

Inspection of a good school: Mells Church of England First School

Mells Green, Mells, Frome, Somerset, BA11 3QE

Inspection date: 13 October 2021

Outcome

Mells Church of England First School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are confident and happy. They are polite and considerate to one another. Pupils treat each other and adults with respect. They hold doors open for each other and listen carefully to each other when working and playing together.

Pupils know how the school's six core values and 'superhero power gems' help them develop skills for life. For example, pupils value the courage to practise and try again when faced with a problem or tricky question. This is shown in their positive attitude to learning. Pupils know about different cultures and religions. They have a strong sense of right and wrong.

Year 4 peer supporters are trained well to help other pupils sort out friendship issues. Pupils know the difference between bullying and conflict. They say that bullying does not happen. Pupils feel safe. Parents agree that staff create a 'nurturing, safe and friendly environment' for their children.

Staff encourage pupils to be 'roarsome readers'. They choose class books carefully to inspire pupils with a love of reading.

Through whole-school projects and educational visits, pupils know they can make a difference in the future. They say it inspires them to 'dream big'. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education.

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

The school's curriculum is clearly sequenced to build pupils' knowledge and skills over time. It sets out the key knowledge pupils must know and remember from the early years through to Year 4. Subject leaders have a sound understanding of how to deliver the curriculum. They increasingly provide useful training and important support to teachers.

Teachers help pupils to remember the curriculum's key knowledge. During lessons, pupils revisit previous learning before being introduced to new information and skills. Pupils know how this helps them do more, know more and remember more. Teachers quickly spot if pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Teachers skilfully use pupils' answers to questions to plan future learning and close gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Leaders plan carefully and review accurately the impact of additional support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who need extra help with their learning receive appropriate support to progress well.

Leaders have rightly made learning to read a priority. Teachers' and teaching assistants' phonics knowledge is secure. They check that pupils say the letters and sounds correctly. They quickly spot pupils who need extra help. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and teaching assistants provide useful catch-up sessions. Pupils build their phonics knowledge, reading speed and accuracy well.

Teachers make effective use of classroom and outdoor learning resources. For example, they think of interesting ways to help children in the early years develop the skills needed to hold a pencil correctly and begin to form shapes and letter. Pupils play with dough, use hand tools and cut with scissors to develop their finger control.

Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly way. They work and play well together. However, sometimes, the expectations for behaviour and learning are not clear. At these times, pupils can become distracted and less focused on their learning. If this occurs, pupils can be unsure what they are supposed to know and remember.

Leaders organise a wide range of meaningful opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils compete at county sporting events. They will play their brass instruments in an orchestra with pupils from other schools. Through these activities, pupils learn important life skills, such as how to work with others and the importance of practice to get better.

Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work well with external agencies to improve their knowledge of roles and responsibilities. Governors provide challenge and support for leaders to help bring about positive school improvements.

The executive headteacher and governors actively support staff well-being. Staff appreciate their care and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training. They know how to report concerns. Staff are confident that leaders follow up any concerns about pupils' safety and well-being. Referrals to external agencies are made in a timely manner.

Staff are kept well informed of safeguarding updates, including e-safety. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils are taught what makes a healthy relationship.

Governors check that leaders carry out their safeguarding roles and responsibilities.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Expectations for pupils' learning across curriculum subject areas vary. Where teachers' expectations are not clear or sufficiently demanding, pupils' progress to secure and remember new knowledge and skills can be hindered. The high expectations for pupils' learning and outcomes, as seen in the core subjects, needs to be applied consistently across all areas of the curriculum.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Mells Church of England First School to be good on 14 and 15 September 2016.

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	123767
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10200032
Type of school	First
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Claire Mitchell and Phillie Witt
Executive Headteacher	Claire Chantler
Website	beckingtonandmellsfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection in September 2016, Mells Church of England First School has federated with another school to form the Beckington and Mells Church School Federation.
- A newly formed governing body operates across the federation.
- The SENCo works across the two schools in the federation.

Information about this inspection

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

- The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, SENCo, staff, pupils and the joint chairs of the governing body.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read from Years 1, 2 and 3.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding practices.
- Inspectors considered 23 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 17 free-text responses, and 13 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David New

Ofsted Inspector

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