

# Inspection of St Mark's Church of England School

Bay Tree Road, Bath, Somerset BA1 6ND

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Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils respond positively. They are proud to be part of the school community. Pupils can see how much their school has improved during the time they have attended.

Pupils attend school regularly. They feel safe and enjoy learning. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Lessons are rarely disrupted, so pupils can get on with their work. They listen to their teachers and take pride in their work.

Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Pupils know that their teachers encourage them to work hard because they want them to be successful. This leads to a productive working environment.

Leaders have worked hard to develop a strong community spirit among pupils. Pupils get on well together and are accepting of diversity. The school is a place where pupils can be themselves and can develop their own unique talents. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are unusual and that these are dealt with effectively when they do happen.

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

The headteacher, trustees and governors share a clear and ambitious vision for the school. Governors hold the headteacher to account to ensure that his actions are working successfully towards this vision. Leaders are positive about the support they receive from the trust. The trust has added additional capacity and expertise to the staff team and helped to improve academic standards, particularly in core subjects.

The school has an ambitious curriculum. The number of pupils studying subjects so that they can achieve the English Baccalaureate is increasing. Each subject has a carefully planned curriculum. Leaders have worked with local schools to develop a relevant and thoughtfully constructed curriculum. Teaching is typically based on strong subject knowledge. Teachers present subject content effectively so that pupils develop their knowledge and understanding. Where teachers deliver lessons outside of their subject specialism, teaching does not always explain subject knowledge clearly. This means that pupils do not learn as well in these lessons.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils and many pupils respond well. However, there are a small minority of pupils who have not yet responded positively to rising expectations and do not always learn as well as they should.

The school has an inclusive culture, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Their teachers know them well and target the right help at the right time. The school's on-site resource base is well led, and leaders are determined that this base will provide high-quality education. Pupils who attend the resource base learn well and take pride in their work.

The behaviour of pupils is a strength of the school. Leaders have developed systems to manage behaviour consistently and effectively. Leaders expect pupils to develop their self-control. Pupils recognise that behaviour has improved during their time at the school.

The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is well planned and continues to evolve as the world changes. Pupils have a mature and knowledgeable understanding of why it is important not to use homophobic or sexist language. They know what is unacceptable and 'call it out' if necessary. Such incidents are rare, and this reflects a school in which pupils can be themselves. Pupils say that they would like leaders to listen to their views about the school more. Pupils are keen to take on more responsibility in the school.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. There is a well-planned careers education curriculum. The school works with other post-16 providers so that pupils can make informed decisions. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture. There is a secure system for reporting concerns about pupils. All staff are trained to use this and receive regular updates. Leaders have clear oversight of this information, so that pupils are helped quickly.

Leaders have built good relationships with other agencies, so help for pupils and families is available where needed. Leaders, governors and relevant support staff are trained in safer recruitment. Checks on potential employees are thorough and clearly recorded.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school has worked hard to raise the ambitions of pupils. Most pupils have responded well to this challenge, but a minority are less well motivated. These pupils do not learn as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum motivates all pupils.
- Where teachers deliver lessons outside of their subject specialism, teaching is sometimes not based on secure subject knowledge. This means that content is not explained clearly and pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders should support teachers to develop their subject knowledge and approaches to curriculum implementation.

- Pupils are keen to take on more responsibility in the school. Some pupils say that they want leaders to listen to them and to be more involved in decisions about the school's development. Leaders should extend the range of opportunities to involve pupils in the wider life of the school.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147801
<b>Local authority</b>	Bath and North East Somerset Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10201001
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	273
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Stuart Warrener
<b>Headteacher</b>	Barnaby Ash
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-marks.org.uk">www.st-marks.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, this school has become part of the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Currently, eight pupils attend this provision.
- The school uses one alternative provider.
- The school does not currently have sixth-form provision.
- This is a Church of England school. It had a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools on 8 and 9 December 2021.

## 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, senior leaders and the chief executive officer of Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership. Meetings were also held with curriculum leaders, class teachers and the special educational needs coordinator. The executive leader of the resource base met with the lead inspector, who visited the provision.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and geography. 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 looked at sample of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and examined records and discussed safeguarding cases. In addition, the lead inspector looked at recruitment practices and checks.
- In making their judgements, inspectors took into account the responses to the survey of parents' and carers' opinions, Ofsted Parent View, and the views expressed in the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Matthew Collins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Maraspin	Ofsted Inspector

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