

Inspection of a good school: St Bartholomew's CofE (C) School

Buxton Road, Longnor, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 0NZ

Inspection date: 19 October 2021

Outcome

St Bartholomew's CofE (C) School continues to be a good school.

However, the inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has a caring Christian ethos at its core. Pupils learn in small classes. Staff have a detailed knowledge of all pupils and provide individual support where needed. Many pupils join the school in different year groups. All are welcomed and included fully in school life.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils to become good readers. Reading is the first activity each morning in all classes. Staff hear pupils read every day and make sure that the books they have are the right level. However, each class uses different resources to teach reading. This is also true in mathematics. This means there is no whole-school approach in these subjects and pupils learn different methods.

Pupils behave well and understand what bullying is. They told inspectors that teachers deal with any incidents quickly so that they feel safe at school.

Pupils enjoy the additional opportunities the school offers. This includes growing vegetables, bee keeping, forest school and making pumpkin soup for members of the local community.

Staff kept in regular contact with pupils during local lockdowns. Every pupil was provided with a tablet computer so that they could complete work set and not fall behind.

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

Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils' social and emotional development are key priorities. As such, pastoral support is a strength of the school. All staff are attentive and responsive to individual needs. This enables pupils to become confident and resilient learners.

Curriculum planning is at an early stage of development in all subjects. All teachers use different schemes for their planning, including for reading and mathematics. This means that pupils' learning is not well sequenced. Planning sets out the skills pupils will learn. However, there is little detail about what knowledge and vocabulary teachers want pupils to know and remember. As a result, pupils have gaps in their learning and understanding.

Children have settled quickly in the nursery. They listen carefully, follow instructions and behave well. They socialise happily with the Reception children in their class and share equipment. However, in line with the rest of the school, planning in the early years is not well developed. Leaders have not considered how the early years curriculum underpins the whole curriculum and forms the foundation for Year 1. Planning lacks sequencing and explicit content.

Although different methods are used to teach phonics, leaders do prioritise reading. They ensure that pupils read daily at school and have well-matched, suitable reading books. Those who are struggling receive extra support. There is a good range of books in school for pupils to select alongside their class reading book. Quality texts provide a stimulus for English activities across the school. Staff have received some training in teaching reading. However, as there is not a consistent whole-school approach to teaching reading or writing, some of this training lacks relevance.

Pupils enjoy the interesting and practical activities that teachers plan. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills in different subjects. This curtails how much pupils write and limits their ability to record their work independently.

Leaders have identified mathematics as an ongoing area for development. They have invested in a new programme for key stage 2 pupils. This has started to help older pupils develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. However, this programme does not operate for younger pupils. This means there is inconsistency in the mathematical methods pupils learn. Staff have had limited training or support in teaching mathematics.

Staff provide extra help for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers set precise targets based on individual areas of need. These are reviewed each term. However, staff do not identify what extra support is needed, or provide focused and specific teaching to help individual pupils, when these targets are not achieved.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and school. They work and play in their mixed age groups well. They share equipment well and are keen to discuss their work with each other, staff and visitors.

The headteacher and governors are mindful of staff workload. All staff agree that leaders are considerate of their well-being. Leaders consider workload carefully when implementing new policies and procedures. Staff report that they are treated fairly and with respect.

Inspectors agree, in discussion with the headteacher, that curriculum planning, development of writing and provision for pupils with SEND may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a collective responsibility. Staff receive regular training to check their understanding of safeguarding systems and policies. Adults know what steps to take if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being.

Leaders contact other agencies to seek extra help for families who need it. They carry out the necessary checks before appointing staff. They raise awareness among pupils of safeguarding risks, including sexual harassment, abuse or violence, at an age-appropriate level. Pupils learn to recognise potential dangers and seek help. Parents are confident that their children are safe and well looked after.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff in each key stage use their own preferred resources to teach phonics, reading and mathematics. This means that there is a lack of consistency and whole-school approach to core subjects. As a result, sequencing and progression in English and mathematics are weak and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should agree a whole-school strategy to teach English and mathematics which provides clear progression and sequencing. Leaders should provide appropriate training for all staff so that they have the skills needed to deliver these subjects successfully.
- The school does not have whole-school plans in place for every subject, and for the early years. As a result, pupils do not build their skills and knowledge in a coherent order or cover the content needed to meet the requirements of the national curriculum or early learning goals. Leaders should ensure that suitable plans are in place and that subject leaders receive the training needed to develop their leadership roles.
- Writing is not developed well across the school. Pupils have limited opportunities to practise and develop their basic skills or to write independently and at length. Teachers should address weaknesses in pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills to improve the quality of their writing. Leaders should check that pupils write regularly in different subjects.
- Pupils with SEND receive regular adult support, but this is not always sufficiently focused on areas of individual need. As a result, targets set in individual education plans are not fully met and areas of need are not supported. Leaders should provide specific and targeted support for pupils with individual learning needs, including from external agencies where required, to ensure they achieve as well as they could.

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 some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2010.

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	124261
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10199603
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	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kate Brown
Headteacher	Anne Collins
Website	www.st-bartholomews-longnor.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	26 January 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Almost all members of staff are new to the school since the previous inspection. Only the headteacher remains as a member of teaching staff since 2016.
- The mobility of pupils in the school is above average. Many pupils join or leave at times other than the usual starting points.
- The school received its last section 48 inspection of church schools in December 2015. Although another inspection is due, the school has been informed that this will not be before 2023 due to disruption caused by the pandemic.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator and safeguarding leader, and a group of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at

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

- Inspectors met with all teaching staff to talk about curriculum, staff workload and the behaviour and personal development of pupils. They also met with groups of pupils to talk about their learning.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans and saw some pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to staff.
- Inspectors checked the school's single central record and spoke to the headteacher about safeguarding procedures. A selection of safeguarding records was examined.
- The inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement. Minutes of governor meetings and a report from the local authority were also scrutinised. Records of behaviour and attendance were checked.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- The inspectors talked to parents at the end of the school day and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and their free-text responses. They gathered the views of pupils and staff on site through discussion with these groups.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Ray

Ofsted Inspector

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