

Inspection of Bathwick St Mary Church School

Darlington Road, Bath, Somerset BA2 6NN

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Bathwick St Mary Church School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, 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 of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are proud of their school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Pupils are valued and their differences celebrated. As a result, they enjoy coming to school and they attend well.

Pupils behave well around the school. Bullying is rare. Pupils know and follow the school values. They get on with their learning in lessons. Pupils are welcoming to visitors. They are polite and keen to share what they like best about the school.

Pupils are enthusiastic about learning different subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who speak English as an additional language learn well here. Pupils are curious and interested in what they are learning. Younger pupils enjoy learning to read and older pupils say they love reading. However, the curriculum for some subjects is not planned or taught as precisely as it is in reading and mathematics.

Many pupils attend clubs and enjoy activities where they develop their interests. Pupils are enthusiastic about multi-skills, sports clubs and choir. Girls talk proudly of playing in the first football team to represent the school competitively. Older pupils welcome the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and to support younger children at play.

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

Leaders have driven improvement at the school with great determination. They have worked well with the trust to develop important areas of the school. This has led to improvement in the quality of the school's curriculum. Those responsible for governance know and understand their role well.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning. Children in Reception Year enjoy learning outdoors. The curriculum helps them to know about the world around them. Children use accurate vocabulary to talk animatedly about wildlife and the changing seasons.

Curriculum leaders have done much to strengthen the curriculum. This is evident in early reading and mathematics. They have identified essential content and when it should be taught. These curriculums are well sequenced so that pupils build their understanding and knowledge securely. However, in some subjects, key knowledge and how to teach it has not been clearly defined. Where this occurs, teaching is not as effective. As a result, pupils do not understand or use concepts as well.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have implemented a systematic and sequenced approach to the teaching of reading. Staff understand the new reading curriculum well. As a result, it is delivered effectively so that pupils quickly learn to decode words and to build up their fluency. Books are usually matched well to pupils'

phonics knowledge. Where pupils are at risk of falling behind with phonics, they receive appropriate additional support to help them to become stronger readers.

Assessment is used well to evaluate pupils' progression through the reading and mathematics curriculums. Leaders are strengthening assessment in other subjects. Sometimes teaching does not routinely check what pupils know and can do. This means pupils' difficulties are not always spotted quickly and addressed swiftly. When this occurs, pupils' learning is not as secure.

Teachers know the pupils with SEND well. Leaders work closely with staff to identify pupils' needs at an early stage. Pupils with SEND get the help they need to learn the curriculum alongside their peers. Leaders prepare pupils with SEND well for their next steps, for example when moving on from Reception Year.

Staff have high expectations for behaviour and pupils' attitudes. Most pupils respond well. Children in Reception Year quickly learn routines. They know how to share and play well together.

Leaders provide many opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development. Pupils have a secure understanding of British values. However, pupils' recall of some areas of the personal, social and health education programme is weaker, such as how to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships. The school council provides pupils with the opportunity to learn about democracy and citizenship. Pupils enjoy working with their peers and staff to develop resources for the school community.

Leaders have created an environment where pupils and staff feel valued. Staff, including early career teachers, say that school leaders support their workload, professional development and well-being effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff have up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff know what to do should they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders respond quickly when staff raise concerns about pupils.

Leaders make sure that pupils and families get the support they need. The school makes effective use of external agencies when appropriate.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They understand how to stay safe online. Pupils can identify a member of staff they would go to if they had any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The essential knowledge that pupils need to learn is not clearly identified or well-structured in some areas of the curriculum. This means that in some subjects teachers do not know the precise content to teach or how best to teach it. Leaders need to strengthen the curriculum in these areas so that subject knowledge is well defined and how it should be taught is clearly understood.
- Teaching does not always check effectively on what pupils know and can do. This means pupils' difficulties or their misconceptions are not always identified quickly or addressed swiftly. As a result, sometimes pupils have a less secure knowledge base on which to build. Leaders need to ensure that teaching makes better use of assessment so the curriculum has the impact leaders intend.

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.

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	145515
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10242386
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	221
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Daniel
Headteacher	Kevin Purkiss
Website	www.bathwickstmary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bathwick St Mary Church School converted to become an academy in March 2018. When its predecessor school, Bathwick St Mary Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The last section 48 inspection of the school took place in February 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 met with the headteacher, senior teachers and representatives of those responsible for governance. Meetings were also held with class teachers and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, examined school records and discussed safeguarding cases.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and science. Inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, listened to pupils read, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke on the telephone to a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors considered responses to staff and pupil surveys, and the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Tracey Reynolds, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gina Cooke

Ofsted Inspector

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