

Inspection of Wembdon St George's Church School

Brantwood Road, Wembdon, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 7PS

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a good school. Pupils like to attend. They feel a strong connection to the school's vision and principles. For example, they understand the six core values, including *koinonia* and service, and how being kind helps to make the day better for everybody.

Wembdon St George's Church School is a happy and safe place where pupils like to work and play together. Older pupils appreciate having opportunities to help with the running of the school. Pupils said that bullying is rare. However, if this happens, they trust teachers to listen and take swift action to intervene.

Pupils conduct themselves well around school and in lessons. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn through a well-planned and effective curriculum. However, there are a few inconsistencies, particularly in teachers' use of assessment in some subjects. In addition, the matching of reading books to the phonics that pupils know could be even better. This would help to get the very best for all pupils, including children in the early years foundation stage.

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

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. Since the school joined the trust in 2017, there have been some significant staffing changes, including different headteachers. Initially, this caused some disruption. However, following the appointment of the current headteacher in early 2020, the school has gone from strength to strength. Senior leaders have established a strong culture of learning.

Senior leaders, governors and trustees work together effectively. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, which helps them to secure improvements. For example, together they have implemented a successful programme of professional development for subject leaders. As a result, there is now a wider pool of leadership talent and strong capacity to improve further.

Leaders have overhauled the curriculum. They have taken the right steps to revisit what they want pupils to learn, from Reception to Year 6. Consequently, there is now an effective curriculum in place with coherent blocks of learning to help pupils know and remember more. Subjects are broken into logical pathways with meaningful steps for pupils to accumulate knowledge. This helps to prepare them well for the next stage in their education. However, there are still inconsistencies in how teachers use assessment information, particularly in some foundation subjects. This means that teachers are unable to identify or address gaps in pupils' knowledge as quickly as they might in these subjects. Consequently, there are some gaps for pupils, including for pupils with SEND, in understanding the whole curriculum.

Leaders began their work to improve the quality of education by re-energising the focus on reading. Reading is 'front and centre' of the curriculum. Pupils like to read. They understand its importance and read often. Teachers are effective in promoting reading for pleasure and academic progress. There is an effective early reading programme in place, starting for children in Reception and continuing into key stage 1. Pupils learn to read well through an effective phonic approach. However, at times, teachers do not provide pupils with the right books, matched precisely to pupils' needs. Therefore, pupils do not practise the key letters and sounds they need to learn most. This holds some back, including a few pupils with SEND or who may struggle with reading. Leaders have appropriately targeted this as an area for improvement.

Leaders ensure that there is a strong personal, social, health and economic programme in place. This helps pupils to learn right from wrong. Pupils mostly treat each other with respect and dignity. They are kind and keen to make the school a better place for all. The school's Christian values are central to building pupils' character and promoting British values. For example, pupils show respect and tolerance toward those of different faiths, beliefs and backgrounds. This leads to mutual harmony in the school, and a place where everybody feels welcome and included. Staff do not tolerate antisocial behaviour. For example, there has been a recent drive to eliminate derogatory language. This has raised awareness among pupils so that they can, collectively, help to make the school an even better place for all.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding. They are tenacious in their work to protect pupils. The school has strong safeguarding systems for recruiting and training staff and governors. Staff are quick to escalate any concerns. Leaders work well with a range of external partners to ensure pupils' safety and their well-being. Leaders have also taken steps to help pupils recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including promoting pupils' mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have developed an effective curriculum. However, teachers' assessments are not as precise as they could be in some foundation subjects. As a result, some gaps in pupils' knowledge are not being addressed swiftly. Leaders must ensure that teachers use assessment equally well across the curriculum to help pupils achieve even more.
- Leaders ensure that there is an effective phonics programme in place. However, some pupils who find reading difficult, including some with SEND, do not have phonics books that are matched exactly to their needs. This means these pupils

are not able to practise the sounds they are learning well enough. Leaders must introduce phonic reading books with even more precision to help all pupils to keep up, or catch up, with greater consistency.

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	144984
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10212161
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Daniel
Headteacher	Clare Wallace
Website	www.wembdonstgeorges.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average primary school in Wembdon, near to Bridgwater.
- The predecessor school was inspected in January 2017. The school was placed in special measures.
- This school joined the Bath and Wells Academies Trust in September 2017.
- The school works closely with the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The school's last National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools was in June 2015. The effectiveness of the school, as a church school, was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- The inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, history and music. For each deep dive, the 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 looked at the single central record and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator to help evaluate provision and practice in the school. Inspectors reviewed individual plans for pupils with SEND, to evaluate how well these are being implemented.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff and pupils to find out what it is like to be a pupil, or to work, in this school.
- The lead inspector met with a representative group of governors, trustees and other trust officers, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors reviewed key documents, including the school's self-evaluation form, school action plans and monitoring records.
- The lead inspector checked all survey responses, including those from pupils, staff and parents. This included taking into account 102 responses to Ofsted's free-text service and Parent View. An inspector also met with some parents on the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

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