

Inspection of St John and St Francis Church School

Westonzoyland Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 5BP

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 May 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	Requires Improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils learn to lead respectful lives. Children in the Reception Year help one another to learn, for example by taking turns politely. Pupils treat one another with understanding and forgiveness. As one pupil put it, 'Everyone has a bad day.' Bullying is rare but if it does happen, staff deal with it effectively.

The school has close links with community groups. Leaders encourage pupils to raise money for charitable causes. Pupils say that there are many positive role models for them at the school.

Leaders place a high priority on pupils' communication and language skills. Children and pupils build a rich vocabulary. If pupils need support with their speech, this is quickly identified. Pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to talk and listen to one another. All of this helps pupils to communicate confidently.

Staff bring the curriculum to life for pupils in imaginative ways. The Reception Year children recently returned from a virtual trip to Africa. Older pupils venture out to museums and landmarks across Somerset. There is an array of clubs for pupils to choose from. For example, pupils can join the 'history detectives', where they learn about society and culture a decade at a time.

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

Leaders have prioritised the development of the curriculum and sustained their focus on this over several years. As a result, in each subject, the curriculum is well-designed. Subject leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn. Children in the Reception Year gain knowledge and vocabulary which they build on in key stage 1. The curriculum is designed to help pupils to revisit and remember their learning.

Children and pupils in the early stages of reading benefit from a well-organised phonics programme. Leaders have strengthened the phonics curriculum with the support of a specialist teacher from the local English hub. The curriculum is well taught. As a result, most pupils become accurate readers. However, some pupils need more practice to become fluent readers. Leaders recognise this and provide the extra support that pupils need.

In most subjects, leaders use assessment effectively to check that pupils understand and have learned the curriculum. For example, in mathematics, teachers test out the limits of pupils' understanding often. This helps teachers to provide the right kind of practice or extension work for pupils. Occasionally, in some other subjects, teachers assume that pupils understand important concepts when this is not the case for all pupils. Pupils sometimes find it difficult to apply their knowledge confidently because they have a misconception or a gap in their knowledge.

Staff work together to make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn the same detailed knowledge as everyone else. Staff identify and support any difficulties with speech and language from the Reception Year. Pupils' confidence grows as a result. This supports both their academic and personal development. There is a well-established cycle of review for pupils' targets and support plans. Parents are included in this process well.

For the most part, pupils are clear about some of the important messages they learn through the curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE). For example, pupils know to look out for signs that a relationship might not be a positive one. However, some pupils do not fully understand some of the important concepts they have learned about in PSHE. This makes it difficult for them when it comes to future learning around the same themes.

Leaders ensure that all pupils take on a position of responsibility before they leave the school. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously and some show real leadership qualities. For example, older pupils look out for vulnerable pupils in the playground. They help them to join in with games and make new friends.

Pupils have positive attitudes to school and their learning. They concentrate well in their lessons. Pupils say that any low-level disruption is handled well by teachers. However, some children and pupils miss essential curriculum content because they do not attend school as well as they could. Leaders are working with these pupils and their families to reduce absences.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved the school in many respects. Staff and parents recognise this. They value leaders' openness and integrity. Leaders are considerate of staff's well-being and mindful of how their decisions impact staff's workload. Governors know the school, its curriculum, staff and pupils well. They draw everyone together around their vision for the school, based on Christian values.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a good understanding of local risks to pupils. They work with safeguarding partners, such as the police, to raise awareness among pupils and staff.

Leaders are quick to identify families who could benefit from early help. As a result, vulnerable families receive timely support. Leaders are strong advocates for pupils and their parents. They are mindful of pupils' needs in the event of any gaps or delays in the support they receive from external agencies.

Leaders have responded robustly to the findings of Ofsted's review into sexual abuse, violence and harassment in schools. Staff understand the issues and are vigilant.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding systematically enough. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, leading to mistakes and misconceptions. Leaders should ensure that teaching consistently enables pupils to gain a secure understanding of key subject concepts.

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	139338
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10230877
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	406
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Daniel
Headteacher	Jim McCall
Website	www.stjohnstfrancisbwmat.org
Date of previous inspection	6 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher joined the school in September 2021.
- The school is part of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Academies Trust. It is a Church of England school. The school's provision for religious education and collective worship was last inspected under section 48 of the 2005 Education Act in January 2019.
- The school is a larger-than-average-size primary school.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors discussed any continued 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 and other members of the senior leadership team, including the special educational needs coordinator, the chair of the board of trustees, the director of education and the assistant director of education of the multi-academy trust and a group of governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum 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.
- Inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school and held discussions with leaders, pupils and staff to evaluate the school's culture of safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered responses to the questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

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