

Inspection of Ash Church of England Primary School

Main Street, Ash, Martock, Somerset TA12 6NS

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 September 2021

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

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

This school was last inspected 15 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ash Primary School provides a calm and safe place to learn. Pupils attend regularly and enjoy coming to school. A few parents raised concerns about bullying. However, pupils say that since the arrival of the new headteacher, incidents of bullying have stopped. Pupils trust adults to help them if they have a worry or concern.

Pupils behave well at social times and generally get on well together. They are polite and courteous. However, in some lessons, pupils' behaviour is not good. This happens when work is not matched closely enough to pupils' ability. Pupils lose interest in their work and become easily distracted.

During the pandemic, leaders ensured that pupils could continue to access extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs on offer. They are proud to represent the school in many local community events.

Leaders' expectations for what pupils can achieve are not high enough. This is reflected in the curriculum that pupils follow. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

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

The headteacher is committed to improving the school. Since her appointment, she rightly prioritised work on improving systems to ensure pupils are safe. In addition, she has identified which aspects of the school's work are not yet good enough.

To some extent, leaders' plans for improvement have slowed because of the pandemic. Nevertheless, the lack of professional development for curriculum leaders has contributed to a weak curriculum. Some staff do not yet have the skills required to improve the curriculum. In some subjects, the curriculum is not well planned. Lessons are not well organised. They do not build on what pupils already know. This leads to some pupils not being able to remember key knowledge and skills.

In subjects such as science, computing and physical education (PE), the curriculum is better planned. In PE, for example, pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. This knowledge is well thought out as pupils progress through the school. Over time, pupils have had much success in local sport competitions.

Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low, including in the early years. Systems for checking the knowledge pupils have learned are not effective. Consequently, teaching staff do not have accurate information about what pupils already know. This leads to curriculum plans not meeting the needs of pupils, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, some pupils lose interest in their work and become distracted.

Leaders have recently introduced a new curriculum for phonics. The early signs are that it is having a positive impact on pupils' ability to read. Leaders ensure that

children in the Nursery class experience a wide range of vocabulary. As soon as they are ready, they start to learn how to read. Children in the Reception class use their new sounds well to write with growing confidence. Leaders have put in place systems to help pupils who struggle with their reading to catch up. Pupils enjoy reading. However, there is no planned curriculum for reading in key stage 2. As a result, some pupils in key stage 2 have gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders have been working on promoting pupils' personal development. When children join the Nursery class, they settle quickly and enjoy being in school. Children are eager to learn. Leaders have introduced careers fairs to help older pupils gain knowledge of local and national industries. Pupils develop an appropriate awareness of how to respect one another. Nevertheless, some pupils have a limited understanding of fundamental British values. This leads to pupils having confused views of different religions and cultures in modern Britain.

Governors do not have an accurate perception of the quality of education. This is because systems for checking on leaders' work are not precise enough. In addition, they do not meet their statutory obligations well enough. Governors do not have a sharp enough focus on the impact of additional funding. This lack of oversight has contributed to governors not having an accurate view of the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have improved systems to keep children safe. Recruitment processes for new staff are robust. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that staff are well trained in identifying pupils who may be at risk of harm. Regular checks on staff's safeguarding knowledge ensure that they remain vigilant. Everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child. Leaders work closely with pupils and families to understand the risks associated with the internet. Pupils can talk confidently about the different ways to stay safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects are not well organised, including in the early years. This leads to some pupils not knowing and understanding what they should. Leaders need to ensure that the content of all subject plans are well organised, and that teachers' subject knowledge is of an equally high standard.
- The curriculum for reading in key stage 2 is weak. Leaders have not considered what they want pupils to achieve by the end of each year group. Because of these issues, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders need to ensure that the content of the key stage 2 reading curriculum is well thought out.

- Teachers' expectations of what some pupils can achieve, including in the early years, are not high enough. Teachers do not always use what they know about what pupils can already do to plan a suitably ambitious curriculum. This limits what some pupils can achieve. In turn, some pupils lose focus and engage in low-level disruption. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils and that teachers have high expectations of pupils.
- There has been insufficient professional development for curriculum leaders. This has hampered their ability to design and implement an effective curriculum. As a result, in some subjects, pupils have not grasped key ideas. Senior leaders need to ensure that all curriculum leaders have the appropriate professional development they need to improve the quality of the curriculum.
- Systems for checking what pupils know and remember in some subjects are weak. This leads to some pupils not knowing the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that systems for checking what pupils know provide teachers with the information they need to support pupils in developing their knowledge and understanding.
- The curriculum for personal development does not help pupils to fully understand fundamental British values or provide pupils with enough opportunities to learn about different cultures. This means that pupils are not well prepared for some aspects of life in modern Britain. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to develop a secure understanding of British values and different cultures.
- Governors do not have an accurate view of the quality of education. This hinders their ability to identify any areas of weakness and provide leaders with appropriate challenge and support. Governors' oversight of the effectiveness of leaders' work needs to improve.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	123814
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10199298
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret Morgan
Headteacher	Rebecca Bennett
Website	www.ashprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2006, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2020.
- In January 2021, the school opened nursery provision for two-year-olds.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received its section 48 inspection in October 2017, when this aspect of the school's work was graded as good.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, a representative from the local authority and teaching and support staff.

- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, computing and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, looked at samples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records, tested staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding leader.
- Inspectors considered the 62 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also took into consideration the 14 responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Marriott

Ofsted Inspector

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