

# Inspection of St Nicholas Church of England VC Primary School, Bromham

The Leaze, Bromham, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 2EY

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders have developed a positive school culture and climate for learning at St Nicholas School. However, they have not acted quickly enough to identify and improve weaknesses in the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not receive a good quality of education.

Pupils are proud of their school, which sits at the heart of the village. They like the fact that it 'feels like a family'. There are positive, warm relationships between staff and pupils.

Parents and carers say that their children are happy and settled at the school. Pupils say that they feel safe and that bullying rarely happens. They comment that if it did, they have a trusted staff member they could go to who would 'get things sorted out quickly'.

Pupils are polite, courteous and keen to learn. They behave well and understand and respect the school rules. Pupils appreciate the opportunities given to them to contribute to the school community. They take on roles such as school captains and sports leaders, who lead daily 'fit nic' sessions to help keep everyone healthy.

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

Leaders, including governors, recognise that the quality of education is not good enough. They have taken action to improve the culture of the school so that it has direction and purpose. Leaders have created a positive environment where pupils are well known and can learn without disruption. However, leaders have not made regular checks on how well the curriculum is delivered. As a result, they have not identified where weaknesses exist. Where leaders know about deficits in the quality of education, they have not made sure that the required improvements are made quickly enough.

Leaders ensure that teachers receive the training they need to develop a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Teachers enjoy working as part of a supportive staff team but say that their workload has increased in recent times. Teachers design learning so that pupils know and remember more. For most pupils, there is an ambitious curriculum that sets out the small steps of knowledge they should learn. However, this is not the case for children in the early years, where the curriculum in some areas is not clearly defined. During unstructured times, adults follow children's interests without clear learning intentions. This can limit children's learning and progress.

Teachers identify what pupils know and understand. However, they do not use this information well enough to adapt learning based on what pupils already know. This

means that, sometimes, pupils do not gain the knowledge they need to complete more complex task. They are unable to explain their thinking.

Reading is a high priority in the school. All pupils enjoy listening to stories, which teachers read with expression and enthusiasm. There is a well-considered curriculum for reading in place. Children begin to learn the sounds that letters make as soon as they start school. Despite this, the books that pupils read are not well matched to their reading ability. In addition, teachers do not provide regular opportunities for pupils to read. As a result, pupils find it hard to develop fluency and accuracy in their reading.

Teachers now have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They respond well to pupils' emotional needs. Most pupils behave well and are keen to try hard and learn successfully.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can achieve. Leaders support teachers to help them identify pupils' needs as early as possible. Staff make sure that pupils with SEND are given the right support at the right time to access the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders provide a range of opportunities and experiences to develop pupils' interests and talents. Pupils take part in sports and music clubs, such as dodgeball and choir. They go on local visits and overnight camping trips. These experiences help pupils to develop their confidence. Leaders forge strong links with the local community, and these help pupils to contribute positively to the wider society. For example, they organise assemblies and enjoy sharing drama and music at the local church.

Pupils learn about fairness and equality through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. They are strong-minded and confident in their relationships with others. Pupils learn to listen to others and to compromise. They talk about their rights and responsibilities. Pupils respect the viewpoints of others, even when they do not agree.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders promote a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are vigilant to changes in pupils' behaviour and identify pupils who are vulnerable. They report concerns with accuracy. Leaders take timely action to make referrals if they consider pupils to be at risk. They support pupils and their families well.

Leaders make robust checks on staff who work at the school. They make sure that visitors understand the safeguarding policy. Staff maintain suitable supervision of pupils throughout the school day.

The curriculum supports pupils to know how to keep themselves safe, including online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have not acted quickly enough to identify and improve weaknesses in the curriculum. This has led to pupils not receiving a good quality of education. Leaders, including governors, need to ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently well and that weaknesses are identified and rectified with greater urgency.
- The curriculum for reading does not prepare all pupils to read well enough. Pupils, particularly those in the early stages of learning to read, do not read with fluency and accuracy. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum for early reading develops pupils' knowledge of phonics effectively. This will enable more pupils to read with confidence.
- In early years, the curriculum lacks ambition and rigour. As a result, teachers are not always clear about what they want children to learn, particularly during less structured times. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum for the early years foundation stage is well matched to the needs and starting points of children so that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Teachers do not use assessment well enough to adapt learning based on what pupils already know. This means that, sometimes, pupils do not gain the knowledge they need to complete more complex work. Leaders need to ensure that assessment is used effectively to determine what pupils know and remember and to adapt learning in light of this information.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	126307
<b>Local authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241800
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	86
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Peter Wallis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanne Lewis
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stnicholasbromham.co.uk">www.stnicholasbromham.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 April 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been several changes in leadership since the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed in January 2022 and was absent at the time of the inspection.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- St Nicholas Church of England VC Primary School is a church school. The school is in the Diocese of Salisbury. The school received its section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character in March 2016, when this aspect of the school's work was graded outstanding.
- A significant proportion of pupils at the school have SEND, and there is a much higher proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans than found nationally.

## 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 a nominated teacher, the special educational needs coordinator, deputy designated safeguarding leads, groups of staff, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- 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 considered the documentation around safeguarding, including the safeguarding checks made on staff. They talked to governors, staff and pupils about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to see how leaders support their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered the 34 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 24 free-text responses, and seven responses to the staff survey.

### Inspection team

Steph Matthews, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sandra Woodman

Ofsted Inspector

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