

Inspection of a good school: St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Porton

Idmiston Road, Porton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 0LB

Inspection date: 4 May 2023

Outcome

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Porton continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this friendly and welcoming school. They are well cared for by staff who take the time to develop respectful and positive relationships with pupils.

The new headteacher has brought about positive change. She is ambitious and has high expectations of staff and pupils. Pupils love learning from the well-constructed 'global explorer' curriculum. Leaders carefully weave big ideas such as being 'creative' and 'worldly' throughout subjects to make learning memorable.

Pupils live up to the school's Christian values. These run through everything the school does. They guide pupils towards making the right choices about their behaviour and conduct. Staff encourage pupils to 'use their voice' if issues arise. Leaders follow up promptly and effectively on the small number of reports of bullying.

Pupils proudly take on many responsibilities across the school. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoy being 'Badger Buddies' to the Reception class. They look out for and act as role models to the younger children. Pupils discuss and debate important themes such as disability and tolerance with compassion.

Most parents and carers comment positively on the school's work. They say that the school is a place where staff provide love and care alongside a stimulating curriculum.

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

Leaders place reading at the centre of the curriculum. The school's revised approach to phonics teaching is working well. In Reception Year, children quickly develop a secure understanding of phonics. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. This helps them become confident and fluent readers. All staff are trained to teach phonics. Staff use assessment well to identify when pupils fall behind. They provide extra sessions to help them catch up. Teachers use a range of carefully chosen texts, including Shakespeare and

poetry, to motivate pupils to read and write. As a result, many pupils become avid readers.

Pupils benefit from a rich and engaging curriculum. Leaders have mapped out the key concepts pupils will learn in each subject. In history, for example, pupils understand chronology. They can use dates and terms to describe events. In mathematics, teachers check pupils' understanding regularly. They plan opportunities for pupils to revisit and practise what they have learned. The 'wizard warm-ups' help the most important knowledge stick in pupils' memory. Despite the curriculum's strengths, leaders have not clearly emphasised the crucial concepts that pupils need to remember and revisit across all subjects. This hinders pupils' ability to build on and make connections with future learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the right help to learn alongside their peers. Staff identify pupils' needs early. Teachers adapt their teaching to support these pupils to achieve well. Staff work in tandem with parents when planning and evaluating support. Parents value information-sharing at SEND coffee mornings.

Pupils' conduct is positive. Consistent routines begin in Reception Year. Children learn how to share and follow instructions straight away. This continues in other year groups. Pupils respect the rules and take responsibility for their actions. For example, they say it is important to 'forgive and start again when we make the wrong choices'. Across the school, relationships between staff and pupils are warm and encouraging.

Leaders bring the curriculum to life by organising trips, events and experiences. To broaden their cultural awareness, pupils sing in a cathedral, perform in plays and learn musical instruments. Various sports clubs, from mini marathon to rugby, keep pupils active. The 'big ideas' curriculum days are a highlight for many. For example, during the 'resourceful' day, older pupils used teamwork and resilience skills to solve an escape room challenge. Pupils study Rosa Parks and Black history to help them appreciate and respect diversity. They are developing into responsible young people.

The governing body shares the passion, commitment and ambition of leaders. They hold senior leaders to account effectively. The new headteacher has increased training for teachers so that they are experts in the subjects they teach. Leaders take steps to make sure that staff workload and well-being are prioritised. As a result, staff morale is high. The school is now well placed to bring about further improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place a high priority on ensuring that pupils are safe. They make sure that staff receive relevant safeguarding training. Staff know the signs that indicate a pupil might be at risk of harm. Leaders act appropriately when staff or pupils raise concerns. Governors test out the school's procedures. They check that staff employed at the school are suitable to work with pupils.

Pupils feel safe. The curriculum helps them learn to stay safe on the roads and online. Pupils know that adults will listen to them if they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few wider curriculum subjects, leaders have not made explicit the most important concepts that pupils need to remember and revisit. This makes it more difficult for pupils to build on or connect what they already know to new learning. Leaders should ensure that they emphasise the essential knowledge and concepts and then check that pupils make deeper connections with their learning over time.

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 February 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	126404
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10287461
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helen Cullen
Headteacher	Lucy Hill
Website	www.stnicholas.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been changes in leadership since the previous inspection. The current headteacher took up post in April 2023, following a period of interim leadership.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is in the Diocese of Salisbury. The school was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in October 2017, when it was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior staff, the special educational needs coordinator, other school staff and five members of the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone call with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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.

- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. Inspectors talked to governors, staff and pupils about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. They asked pupils about their experiences in the school, including bullying.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss how leaders support their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments, and responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jyotsna Paranjape

Ofsted Inspector

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