

Inspection of Somerfords' Walter Powell CofE Academy

Dauntsey Road, Great Somerford, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 5HS

Inspection dates: 3–4 March 2020

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

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school and attend well. They are kind and courteous. Pupils value the school's Christian ethos and appreciate what it means to be part of the school community. Staff celebrate pupils' efforts to demonstrate the school's values.

Pupils feel safe in school. Parents, who completed the online questionnaire, agree. Pupils know what to do if they have a concern and feel confident that staff will deal it. Pupils behave well in and around school. Bullying is rare. Staff are quick to respond to bullying, but incidents are few and far between.

There have been changes to leadership since the previous inspection. This has slowed the pace of improvement. However, this pace has picked up of late. Leaders, at all levels, know the school well. They have prioritised further improvements and are taking steps to achieve these.

Leaders have introduced new curriculum plans. This work is still taking shape. Staff are trying to make these plans fit the school's mixed-aged classes, but this is proving to be difficult. Staff are working diligently to overcome this by adapting plans as they go, but this is not consistent across the school. The plans are not giving enough consideration to what pupils already know.

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

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. They are beginning to bring about improvements. Leaders, trust representatives and governors work well with one another. They share information to make sure everyone keeps up to date with how well the school is getting on. Staff work closely as a team and are increasingly sharing best practice with neighbouring schools in the trust.

Children get off to a delayed start when learning how to read. They struggle to read whole words, which slows their reading speed. The number of phonetically decodable books is in short supply. This limits how well children apply their phonic knowledge. Older pupils have positive attitudes towards reading, particularly those who are 'free readers'. Those who are still reading 'staged books' would like to read more exciting and challenging texts. Teachers decide how to support pupils' reading development class by class. Leaders have not made clear what pupils should know, across fiction and non-fiction texts, as they move through the school. This makes it hard to build on pupils' prior knowledge.

Leaders have adopted a new approach to teaching science and the foundation subjects. Their aim to develop pupils' enthusiasm and a love of learning is paying off. Pupils told inspectors that they really enjoy these subjects. Staff find it difficult to adapt curriculum plans to meet the school's mixed-aged classes. They are having to think on their feet. Staff are making changes to curriculum plans to ensure that pupils learn what they should, but there is still more to do. In some cases, staff

expose pupils to curriculum content before they are ready. The sequencing of learning is not building on pupils' knowledge well enough. As a result, not all pupils fully understand what they have learned before moving on.

In mathematics, leaders have acted on areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their mathematical reasoning. Where teaching is strongest, pupils build on what they know. However, this is not yet consistent across the school. As seen in science and the foundation subjects, pupils struggle because the curriculum does not build on what they already know.

Staff support pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. They quickly identify pupils who may need more help and put support in place. They track pupils' progress and access external support when needed. Staff regularly review pupils' targets to ensure that they remain precise.

Pupils have a strong understanding of different cultures and faiths. They know people have different beliefs but know it is important to show respect and understanding. Pupils know right from wrong. They told inspectors that the school's values help them to make sensible choices.

Pre-school provides children with a secure foundation for future learning. Children access activities that motivate and engage them. This dwindles as they move through the Reception Year, where children do not achieve as well as they could. Children feel safe and adults care for them well, but expectations are not high enough. Staff do not provide suitably challenging activities. The curriculum is not helping develop children's independence well enough. Adults keep an eye on children's progress but the quality of their assessments lacks precision. This makes it difficult for staff to match activities to children's emerging needs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff recruitment processes are robust. There are suitably trained leaders in place to undertake the shortlisting and interview process. Leaders only appoint staff who are suitable to work with children. Staff access regular training to help them keep abreast of their safeguarding responsibilities. They know they must pass concerns they have about pupils' welfare on to leaders without delay. Leaders' record-keeping is well organised. This helps leaders to identify patterns or trends. Although the number of concerns about pupils' welfare is low, staff vigilance is high. Leaders take appropriate action to keep pupils safe, involving external agencies when needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupil struggle to apply their phonic knowledge when reading. They find it hard to read whole words, which slows their reading fluency. This is because pupils do not get enough opportunities to blend letters and the sounds they make, and there are few phonetically decodable books at each stage of the phonics programme for them to practise. Leaders need to ensure that pupils keep up with the phonics programme, read a range of suitable reading books and develop increased reading fluency.
- Pupils' reading comprehension is not as strong as it could be. This is because teachers take different approaches in their teaching and assessment of pupils' reading comprehension. Pupils would also benefit from more challenging books. Leaders need to ensure that there is a clear reading strategy, with high-quality texts at its core so that pupils' reading improves.
- Pupils' knowledge in science and the foundation subjects is improving. Curriculum plans are not yet set in stone, and staff are having to think on their feet when adapting plans to fit the school's mixed-aged classes. This is proving to be difficult. Leaders need to agree the school's curriculum approach and help staff to sequence learning, so pupils build on what they already know.
- Expectations in the Reception Year are not high enough. Staff do not use precise information about what children know, can do and understand to inform the activities they provide. Children get off to a slow start and are too reliant on adults. Staff need to sharpen the quality of their assessments and provide suitable activities which develop children's understanding and independence.

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	142292
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10146213
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lynda Fisher
Headteacher	Andrea Kaye
Website	www.walterpowell.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Somerfords' Walter Powell CofE Academy has been part of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust since September 2015.
- Ofsted previously inspected the school in January 2018 and judged the school to be good. The inspector identified improvement priorities for school leaders to address.
- Somerfords' Walter Powell CofE Academy has three mixed-aged classes. They also operate a pre-school.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and history during the inspection. Inspectors met with senior leaders and curriculum leaders, considered pupils' workbooks, conducted lesson visits, and spoke with teachers and pupils. The lead inspector also spent some time looking at pupils' writing.

- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer and the school improvement partner. He also met with representatives from the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with the designated lead and deputy lead for safeguarding to discuss and consider their work to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector also checked the school's single central record.
- The lead inspector met with the special needs coordinator. They discussed the school's approach to identifying pupils with SEND and the quality of their work to support pupils.
- The team inspector considered logs of behavioural and bullying incidents. She also spoke with pupils about behaviour.
- The lead inspector met with leaders to discuss how the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The lead inspector considered responses to Ofsted's questionnaire and Parent View. He also considered responses to the staff and pupil survey. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tracy French

Ofsted Inspector

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