

Inspection of Norton St Philip Church of England First School

Church Street, Norton St Philip, Bath, Somerset BA2 7LU

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Norton St Philip Church of England First School is a welcoming, caring school. The school's ethos, 'Small Schools, Thinking Big', comes alive here. Leaders provide an exciting, rich curriculum. Staff imaginatively tap into possibilities to ignite pupils' interests. For example, pupils learn samba drumming and flamenco dancing when they learn about different traditions and cultures. Pupils love showcasing their talents when they perform in theatre productions.

Pupils are wonderful ambassadors for the school. They are polite and friendly. The vast majority of pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. Parents are overwhelmingly positive. They typically comment that 'children are encouraged to flourish and grow'.

Pastoral support for pupils is strong. Staff care deeply about pupils and forge supportive relationships with them. As a result, pupils feel valued and safe. Pupils can explain what bullying is. They confirm that it is not tolerated at school. Pupils are confident that adults and peer supporters will help them to resolve any problems.

Staff thoughtfully plan learning experiences that extend beyond the academic. For example, many pupils try activities such as skateboarding, yoga and bouldering. Pupils also take on positions of responsibility with maturity and pride. For example, they can become peer supporters, librarians and members of the school council.

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

Leaders have designed a rich, well-sequenced curriculum in most subjects. This ensures that pupils develop the knowledge, skills and vocabulary they need. Pupils use what they already know to gain new knowledge. For instance, in mathematics, Year 2 pupils use their knowledge of two-dimensional shapes to describe three-dimensional shapes. Older pupils use their recall of times tables to multiply two-digit numbers by one-digit numbers accurately. Teachers routinely check how well pupils are learning and make adaptations to the curriculum when necessary. Consequently, pupils achieve well.

In some subjects, leaders are making improvements to the curriculum. Where this is the case, the curriculum does not yet support pupils to build the deep knowledge and skills that they need for what comes next.

Leaders inspire pupils to develop a love of reading. Pupils become absorbed when adults read to them. For example, Year 3 pupils listen intently to 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' by C. S. Lewis. Leaders and staff prioritise pupils' learning to read well. The recently introduced phonics programme supports children in Reception Year to learn phonics as soon as they start school. Older pupils practise reading regularly and gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident,

fluent readers. Pupils who find reading difficult are given extra support. This helps them to catch up quickly.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders and staff understand pupils' needs well. They provide a sharp focus on both academic and pastoral support. Therefore, pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers successfully.

Pupils respect adults, listen carefully and concentrate well. Low-level disruption is rare. However, occasionally, a small minority of older pupils lose focus, because they forget what adults expect of them.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is exceptional. It motivates pupils to explore and find things out. Pupils take part in activities that enrich their learning and bring it to life. For instance, pupils learn about Martin Luther King and the impact of discrimination on people's lives. Pupils visit the American Museum in Bath to deepen their understanding of the civil rights movement. Pupils reflect sensitively on the experiences of others. For example, the school has welcomed several Ukrainian pupils into the school. This has given pupils the chance to learn first hand about life in a war-torn country, as well as to collect and send essential items out to Ukraine.

Leaders are ambitious and motivate staff well. Staff morale is high because they thoroughly enjoy working at the school. They appreciate leaders' support and their consideration of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff prioritise pupils' safety and well-being. Leaders make the necessary checks to ensure staff are safe to work with pupils. Leaders provide training for staff. Staff know how to refer any concerns they have.

Leaders are alert to the signs that might indicate a pupil is at risk. They make referrals to specialists when they need advice. Leaders maintain detailed records and routinely follow up their actions.

Pupils learn how to stay safe. For example, they learn about healthy relationships, drug awareness and how to stay safe when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum does not consistently enable pupils to secure the breadth of knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of their education. Leaders need to further develop the curriculum in these subjects and then check whether pupils know and remember more as a result.

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	123836
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10228009
Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Caroline Whitehead
Headteacher	Georgina Muxworthy
Website	www.rodeandnortonschoolfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new executive headteacher has been appointed.
- The school is a Church of England school. Its last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools was in June 2019.
- The school is part of the Rode and Norton St Philip federation of schools. The school federated with Rode Methodist VC school in 2016.
- The school provides before- and after-school care for pupils.
- 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 held several meetings with the headteacher. They also met with the special educational needs coordinator and the early years leader.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with a group of governors. They also had a phone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding records and checked the school's single central record. They discussed safeguarding arrangements with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and adults about safety.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at various times of the day, including their arrival at school, breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and parents to gather their views. They reviewed responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, along with free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Catherine Beeks, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Chris Hansen Ofsted Inspector

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