

Inspection of a good school: St Nicholas' Church of England Infants' School and Nursery Class, Wallingford

St Nicholas Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 8HX

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 July 2022

Outcome

St Nicholas' Church of England Infants' School and Nursery Class, Wallingford continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils discover the joy of learning in this friendly school. They sparkle with excitement when talking about their topics. Children in the Nursery class love to learn through their engaging play. By Year 2, pupils are eager to impart to others the detail of what they have found out.

Shared values underpin the school's ambitious vision of 'becoming the best we can be'. Staff and pupils alike know that the goal is to keep doing everything better. Pupils strive to live up to adults' high expectations. They are respectful, listen to their teachers and get on sensibly with learning. This makes for a caring school with very little bullying, although incidents and upsets sometimes occur. Pupils say they can talk to any adult if something is worrying them. Staff take every report seriously.

Pupils have opportunities to join clubs that appeal to a range of interests, including science, cookery and sports. Pupils were delighted when visits and visitors resumed after COVID-19 restrictions. Year 2 were overawed by their visit to Windsor Castle while the Queen was in residence. Parents and carers are positive about the school's work. A few of them would welcome more specific information about how well their child is doing.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that stimulates pupils' interests and prepares them well for the future. In each subject and starting in the early years, the curriculum sets out clearly what pupils will learn and when. Learning to read sits firmly at its centre.

Teachers have recently strengthened their approach to early reading. Children learn phonics as soon as they begin in the Reception class. Teachers promote reading very well. Pupils love the stories their teachers choose. There are attractive books in every classroom, including in the Nursery. Here, children seek out adults to read to them. Key

stage 1 pupils have remarkable recall of the stories their teachers share. They are enthusiastic to recommend books and authors. Teachers know their pupils very well and identify those who fall behind. Throughout the school, daily reading practice helps pupils who need to catch up to become confident and fluent. However, a few pupils, including some with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not get enough expert support to develop fluency.

Children's interest in mathematics starts in the early years. Here, pupils enjoy many opportunities to learn through their creative play. They develop important concepts, such as full, half-full and empty, through well-planned opportunities. Reception children enjoy working with numbers. They develop firm foundations for teachers to build upon in key stage 1. Staff make available exactly the right apparatus and models to support children's thinking. These tools support pupils to enjoy mathematics and feel successful. Most pupils can explain their methods because they understand how numbers work. Occasionally, some pupils are not supported to build knowledge coherently. In both reading and mathematics, training to implement the curriculum remains incomplete for a small number of new staff. Leaders are addressing this with urgency.

Pupils relish what they find out in their topics. They like learning information and are adept at recalling it. They are articulate when talking about their learning. Year 2 know all about their town's medieval castle. They can name the different functions of a castle's features. Pupils are inspired by the famous people they have learned about. They can also talk about the work of the artists they have studied. Pupils reflect on their learning by thinking about the ambitions that they might want to realise.

Pupils learn to talk about their feelings. They are developing strategies to recognise their moods and address a negative emotion. Leaders also encourage pupils to express their views about learning. A few of them explained how much they like physical education but think some lessons could be more active. Their teachers agree with them and have plans in place. Pupils do not miss out on activity. They have many opportunities to participate in challenging sports and team games.

Leaders' work to implement revised curriculum plans in the different subjects is becoming embedded. There are some small variations in the implementation of subjects. This means that some pupils, including a few with SEND, do not build knowledge consistently well. The staff team is continuing to develop expertise in all subject areas.

Staff who spoke with the inspector praised leaders for their visible presence, and for the support and training they provide. Leaders are considerate of teachers' workload and staff well-being. Trustees and local governors are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is everyone's priority. All staff have comprehensive training that is regularly updated. They know how to recognise signs of abuse and the

risks that pupils might meet in the community. All adults follow the school's system for reporting concerns. Leaders do not hesitate to involve local safeguarding partners when necessary. No one rests until pupils and families get the help they need.

Teachers support pupils to be safe when they are online. Parents receive a regular newsletter to inform them of potential risks and to encourage positive online habits at home.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils learn and apply phonics in line with the school's programme. However, a small number are not developing the confidence and fluency that they need. Leaders should embed the school's recently introduced structured synthetic phonics programme to build teachers' expertise in early reading. This will ensure that those pupils who need to catch up have the support they need to become fluent and accurate readers.
- There is some minor variability in the implementation of the newly revised curriculum. Consequently, there are times when some pupils, including a few with SEND, do not build knowledge securely. Leaders need to provide further training to teachers so that they all have effective strategies across the whole curriculum to build the knowledge that pupils need.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Nicholas' Church of England Infants' School and Nursery Class, Wallingford, to be good in January 2017.

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	145650
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10238328
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Kathy Winrow
Headteacher	Amy King
Website	www.st-nicholas.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has not previously been inspected. In April 2018, the predecessor school, St Nicholas' Church of England Infants' School and Nursery Class, Wallingford, became an academy by joining Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST.)
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club. This is managed by the local governing body and is open to pupils who attend the school.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2017.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the school leaders and other members of staff. Meetings took place with the chief executive officer of the ODST and the linked adviser. A telephone call took place with the chair of the board of trustees. The inspector met the chair of the local governing body and four governors.

- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. This involved looking at relevant documentation, staff recruitment checks and training. Discussion took place about how well the adults in the school act on concerns about pupils' welfare.
- The inspector spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views about the school. There were 67 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and 28 replies to the staff survey.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and physical education. This involved talking with subject leaders and class teachers about how these subjects are delivered, visiting lessons and talking to pupils about their learning and work.
- The inspector listened to some pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 reading to a familiar adult and discussed the school's provision for pupils with SEND.
- Pupils' views of the school were gathered by talking to a large number of pupils during the course of the inspection.

Inspection team

Linda Jacobs, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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