils do not read regularly at home. Leaders should ensure that books

match pupils' confidence in their use of phonics and work with parents to help them in supporting their children to read accurately and often.

- Leaders are introducing new schemes of learning across the foundation subjects. However, staff have not had the training they need. Consequently, they do not have the subject knowledge or pedagogical understanding that they need to adapt these schemes to help pupils of all abilities learn. Leaders should ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the training and support that they need to teach the foundation subjects well.
- Some pupils do not show good attitudes to school. Some attend infrequently, others do not engage in their learning in class and many do not complete the work they are set. Leaders should work with teachers to ensure that their expectations are suitably high enough and are insisted on.

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 the school and 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

Unique reference number	144298
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10125232
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	212
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Exon
Headteacher	Cath Crossley
Website	www.beechcroft.dsat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Beechcroft St Paul's Church of England Primary School is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The current headteacher took up her post in September 2019.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is much higher than that of similar schools nationally.
- A statutory inspection for Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) was conducted in December 2014. The religious character of the school was judged to be outstanding.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with the headteacher, senior leaders, class teachers and a group of teaching assistants.

- The lead inspector met with four members of the local governing body, the trust's director of education and the regional director of education. He spoke with the chief executive officer and the vice-chair of the board of trustees by telephone.
- We did deep dives in reading, geography, mathematics and physical education. This included discussions with subject leaders; visits to lessons; looking at examples of children's work; discussions with teachers; discussions with children and listening to children read.
- We reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. We spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. We also asked the pupils about how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.
- We observed pupils playing at breaktime and lunchtime.
- One inspector spoke to parents at the end of the school day. Inspectors took account of the views of the 29 parents who completed the Parent View survey and one email from a parent.

Inspection team

Iain Freeland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gary Chown

Ofsted Inspector

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