

Inspection of Three Ways School

180 Frome Road, Odd Down, Bath, Avon BA2 5RF

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

All staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve at Three Ways School. They want all pupils to be the best they can. Adults know pupils well and care about their well-being. The school is a place where pupils thrive, both academically and personally.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend well. They study a broad range of subjects across three curriculum pathways. The majority of parents are in agreement about the nurture and preparation for life that the school provides their children. Parents commonly use words such as 'amazing, fantastic, blossom and flourish' to describe the school.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Everyone has high expectations of behaviour. As a result, the school is a calm and purposeful place to learn. Pupils say that bullying is not something they worry about, but they trust that staff would deal with it quickly. Staff promote positive relationships in all aspects of school life. Pupils are respectful and tolerant of each other. They are fully accepting of the wide range of needs across their peers.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is underpinned by the shared value of preparing pupils for their next stage. The three curriculum pathways, 'pre-formal, semi-formal and formal', provide an effective structure for pupils to learn successfully. Staff use the outcomes in education, health and care (EHC) plans to target precisely what pupils need to learn. As a result, what pupils learn is ambitious and appropriate to their range of needs and disabilities. However, some aspects of the curriculum are relatively new. Leaders recognise that there is still work to be done to define the key knowledge they want pupils to know and remember in each curriculum pathway.

Subject leaders are knowledgeable about the curriculum areas they lead. Staff feel well supported. Leaders ensure teachers are trained to deliver the curriculum effectively across the three pathways. In core subjects, such as early reading and mathematics, subject leaders have more accurate information about the impact of teaching. This is not as rigorous in other subjects. As a result, leaders do not know how well pupils learn the subject content and how well teachers use the assessment system that is in place.

Leaders are highly ambitious and knowledgeable about how children learn and develop in early years. They ensure that the early years curriculum is well-informed by external agencies such as speech and language therapists. As a result, children in early years have a very successful start to school. The highly effective foundation phonics curriculum, which includes exposure to music and sounds in the environment, develops children's communication very well. The approach to early

reading builds on this successfully. Pupils learn their sounds and use this knowledge to sound out words when reading books matched to the sounds they know. Older pupils know how the school continues to develop their reading expertise. They have opportunities to read every day. Pupils in key stage 4 and 5 work on their functional reading skills to prepare for accreditation and life beyond school. Pupils enjoy listening to adults read to them. Pupils listen to a wide range of books. Many of these have been selected to increase pupils' awareness of current issues and diversity.

Leaders provide a range of wider development opportunities for pupils. Pupils have a voice that makes a difference through their roles in the school council. Careers education and work experience are a high priority in the school and the sixth form. Leaders make sure that links to careers are made throughout the curriculum. The school's on-site café offers older pupils numerous opportunities to develop different employment skills on a daily basis. Pupils can apply for work experience in addition to this. 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.

Leaders use a targeted, team approach to managing behaviour. They have developed strategies that focus on pupils social and emotional well-being. Staff recognise how important it is to respond to pupils' individual needs. Pupils have detailed, individual support that is precise about the specialist strategies that might be used to support them. Leaders monitor and review these regularly. This information is used well to inform future practice and training for staff.

Governors share the ambition of school leaders. Leaders provide governors with relevant information regarding the development of the curriculum. However, governors do not challenge leaders sufficiently about the effectiveness of the curriculum. As a result, they do not know enough about the quality of education pupils receive.

The school's involvement in strengthening special educational needs and/or disabilities practice and awareness is commendable. External agencies such as community nurses, social care occupational therapy, the preparing for adulthood inclusion team, and the disabled children's team have high praise for the way the school works in partnership with them to reach the best possible outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, monitor safeguarding closely. They have ensured safeguarding is high priority. All staff are knowledgeable and receive frequent and up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff know the procedures to follow when reporting concerns. Leaders make timely and well-informed decisions to get families the help they need. Leaders are tenacious in securing the involvement of other

agencies. Safer recruitment processes are well established. Appropriate checks are made on the suitability of staff.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They can recall their learning about staying safe online and the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The revised curriculum in some foundations subjects is still in its early stages. Consequently, leaders have not clearly defined the key knowledge they want pupils to learn in each curriculum pathway. It does not help teachers to sequence the essential knowledge pupils must know and remember. Leaders need to ensure that the specific knowledge they want pupils to learn is identified so that pupils learn and remember more over time.
- Leaders do not assure themselves of how well the curriculum is delivered in some subjects. Some subject leaders do not have a firm or accurate view of how well pupils learn the essential subject content. Leaders need to be more robust in checking the impact of their actions and decisions so that they have an accurate view of the quality of the implementation of the curriculum in all subjects.
- Governors do not make effective use of the information they have in order to challenge leaders about the quality of education. As a result, governors are not fully aware of the effectiveness of the curriculum. Governors need to ensure that they prioritise their challenge of leaders to assure themselves about the quality of education in all subjects, across all curriculum pathways.

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	140079
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10212247
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	25
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Roberts
Headteacher	Josephine Stoaling
Website	www.threeways.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Three Ways is a generic special school which caters for pupils from the ages of 4 to 19 years. It provides for pupils with complex, severe or moderate learning difficulties.
- All pupils have education health and care plans.
- The school is the only school in the academy trust.
- The school does not use 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 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, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, representatives from multi-agency teams on the school site and members of the governing body, including the chair. In addition, an inspector talked to the school's improvement adviser and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics PSHE and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement, and paperwork relating to the work of the trustees. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum and EHC plans.
- An inspector listened to the views of parents on day two. The 62 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 44 free-text responses were also considered along with the responses to the pupil survey and 126 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paula Marsh	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Dulon	Her Majesty's Inspector

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