

Inspection of Bardwell Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Bardwell, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 1AD

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 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 enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They like their teachers and enjoy learning because teachers make lessons interesting.

Pupils get along well because this is a 'family' school. Pupils typically say, 'We are a community, and we all work together.' Pupils say behaviour is usually good. Pupils say there is hardly any bullying at the school. If a pupil is unkind, it is sorted out quickly.

Pupils achieve well in most subjects. Early reading is currently taught well. However, this was not always the case. As a result, a few pupils in key stage 2 have gaps in their phonics knowledge. The new phonics, reading and spelling curriculum is helping most pupils to close these gaps.

Children in the early years are safe and happy. Learning activities are fun, and children behave well in lessons. Children are well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of seasonal sports clubs and additional curriculum activities that promote their personal development. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Most parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school.

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

The senior leadership team started at the school just before the COVID-19 pandemic. They have worked hard to ensure that all the areas for improvement highlighted at the last inspection have been addressed. Leaders have redesigned the curriculum. Learning in all subjects is carefully organised and sequenced.

When all pupils returned following the first national lockdown, leaders found that there were gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge and understanding. This was especially true for pupils in key stage 2. Leaders have introduced new phonics, reading and spelling programmes to put this right. Teachers are increasingly confident in effectively teaching these programmes. This is beginning to have a positive impact on how well most pupils can read unfamiliar words. However, a small number of older pupils still struggle to remember and use their phonics knowledge to help them read accurately.

Pupils are developing a love of reading because teachers are passionate about promoting different authors and encourage pupils to read widely. Pupils enjoy being read to regularly. There is good provision for pupils who need extra help with their reading.

Pupils' behaviour was a concern at the previous inspection. Leaders have turned this around. All adults have high expectations for how pupils should behave. Pupils like

the warning system because, as one pupil said, 'If I get a warning, I don't want another one!'

In most subjects, pupils learn the important knowledge they need to prepare them for the next stage in their education. Teachers carefully check that pupils know and remember more as they progress through each curriculum subject.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well to access the full curriculum. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures pupils' needs are accurately identified and met. Pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs behave and learn well because they have useful resources to help them understand their emotions. The SENCo works effectively with external specialists.

Children in the early years make a strong start to their education. The early years leader is ambitious for what each child can achieve. The curriculum is carefully structured and learning activities are exciting and enjoyable. Children behave well because they love their learning activities.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well. Pupils show respect and care for one another. Pupils can explain the schools' values. They know how to be 'resilient, reflective and kind communicators'. Leaders provide a wide range of educational visits. There are opportunities for pupils to hear from subject experts linked to curriculum learning. Pupils learn about healthy relationships in line with the latest nationally published guidance. Fundamental British values are promoted well.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the support for their well-being and say workload is not a problem. Teachers at the start of their careers receive effective support from the trust.

Governors support and challenge leaders well. Governors ensure leaders use resources effectively and efficiently. Governors visit the school to check on school improvements. They clearly know the strengths and what needs to improve further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have stringent systems in place to ensure all pupils are safe. During the national lockdowns, staff kept in regular contact with families to check on their well-being as well as to check pupils' learning. Governors and the trust make regular and robust checks on the school's safeguarding procedures.

Staff are well trained. Staff's briefings help keep all staff up to date. Staff are confident to spot and report concerns. Leaders act promptly to keep pupils safe from harm. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and outside school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Following the return to school of all pupils after the first national lockdown, leaders recognised that there were gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. They acted swiftly by implementing new phonics, reading and spelling programmes. However, there remain a few pupils who are not using their phonics knowledge effectively when they read unfamiliar words which means they are not fluent readers. Leaders should continue to ensure that staff are confident in teaching the new phonics, reading and spelling programmes effectively.

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	143056
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10227401
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Yapp
Headteacher	Rob Francksen (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.bardwell.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 and 4 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Bardwell Church of England Primary School is part of the Tilian Partnership, a trust under the umbrella of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.
- The trust supports the school with leadership, early career teachers' mentoring and oversight.
- The school leadership team were appointed just before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. All teaching and support staff were appointed after the leadership team were in post.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs every day.

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.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with the school's senior leaders. Inspectors met with a group of governors and the chief executive officer of the Tilian Trust.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and scrutinised documents related to pupils' behaviour, safety and well-being.
- Inspectors met with the SENCo and scrutinised provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors visited the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, geography, mathematics and science.
- 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 samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to parents dropping off their children at school. There were 26 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered six responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils when visiting lessons, at a formal meeting and on the playground to gather their views.

Inspection team

Julie Winyard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John Lucas

Her Majesty's Inspector

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