

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Bradford Abbas

Mill Lane, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 6RH

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

This school was last inspected 15 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders at St Mary's have high expectations. They are determined that all pupils reach their full potential. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Staff encourage them to be resilient and enjoy and value their relationships with friends.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Staff provide them with much care and support. Leaders plan experiences for pupils that take place beyond their locality. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities that support their personal development. They appreciate the impact these have on their well-being. Parents and carers value the school's nurturing approach.

Pupils are polite and caring towards each other. They behave well in classrooms and around the school site. Low-level disruption is managed effectively. Pupils say that staff sort it out, so that it does not affect learning. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are confident that should it happen, adults would deal with it well.

Pupils have a good understanding of respect and tolerance. They understand that everyone is different and that it is good to be different. They know the importance of the school's Christian values. Pupils appreciate the strong, respectful relationships they have developed with staff.

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

All staff share the same high ambition for pupils. They know that leaders care about their well-being and take steps to ensure that they have an acceptable workload. Consequently, staff are well placed to provide for pupils. Parents say that their children are 'safe, supported, happy and challenged'.

Leaders prioritise reading. From the moment children start in Reception, they learn phonics. Staff have been trained in a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Books are matched to the sounds pupils are learning. This enables them to develop into fluent readers. Leaders' careful tracking of pupils' phonic knowledge quickly identifies those who fall behind. Staff provide extra support to enable them to catch up. Pupils enjoy reading. Older pupils understand the importance of being able to read.

The mathematics curriculum is well organised and sequenced. Staff demonstrate strong subject knowledge. Resources and adult support are used well to ensure that most pupils engage effectively in their learning. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They articulate how they build on prior learning to support their understanding of new concepts. Teachers use assessment to identify where pupils need further support. Early years staff break mathematical activities down into small steps to help children learn successfully. Children demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning in mathematics. They are curious and concentrate well.

Staff plan and sequence subjects within the wider curriculum appropriately to ensure that pupils build knowledge and skills over time. Leaders revisit the curriculum every year, taking into account the needs of mixed-aged classes. Teachers have secure subject knowledge in physical education (PE). Pupils talk enthusiastically about the opportunities for sport within the curriculum. They articulate their knowledge and understanding of team games confidently.

Staff know and understand pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND have plans that outline the individual support they require. However, not all teachers adapt the curriculum sufficiently to ensure that all pupils with SEND consistently achieve well.

Pupils conduct themselves well around school and in lessons. They have positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils show respect for one another and adults. Staff in early years build strong relationships with children and help them to feel safe. Staff encourage children to become independent in readiness for future learning. As a result, children cooperate well together.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the needs of their community. Alongside staff, they prioritise pupils' wider development. Staff work together to provide opportunities within their own and the wider community to develop pupils' confidence, resilience and self-esteem. These include sporting opportunities, traffic-calming initiatives and working with local businesses. Pupils understand how to stay physically and mentally healthy. They talk positively about the school allowing them to 'step out of their comfort zone'.

Governors share the ambition of school leaders. They are highly supportive of the school and determined that all pupils will succeed. Governors are clear about their role in keeping children safe. However, governors do not have a deep enough understanding of the impact of decisions made about the quality of the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff act in the best interests of keeping pupils safe. Leaders promote a culture of vigilance across the school. Alongside governors, leaders complete checks on the suitability of staff before they work with pupils. Systems for reporting concerns are effective. Regular and up-to-date training ensures that staff know what to do if they are worried about a pupil.

Pupils and parents agree that the school is a safe place to learn. They know whom to go to if they have a concern. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum supports pupils' understanding of how to keep safe in a range of situations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some year groups, staff do not adapt learning well enough to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, some pupils with SEND do not make the progress of which they may be capable. Leaders need to make sure that expectations are clear for pupils with SEND, so that they are supported to achieve well across the curriculum over time.
- Governors do not have a clear strategic oversight of leaders' actions to improve some aspects of the curriculum. As a result, they are not challenging leaders in sufficient depth to assure themselves of the quality of education. Trust leaders need to ensure that governors receive relevant support and guidance so they can effectively hold leaders to account for this aspect of the school's work.

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	144299
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10199287
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	103
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Rees
Headteacher	Emma Grunnill
Website	www.bradfordabbasprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Mary's Church of England Primary School joined the Sherborne Area Schools' Trust in June 2017.
- The school is a voluntary-controlled Church of England school. At its most recent section 48 inspection, carried out in June 2017, the school was judged to be outstanding.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 had 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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher (who is also the special educational needs coordinator), groups of staff, a representative from the multi-academy trust, and members of the governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to an adult in Years 1, 2 and 3.
- Inspectors looked at how the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also considered the school's single central record.
- Inspectors considered 25 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including 15 free-text responses. They also considered 28 responses to the pupil survey and 17 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector Her Majesty's Inspector

Angela Folland Her Majesty's Inspector

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