

Inspection of Buckland St Mary Church of England Primary School

Buckland St Mary, Chard, Somerset TA20 3SJ

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

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

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong sense of belonging at this small rural school. Pupils say it is like 'one big family'. The school's Christian values shine through everywhere. Pupils are polite and get along well with each other. Pupils are safe. They attend well. Pupils are confident that if bullying did happen, staff would sort it out swiftly.

Pupils take pride in carrying out their responsibilities as playtime buddies and collective worship leaders. Pupils actively support charities and see this as part of their service to the school, the local community and beyond. Staff encourage pupils to debate and put their views across, and they do.

Pupils appreciate the many ways in which they can expand their horizons beyond village life. They enjoy sporting events, visiting other schools, music events and learning outside in the local area. Most pupils appreciate the high profile that art has in the school.

The quality of education pupils receive is improving but it is not good. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The curriculum does not include all the necessary content for pupils to thrive. Pupils do not know and remember as much as they could.

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

The new headteacher has an accurate understanding of the weaknesses in the quality of education pupils receive, and why this is so. Leaders are providing staff with clarity, and the right support to bring about necessary improvements. Nonetheless, it is too early to see impact in some subjects.

Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and at social times. In Nursery, staff implement a rich and carefully thought-out curriculum. It includes all the required areas of learning and prioritises getting children talking, knowing more and doing a lot. However, staff do not build on these rich experiences sufficiently. Teachers do not use their assessments of what pupils know already well enough. This is not helping some younger pupils to secure the basic knowledge and skills they require to do well. Staff do not ensure that the curriculum in place for older pupils teaches them new knowledge when they are ready.

Conversely, most school staff use their good subject knowledge of phonics to get pupils reading. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. Most pupils are learning to read well. Many pupils who have fallen behind are catching up now.

The staff work well together. They are positive about the help and support they have. Staff successfully use and apply the training they receive. For example, in mathematics, teachers make sure that the curriculum builds on what pupils already know. Increasingly, pupils are gaining all the knowledge they should. Leaders help

teachers to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Consequently, all pupils can access the full curriculum on offer. However, staff do not have equally strong subject knowledge in every subject area yet.

Leaders' actions over the last 18 months to upgrade the wider curriculum are starting to pay off. Leaders identify the broad key ideas pupils need to know in every subject. However, some subject plans miss out essential information or do not provide enough guidance about the sequence and complexity of knowledge pupils should know. This means pupils do not learn enough, including in science.

Since September 2021, leaders have been making swift and appropriate changes to ensure that pupils learn more content in every subject. However, it is early days. Therefore, in a range of subjects, including computing, history, and geography, pupils have considerable gaps in their knowledge.

Pupils gain wide-ranging knowledge about different faiths and cultures, and how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy. There is a strong emphasis on spirituality and learning about oneself. Pupils become confident young citizens who are highly inclusive in their outlook.

Over time, trustees have not assured themselves that the policies, systems and processes they expect to be in place have become common practice. The new headteacher is taking swift and appropriate action to ensure that everything is in place to put this right.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a strong understanding of what to do when pupils are at risk. They know how to refer concerns to the appropriate authorities and have a secure understanding of all the necessary systems and processes they need keep up to date in school. Staff are clear about reporting their concerns, but some historical records lack sufficient detail.

Pupils are well informed of the risks around them, including using social media. Staff are trained in the most recent guidance and legislation to keep pupils safe, and they are.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are weaknesses in the content and sequencing of some curriculum plans. Teaching in some subjects does not prioritise the essential knowledge pupils need. Pupils learn much more in some subjects than others. Leaders need to ensure that the way the curriculum is planned and delivered is successful in

ensuring that pupils gain all the essential knowledge they need in every subject area.

- Teachers do not use their assessments of what pupils know and can do well enough. Pupils have gaps in knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that teachers use all the information they have about what pupils know already so that pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and achieve well.
- The curriculum does not prepare pupils well enough for Year 1. The curriculum does not build on pupils' knowledge effectively. Pupils do not learn all the essential knowledge they need to thrive. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum in Reception and Year 1 is rich and well crafted so that pupils learn everything they should.
- Leaders and teachers do not have strong enough subject knowledge in all subjects they teach. Staff do not identify when sequences of work miss out important concepts to deepen pupils' knowledge. Leaders must ensure that all staff have the subject knowledge they need to plan and deliver sequences of work that enable pupils to gain all the knowledge they need to excel and achieve well.
- Systems to quality assure the work of the school are not fully effective. Some school policies and guidance take longer to implement than they should. Leaders and trustees must ensure that the quality assurance arrangements improve so that trustees are accurately informed about the school's effectiveness.

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	141740
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10200979
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	76
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Simon Billington
Headteacher	Steve Morton
Website	www.bucklandstmaryprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 and 8 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There are four classes. This includes a Nursery class, a Reception and Year 1 class, a Years 3 and 4 class, and a Years 5 and 6 class. There are no Year 2 pupils currently.
- The school makes use of the trust's special educational needs coordinator.
- There have been several recent staff changes. The new headteacher took up post in September 2021. The Years 5 and 6 teacher, and Nursery manager, also took up post at this time.
- The school is part of The Redstart Learning Partnership. This is a group of 10 primary schools in Somerset and Devon.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was carried out in July 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative learning providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, central trust staff, including the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, members of the teaching and learning committee, the chair of trustees and teachers, including those new to the school.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, computing and science. 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 considered samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders and pupils about other subjects.
- An inspector also looked more widely at subject plans and talked to leaders, teachers and pupils to ascertain whether pupils complete their programmes of study in a full range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator to consider the quality of provision for pupils with SEND, and the designated safeguarding lead to gather evidence on the school's work to safeguard pupils.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and around school. They also visited breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Inspectors considered 15 responses to the Ofsted staff survey alongside nine responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including eight free-text responses from parents. They also reviewed the school's own parent and carers survey.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Debbie Tregellas

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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