

Inspection of Bodsham Church of England Primary School

School Hill, Bodsham, Ashford, Kent TN25 5JQ

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 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?

This is a small school with a big heart. Pupils, parents and carers describe it as nurturing and 'a big family'. The school's Christian ethos underpins day-to-day life here. Pupils are welcoming to newcomers. Older pupils understand what the term 'compassion' means and strive to be kind, especially to recent arrivals to the school.

Pupils behave very well. They are respectful of each other in class. They disapprove of poor behaviour. One group agreed that teachers 'figure it out and fix it' when they fall out. Pupils further described how they feel safe because the school is small, staff care, and everyone knows each other. Pupils in Year 6 particularly like helping children from Reception. This might be with their book choices in the library, or at break.

Staff are highly consistent in their approach. Expectations are high, including in Reception. Routines are firmly established. Pupils know what the rules are. Classrooms are lively but purposeful. Leaders and governors see pupils as future leaders. They aspire for them to leave the school as rounded and informed 'little people', ready to make a difference in the world. Inspectors found this to be the case in the wealth of opportunities afforded to pupils.

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

This is a well-led school. Staff work as one team. Leaders strive to ensure that teachers are motivated and supported well to provide the best for all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and a growing number of pupils from vulnerable backgrounds.

Governors know the school well. They know what the school's strengths are. They are not afraid to ask probing questions of leaders, or to challenge them on their priorities when required.

The school's curriculum is evolving. Leaders see curriculum design as an important aspect of their work to improve the school. Because of this, they know that some subjects are not as well developed as others. For example, in history and geography, staff are not always fully aware of the detailed and specific knowledge that they should teach.

Pupils enjoy their mathematics and English lessons. Teachers possess good subject knowledge and are skilled in the way they design learning. They constantly assess the progress pupils make. They demonstrate good awareness of individual pupils' needs and intervene when more support is needed. This includes in early years, where provision is strong and children benefit from an individualised curriculum in a very small class.

Mathematics is taught consistently well across each phase of the school. This starts in the early years. Pupils then follow a well-established pathway as they move through the school.

The school's programme to teach pupils to read is effective. Staff talk positively about their latest training provided by an external consultant. Classroom visits to Reception and Years 1 and 2 showed pupils enjoying their phonics lessons. If pupils fall behind, staff make sensible adaptations and provide extra support for them to catch up. This is particularly the case for a small but growing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Older pupils appreciate books and enjoy reading. One described how reading made them feel like they were 'in someone else's life'.

Pupils love music at Bodsham. Classroom visits showed music lessons to be joyful and practical in nature, with pupils always active participants. Pupils are keen to compose and use musical terminology confidently. Staff enjoy delivering music sessions, adding complexity and challenge to their teaching where appropriate.

As a school with a Christian ethos, leaders see the personal development of pupils as sacrosanct. They challenge pupils to follow a path of courageous advocacy in all they do. Staff aspire for pupils to have the confidence to make a difference in the world. Class projects such as litter picking, raising funds to sponsor a gorilla or recycling tetra packs are all examples of this.

Pupils learn about physical and mental health through the school's personal, social and health education programme. This includes age-appropriate relationships and sex education. Tolerance and respect for different cultures and faiths are taught in a number of ways, including special assemblies. Older pupils' books showed their work on aspects such as developing self-belief and understanding their personal rights and responsibilities as a citizen to be comprehensive.

Parents and staff who talked to inspectors or replied to Ofsted's questionnaires were equally positive about the school. One parent summed feelings up by commenting: 'Bodsham may be small in size, but its impact is enormous. A brilliantly led school, fair, brave, fun, an inspiring place to learn.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The culture to keep pupils safe is strong. One teacher described how she felt 'safe' to be a member of staff here, because she has complete confidence in leaders to make the right decisions when action needs to be taken to safeguard pupils.

Arrangements to recruit staff are robust. The correct checks are carried out on adults working or volunteering at the school. Pupils learn to stay safe through the formal curriculum and through discrete events, such as assemblies or other focused events. This includes staying safe when online and understanding the potential dangers associated with social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all curriculum schemes of work detail the specific component knowledge that teachers require to plan effective learning over time. This means that teachers are not well equipped to plan learning that builds on the key knowledge pupils have learned in the past. Nor do teachers have a clear enough idea of how the specific knowledge that they teach will be built on in the future. As a result, pupils do not make the progress through the curriculum as well as they might in subjects such as history and geography. Leaders have already started to address this issue. They now need to act with renewed energy to address this shortcoming.

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	118673
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10228774
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Leigh Cavanagh
Headteacher	Paul Newton (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.bodsham.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 July 2008

Information about this school

- This is a very small Church of England voluntary controlled primary school. The school operates four classes. Children in Reception have their own class. There are three further classes with mixed year groups in key stage 1 and lower and upper key stage 2.
- The school is a partner school in The Federation of Bodsham Church of England Primary School and Saltwood Church of England Primary School. This is a statutory hard federation which started in January 2015. Both schools in the federation are governed by the same governing body.
- As a school with a religious character, the school was last inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in June 2018.
- 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 held a wide range of meetings with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and teaching and support staff. The lead inspector met with the chair of governors accompanied by two other governors. He also held separate telephone calls with officers from the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, music and history. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector heard pupils read to a known adult.
- Inspectors checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. They also reviewed the school's website and other records regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. A formal meeting was held with a representative group of pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. The views of staff were also considered through Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Bateman

Ofsted Inspector

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