

Inspection of Witchampton Church of England First School

Witchampton, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 5AP

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

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 Witchampton Church of England First 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?

Witchampton's ethos of being a 'small school with a big heart – making a difference' is reflected in the actions of staff and pupils. They take a caring and community-facing approach. Leaders promote the school's values of love, courage, inspiration and respect. When pupils, including children in the early years, demonstrate one of these values they are issued with a 'Witchampton Wow'. Pupils wear these on their jumpers with pride.

Pupils benefit from warm, nurturing relationships with staff. Bullying is extremely rare. If it does occur, then it is dealt with swiftly. As a result, pupils are happy and want to come to school. Children in the early years foundation stage settle into school life quickly. They benefit from established routines and a stimulating environment in which to learn.

There are a range of leadership opportunities across the school. These include belonging to the worship team, school council and eco committee. As pupils move into Year 4, they can become play leaders or a house captain. Pupils are proud to take on these roles. They talk confidently about the difference they make to school life. Pupils also benefit from trips and visits linked to what they learn in the curriculum.

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

Leaders, include governors and trustees, are ambitious for all pupils. Pupils follow a broad and varied curriculum. Subject leaders have carefully planned the knowledge they want pupils to learn. They consider what pupils already know and what they will learn next. They use this information to plan a logical learning sequence for pupils to follow.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge, especially in mathematics, as this has been a focus this academic year. They regularly check what pupils know and remember over time. This helps them to plan the most appropriate next learning steps for pupils. However, teachers' use of assessment in subjects in the wider curriculum is not as well developed as it is in the core subjects.

Leaders prioritise reading. Storytime is built into the daily timetable for all classes. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the different texts staff share with them. Staff in Reception Year use these texts as inspiration for other creative activities. This helps children to remember the story and make connections across the curriculum. Pupils say they enjoy reading and continue to read at home. Leaders recently took all pupils in the school to visit a local book shop. Pupils purchased books for the school within a set budget.

Children start the school's chosen phonics programme at the beginning of Reception Year. This helps them to get off to a flying start. Pupils on the programme read

books that are matched to the sounds they know. All staff receive appropriate training in reading. If a child is struggling, staff support them to catch up quickly.

Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. When a new adult joins the setting, they quickly receive the training they need to help these pupils effectively. Leaders have reviewed how targets for pupils with SEND are set. They are broken down into manageable steps and are regularly reviewed. Pupils with SEND receive effective bespoke support in spaces, such as 'The Nest'.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' conduct. They model the learning behaviours they expect to see. Although the majority of pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and behave well, some staff do not consistently hold pupils to these high expectations. Pupils know the routines of moving safely around the school site. For example, there are step monitors to help them navigate the steps up to the playground. At playtime, they engage cooperatively in a range of outdoor activities. Children in the early years show they can take turns and share.

Leaders have created a culture of inclusivity and acceptance. Pupils say this is a fair and respectful school. They recognise difference and can talk about why it is important to treat everyone equally. Staff teach fundamental British values explicitly and link them to the school's values. Pupils learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy.

Staff say they are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported by leaders and say their workload is considered carefully. Staff and parents describe the headteacher as inspiring.

Parents are positive about the quality of education provided by the school, as well as the caring, family approach. They appreciate the regular, informative communication the school provides.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders conduct regular 'health checks' on all areas of safeguarding. As a result, systems and processes are closely monitored and any necessary improvements made quickly. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on adults who want to work at the school.

Staff receive regular training and know how to report any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. Leaders act quickly so pupils and their families receive the support they need. This includes working with external agencies as required.

Pupils feel safe and have a trusted adult in school. They learn about healthy relationships and online safety in an age-appropriate way.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although leaders have high expectations of pupils' conduct, staff across classes do not always insist these are met. As a result, a small minority of pupils find it difficult to manage their behaviour and sometimes cause disruption to learning. Leaders should ensure that staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently.
- Teachers' use of assessment in subjects in the wider curriculum is not as well developed as it is in the core subjects. Therefore, teachers do not always know how successfully pupils are progressing through the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that assessment is regular and deliberate across all subjects.

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	141854
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10256642
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	59
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Kingston OBE
Headteacher	Jo Hancock
Website	www.witchampton.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school was part of Wimborne Academy Trust until February 2023, when it joined with Minerva Learning Trust and became Initio Learning Trust.
- Witchampton is a Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection took place in July 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 discussions with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years and mathematics lead, two members of the local

academy committee, the director of education, the associate director of the trust, the chief executive officer of the trust and a trustee.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and design and technology. 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the pupil survey and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Claire Fortey

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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