

Inspection of a good school: Sherborne Abbey Church of England Primary School

Lenthay Road, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 6AQ

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 November 2021

Outcome

Sherborne Abbey Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this inclusive and welcoming school. They learn well across a range of subjects. Pupils take pride in sharing their achievements, for example on the 'work of the month' display. They get on well together and with their teachers. Consequently, this is a happy place for pupils and staff to be.

Leaders and staff share a passion for every pupil to do as well as they can, both socially and academically. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in before- and after-school clubs, such as reading, drama and sports. They apply the school's Christian values of kindness and respect when learning about different cultures. Pupils' comments included: 'What matters most is on the inside.'

Pupils behave positively in lessons and around the school. They enjoy sports and using the playground markings to devise team games. They know the difference between bullying and falling out with friends. If bullying happens, pupils are confident that leaders, including pupil anti-bullying ambassadors, will sort it out quickly.

Most parents and carers are pleased about the quality of education their children receive. They said that staff add a 'personal touch' and provide a calm and nurturing atmosphere that enables children to succeed.

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

Leaders have placed reading at the heart of the curriculum. From the start of Reception, children begin to understand the sounds that letters represent. They remember sounds well because teachers regularly revisit important learning. In Years 1 and 2, staff make sure that pupils who are at risk of falling behind receive timely support to catch up. Many pupils benefit from additional 'priority reader' sessions to build their fluency and accuracy. However, some pupils' reading books contain sounds that they do not yet know. This affects their ability to read with confidence.

The strong focus on reading continues for older pupils. Leaders ensure that staff inspire pupils to read for pleasure by introducing them to new authors and exciting books. Pupils spoke enthusiastically and knowledgeably about the books they read. They are encouraged to develop a lifelong love of reading.

Leaders and teachers have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn through the curriculum. Subject plans are well sequenced and include memorable experiences such as trips, and encounters with visitors to the school. Pupils confidently recall their knowledge and achievements in a range of subjects. For example, in history, younger pupils talked confidently about significant people such as Samuel Pepys. As pupils become older, they build up their knowledge of concepts such as invasion and empire across the different civilisations they have studied.

In English, mathematics and science, leaders use assessment effectively to check what pupils know and can do. They adapt plans and lessons to help pupils learn the most important knowledge and skills. However, assessment is in the early stages of development in some other subjects. Not all subject leaders have a detailed understanding of how well pupils learn the curriculum from Reception to Year 6.

Staff make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the right support. For example, in mathematics, teachers skilfully break learning down into smaller and more manageable steps to help pupils learn. In addition, staff make effective use of local experts, such as speech and language therapists, to develop pupils' early language and communication skills.

Pupils and staff develop strong relationships. This contributes to a calm and positive learning environment. Lessons flow smoothly. They are not interrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils know they have a right to learn without disruption.

Leaders provide pupils with a range of opportunities to enhance their personal development. For example, pupils enjoy being part of the school council and helping with lessons as sports ambassadors. Pupils, including those with SEND, look forward to representing the school in sports competitions. They know the importance of teamwork and helping each other. Pupils learn to respect different lifestyles, cultures and faiths. They are confident about challenging racism and discrimination. The school helps pupils become well-rounded and caring individuals.

Leaders have created an aspirational culture among staff, based on mutual respect and trust. Staff are proud to work at the school. They know that leaders, including governors, take their workload and well-being seriously.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors monitor safeguarding closely. Systems to record the suitability of staff to work with pupils are robust. Leaders ensure that all staff take account of the most recent guidance. Staff know how to spot pupils who may be at risk. There are well-known

systems in place to alert leaders to any concerns. Where necessary, leaders are quick to involve other agencies, to ensure that families receive the help they need.

Through the curriculum, pupils are well informed about ways to stay safe, including when using the internet and social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- For some pupils at the early stage of reading, books do not match the sounds they have learned. When this is the case, pupils struggle to read with confidence and fluency. Leaders should ensure that these pupils practise their reading using books that match the sounds they know.
- In a few subjects, leaders do not use assessment well. Some subject leaders do not fully understand how well pupils learn the curriculum. Leaders should make effective use of assessment to check what pupils know and can do in all subjects.

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 predecessor school, Sherborne Abbey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, to be good in March 2015.

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	144414
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10200927
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Rees
Headteacher	Ann-Marie Kampf
Website	www.sherborneabbey.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Sherborne Abbey Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy in June 2017. When its predecessor school, Sherborne Abbey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged good.
- The school joined the Sherborne Area Schools' Trust in June 2017.
- Sherborne Abbey is a church school. At the most recent section 48 inspection of the school, carried out in June 2016, the school was judged to be outstanding.
- 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 the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, the deputy chief executive officer and three representatives of the local governing body.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other subjects, including history.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. The inspector considered how well the designated safeguarding leader acts on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. The inspector talked to pupils, staff and governors about safe working practices.
- The inspector considered 104 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 57 free-text responses and 40 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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