

Inspection of a good school: Freshford Church School

High Street, Freshford, Bath, Somerset BA2 7WE

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 June 2022

Outcome

Freshford Church School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Freshford pupils leave the school as polite, confident individuals. Staff provide a curriculum that is challenging, exciting and varied. Pupils produce high-quality work across different subjects. They think for themselves and make deep connections in their learning. Younger pupils get off to a flying start. There is a systematic focus on learning the basics with ongoing encouragement to be independent, to problem solve and to reason.

There is a clear team approach to ensure that pupils are cared for well and behave well. Any concerns, for example, about pupils not being friendly to each other or bullying are taken very seriously. Pupils are clear that they feel listened to by adults and trust them. Pupils play well together. They look after each other.

Most parents are very satisfied with the school. Many describe it as 'wonderful' and 'fantastic' where their children have 'blossomed'. They praise the deep commitment and passion of leaders and staff. A few are concerned about the school's provision for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have recognised these concerns. The provision is improving.

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

Leaders and staff are ambitious for their pupils. They are committed to develop the whole child. The latest educational research underpins the school's work. Staff have designed a curriculum that ensures that pupils become confident readers, writers, mathematicians, artists and athletes. Staff challenge pupils to consider 'big questions'. Through these, pupils deepen their understanding of, for example, geography, history and science. Leaders have rightly recognised that there are aspects of the curriculum that need further strengthening. They are working to ensure that the big questions more systematically build learning year-on-year.

Leaders give a high priority to pupils learning basic skills well. From the start of school staff ensure that children learn to read, write and count well. Children learn to read and write sounds and words through structured, regular routines that are tailored to their needs. There is a clear rationale in place about which books pupils read. This means that they become fluent and develop a love of reading. In mathematics, early years staff introduce key concepts carefully and methodically. Adults, who have a clear idea of the most important learning, skilfully support the children to get the best from them. If children need extra help, it is available.

Teachers have a rich knowledge of literature. They are eager to impart this to pupils so that they develop a love of reading themselves. There are wide opportunities for pupils to read in class and individually. Pupils read a range of texts, recommending books to each other. The whole school community is excited by the current study of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Staff use the Shakespearian text to stimulate high-quality reflection, writing, performance and art.

Leaders changed some aspects of teaching mathematics so it was delivered effectively online during lockdown. Pupils develop confidence and become proficient mathematicians. However, there are now some inconsistencies. There is work to do to ensure that pupils are systematically deepening their learning as they move through the school.

Leaders have improved the physical education (PE) curriculum in line with the school's ambition to develop the whole child. Through careful routines and high expectations pupils learn to work individually, as pairs and as part of team. They challenge themselves. Pupils develop skills across a range of sports in an atmosphere of fun and energy. They have clear knowledge of the basics and how to refine their performance and become more skilful. Pupils are confident that they will continue sport when they leave the school.

Staff care for pupils well. Support for pupils in class, including for those with SEND, is sensitive and ensures that pupils learn well. Leaders recognised the frustration among parents about some of the processes to identify and review the provision for their children. They acted, including appointing an interim special needs co-ordinator (SENCo). It is early days. There are now more robust processes in place and a clear way forward to improve things even more.

Staff have been significantly affected by Covid-19 and other health related issues. However, their morale is good. They recognise the support they received. Leaders, including Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust and the local governing board know the school well. They have identified that current leadership needs more capacity to bring about further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding practice is underpinned by the deep commitment of all staff to do the very best for everyone. Pupils say that they trust staff. The school ensures that effective

training, systems and procedures are in place to safeguard pupils. Where cases are more complex there is effective work with other agencies.

The school's single central record of staff is well maintained. Appropriate recruitment processes are in place.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Currently, there are aspects of the curriculum that are inconsistent or not sequenced sufficiently. This means that pupils do not systematically build the knowledge and skills in line with the school's high ambition. Leaders should continue to clarify the intent of the curriculum in line with the aspirations of the school. They should determine what pupils should know, understand and achieve by the time they leave and eliminate inconsistencies.
- Some of the processes to identify and monitor pupils' SEND are not clear enough. This means that a few parents feel that their children are not receiving what they need. Leaders should continue the work they have started to strengthen procedures and the ongoing communication with parents to consolidate a partnership approach to meeting pupils' needs.
- Too much responsibility for leadership and management falls on the headteacher. This has become particularly apparent recently and means that monitoring and ongoing improvements have been interrupted. The multi-academy trust, local board members and school leaders should continue to work together to consider how additional capacity might be achieved so that improvements are secured and well-being is maintained.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Freshford Church School, to be good in July 2014.

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	145583
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10231300
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	152
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Daniel
Headteacher	Andrew Wishart
Website	www.freshfordschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Freshford Church School joined Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust in 2018.
- A number of key staff have been away from school in the last year due to COVID-19 and other health related issues.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and senior teachers, members of the local governing body, the chair of trustees, the director and assistant director of education of the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read to a familiar adult. The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and met with the interim SENCo.

- The inspector looked at the policies and procedures used to keep pupils safe. He reviewed the checks carried out by leaders on the suitability of adults who work in the school.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the end of the school day. The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Stephen McShane, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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