

Inspection of a good school: Nether Stowey Church of England Primary School

Mill Close, Nether Stowey, Bridgwater, Somerset TA5 1NX

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

Outcome

Nether Stowey Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Nether Stowey is a happy, safe and welcoming school. Leaders have ensured there are strong links with the local church and the local community as a whole. This means pupils feel a strong sense of pride in their school and where they live. For example, pupils speak highly of their successes in sports tournaments. They live by the school's ethos of 'We are caring, we are active, we are our best.'

Pupils behave well in class and at social times. They have positive attitudes to learning, including in the early years. During lessons, they are inquisitive and engaged. They co-operate well together in group tasks. For example, older pupils work collaboratively to create gymnastics routines in physical education (PE). Pupils say that bullying does not happen. They say that if it did, adults would resolve it. Pupils also help each other to solve disputes through being peer mediators.

Pupils develop their interests through a variety of clubs such as choir, chess, cookery, art and football. They become more independent through experiencing residential in key stage 2. Staff plan trips to deepen pupils' knowledge of the curriculum. For example, they visit a local museum to learn more about the Romans.

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

Leaders are ambitious for the school. They have united staff, pupils and governors in this vision. Staff say that leaders take into account workload when making changes. They feel proud to work at Nether Stowey. Parental confidence in the school is high and is much improved from the last inspection. They say that staff are approachable and feel they listen to any concerns they may have.

Leaders have established a well-sequenced curriculum. It identifies the knowledge pupils should know, and when. They rigorously check the impact of it. This includes governors.

As a result, leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. Leaders have ensured staff receive regular training on the curriculum. This means staff feel confident and supported in its implementation, including those in the early stages of their career. Staff adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the mixed-age classes, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Staff have consistent approaches to the teaching of subjects. This means that pupils learn well from early years to Year 6. For example, in mathematics pupils regularly recap and revisit concepts they have learned. They can identify areas they have learned in the past that help them with their current work, such as times tables. In PE, pupils recall key tactics needed in games such as netball. However, on some occasions teachers do not take into account well enough what pupils can do. They do not deepen pupils' knowledge through closely matched tasks or questions as much as they could. Pupils say sometimes their work is too easy.

Leaders place a high priority on reading. They have implemented a new approach which starts in the early years. Staff ensure children get off to a flying start in phonics. Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained. Teachers introduce more-complex letter and sound correspondences earlier than in the past. Consequently, pupils learn to read quickly. Staff regularly check for any gaps in knowledge. They swiftly identify any pupils who have fallen behind. Through effective support, pupils catch up and keep up.

Pupils have positive attitudes to reading. Leaders have ensured the school library is well stocked. They enhance this with regular visits to the village library. Consequently, pupils read texts by a variety of authors and from a variety of genres.

Leaders have carefully considered the wider curriculum. They place a high priority on children's mental health and raise children's own awareness of it. As a result, pupils can suggest ways of keeping both physically and mentally healthy. Pupils take on leadership roles, such as school council members, house captains and digital leaders. Through these, they help to raise money for charities.

Pupils have clear views on equality and tolerance. They speak passionately about gender inequality. For example, the differences between men and women's pay in society. However, they say that at Nether Stowey, everyone is treated equally regardless of gender, race or background.

Governors are knowledgeable, passionate and committed. They know the school well. Through working with subject leaders and visits to the school, governors check all subjects to see how well pupils learn. They support and challenge leaders as appropriate.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of 'It could happen here.' They know of potential issues within the local safeguarding context and ensure staff are aware of these. Staff alert

leaders to even the smallest concerns. Leaders take clear, decisive action in response. This includes referrals to the local authority as necessary.

Leaders make thorough checks on staff's suitability to work with children. Governors regularly check aspects of the school's safeguarding work.

Pupils know how to stay safe online. For example, they know the importance of not sharing personal details with strangers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On some occasions, teachers' expectations of what pupils can learn are not high enough. Pupils are not challenged to deepen or extend their thinking as much as they could do. Leaders need to ensure that teachers take into account what pupils can already do and extend their thinking further.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

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	123789
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10256746
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pauline Carpenter
Headteacher	Chloe Holt
Website	www.netherstowey.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up their post in 2018.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school provision.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. Its last inspection under the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools was in 2017, when it was judged good overall.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning.

- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. He met with the designated safeguarding lead to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. The inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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