

Inspection of a good school: Oliver Tomkins Church of England Junior School

Oliver Tomkins Schools, Beaumaris Road, Toothill, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN5 8LW

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

Outcome

Oliver Tomkins Church of England Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this school. They are cheerful, polite, and enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils feel safe at school. They say that issues such as bullying are rare. Pupils are sure that adults, including the headteacher, would sort out any problems swiftly. Around the school and in lessons pupils behave well.

Leaders, staff and governors have high aspirations for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Inclusivity and acceptance of differences are two of the defining features of this church school. Pupils respond well to these high expectations. They know why learning is important for their futures. Their aspirations include, 'to be a scientist so I can have an impact on the world'.

Parents support the school. They value the direct and comprehensive way that the headteacher and school leaders communicate with them. They are particularly appreciative of the support and information they have received during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the school's remote learning offer. Parents say the school 'couldn't have done more to support us'. They know school leaders take parents' and pupils' welfare seriously.

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

Leaders ensure that the teaching of early reading is well organised and effective. Staff are well trained in phonics and so younger pupils experience a consistently well-planned phonics programme. Staff assess new pupils' reading skills quickly. Staff provide extra help for any pupils who need it. As a result, the weakest readers are able to catch up. Teachers make sure that reading books used at home and at school match closely pupils' phonic skills. Consequently, pupils experience success and gain the knowledge they need to become confident readers.

Leaders prioritise developing pupils' love of reading. There are high-quality books in libraries and book corners. In guided reading lessons, teachers use demanding texts to

challenge pupils. Leaders encourage parents to read with their children at home. They provide online workshops, story-telling sessions and book swap schemes to promote a love of reading. Pupils recognise the value of reading, saying that 'reading helps you learn well. It helps with English. It helps you get a better job'.

Curriculum leaders have identified the skills and knowledge they want pupils to learn. They have thought carefully about the sequencing of this knowledge in many subjects. For example, in geography Year 5 pupils build on their study of rivers from the work they completed in Year 4. Consequently, pupils know and remember more in geography. However, this is not yet consistent in all subjects.

Pupils are enthusiastic about mathematics and eager to share their learning. Many confidently explain their reasoning when solving problems. However, on occasion, teachers do not break down new learning into small enough steps. This makes it difficult for a few pupils to understand new concepts.

Leaders help teachers to identify the needs of pupils with SEND accurately. Pupils with SEND study the full range of subjects. Adults in lessons support them well. These pupils flourish. They develop resilience and independence.

Pupils behave well in lessons. Low-level disruption is not tolerated. Leaders make pupils' personal development and well-being a priority. They provide effective guidance and support for pupils' well-being and mental health. Pupils value this support, including the young carers group. There are many extra-curricular activities. These enhance pupils' learning. Pupils understand British values such as democracy through the work of the school council.

Leaders and governors have high expectations. They are mindful of staff workload and well-being. For example, during the period of remote education, leaders ensured staff had time to plan and teach lessons. Staff appreciate leaders' actions to protect them from bullying and harassment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have a deep commitment to keeping pupils safe. Parents respect their uncompromising determination. Leaders know the risks to pupils in their local area. They work closely with outside agencies. During the pandemic, they have continued a relentless focus on keeping pupils safe. Leaders have put in place effective policies and procedures. This includes up-to-date training for all staff and governors. Staff know what to do if they are worried about a pupil, including about any sexual harassment. Leaders are quick to provide pupils and families with the help and support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have considered the progression and sequencing of the curriculum. However, in some subjects teachers do not yet make the strongest use of this information to help them break down new learning into small enough component parts. This means that, particularly in mathematics, some pupils can struggle to learn new concepts quickly. Leaders should make sure that teachers identify the small steps and precise knowledge and skills which pupils need to learn new ideas successfully.

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 the school to be good in June 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	126440
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10199820
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ben Fleckney
Headteacher	Rhian Cockwell
Website	www.olivertomkinsschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Oliver Tomkins Church of England Junior school is a voluntary-aided school in the Diocese of Bristol. The school's last section 48 inspection was in June 2017. The next section 48 inspection of the school should take place before July 2024.
- The school is in a hard federation with the neighbouring infant school, Oliver Tomkins Church of England Infant School. The headteacher leads both schools.
- The number of pupils who are eligible for the additional pupil premium funding is higher than average.
- The number of pupils receiving support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The inspector met with school leaders, four governors and the school improvement adviser.
- The inspector listened to pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5 read to an adult.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons with school leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- The inspector checked to see how well the school keeps pupils safe.
- To evaluate how well pupils behave the inspector observed pupils at breaktime and around the school as well as in lessons.
- The inspector considered 19 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 11 free-text responses. The inspector also gathered the views of parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Sarah O'Donnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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