

Inspection of English Bicknor Church of England Primary School

English Bicknor, Coleford, Gloucestershire GL16 7PG

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

'Children and families are at the heart of everything they do' and 'this is a tiny school with an enormous heart' are typical of parents' views, and show what it is like to be a pupil attending English Bicknor. The school values of trust, compassion, perseverance and respect shine through. Pupils love all the school has to offer and attend regularly. Leaders have high expectations, and as a result pupils achieve well.

Staff are superb role models, and relationships within the school are exceptional. Staff expect all pupils to be responsible, respectful and active members of the school, and to contribute positively.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are outstanding. From the time they start school in the Reception Year, pupils learn to support and care for each other. Pupils work and play together harmoniously; disagreements are extremely rare.

Pupils have a strong voice. This builds their confidence and self-esteem. A wealth of clubs are available to pupils, from music to gardening and sports. These are fully inclusive and well attended.

The school offers tremendous pastoral support. Staff go 'above and beyond' for pupils and their families. This ensures that pupils feel happy and safe in school and are ready to learn.

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

Leaders are unrelenting in their determination and commitment to provide pupils with the best education and care. They work tirelessly with staff to ensure pupils have access to an ambitious and exciting curriculum. This provides them with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. For example, in mathematics, pupils can apply algebraic strategies and knowledge of shapes to identify unknown coordinates. However, leaders know that the curriculum is not fully embedded in all of the wider curriculum subjects. As a result, pupils do not gain the planned knowledge they need to achieve well across these subjects. Leaders know the importance of making the curriculum secure in all subjects. They have plans in place to get this sorted out rapidly.

Leaders know how crucial it is that pupils learn to read as soon as possible. They expect every pupil to become a fluent reader. Younger children learn phonics from the start. They use this knowledge well when they read. Staff receive training that gives them the knowledge and skills to teach early reading confidently. Reading books match the sounds that pupils know. Staff quickly spot pupils who may be at risk of falling behind. They intervene with additional support so pupils catch up quickly with their classmates. Pupils enjoy story time. They talk with joy about their favourite books and authors.

The school's Christian foundation underpins its approach to pupils' spiritual and character development. Pupils show this in how they behave and discuss important issues. Their behaviour and attitudes are exceptional. Pupils are very kind and, where necessary, forgiving of each other. They understand the importance of respect when discussing religions, life choices, and family models different from their own.

Leaders provide a wide range of experiences beyond the academic curriculum. For example, careers week gives pupils the opportunity to learn about a range of jobs and professions such as an engineer, space scientist and an author. Leaders ensure that pupils are ready for the next stage of their education. Older pupils talked with enthusiasm about their recent residential trip, learning new skills such as bushcraft, navigation and rock climbing. These activities build strong relationships and develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

Adults love working at English Bicknor. They appreciate the training which develops their knowledge and skills. They welcome the focus that leaders place on their mental health and well-being. Leaders are conscious of staff workload and consider ways to help them manage this.

Governors know what is working well and what needs to improve. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education and care pupils receive. Leaders welcome the support and guidance they receive from trust leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. All adults consider safeguarding to be their responsibility. Staff are well trained to notice and report any signs of concern. Leaders respond swiftly to support pupils and families in need of help and do not hesitate to escalate concerns when required. Staff carry out the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. Leaders provide a curriculum that teaches pupils to understand risk, including internet safety. 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)

- The curriculum is not fully embedded in all of the foundation subjects. As a result, pupils do not gain the planned knowledge they need to achieve well across these subjects. Leaders need to complete the process of embedding the planned curriculum effectively in 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	148946
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10256605
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Louisa Davies
Headteacher	Emma Isaac
Website	www.englishbicknorcofeprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Severn Federation Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust. The school joined the trust in March 2022.
- The executive headteacher and executive deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2022.
- The executive headteacher and executive deputy headteacher are also leaders at Aylburton Church of England Primary School.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Gloucester. At the most recent section 48 inspection of the school, carried out in October 2019, the school was judged to be good.
- 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.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, executive deputy headteacher, other school staff and three members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, the 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 sampled work in other curriculum subjects, including science and history.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult. Story time was visited in Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including the safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding leader acts on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and governors about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- The lead inspector considered key documentation, including school development plans and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. An inspector met with leaders to discuss and scrutinise how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text replies. Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. They also considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Adam Matthews

Ofsted Inspector

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