

Inspection of a good school: Bemerton St John Church of England Primary

Lower Road, Bemerton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 9NW

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 May 2023

Outcome

Bemerton St John Church of England Primary continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love learning and they are excited to attend school. Pupils know leaders expect them to work hard, and they respond well. Pupils quickly learn to read, write and calculate, so they can make the most of the wide-ranging curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Through the carefully planned curriculum for personal, social and health education, they learn how to make and maintain friendships. Pupils say that bullying is not an issue. They feel safe and are very confident that adults will sort out any problems they have.

The excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents are very well organised. These include trips and visitors that bring the curriculum to life. There are numerous popular after-school clubs, including an impressive choir and gardening clubs. Pupils are very proud that their school is an eco-school.

Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, including running the library and membership of the school and church councils. They exemplify the school vision of 'through love, serve one another'. One pupil summed up the school experience of many pupils, saying 'We've got so many opportunities that give us the freedom to be us.'

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum for all pupils from Reception to Year 6. It encourages pupils to learn to be curious, to enquire and to think about how and why things happen. Staff have high aspirations for all pupils to succeed.

Leaders have made sure that staff have secure subject knowledge. Staff use this expertise to teach the curriculum well. They question and check understanding, encouraging pupils to discuss ideas with each other. This means pupils think about and rehearse their

answers and increase their confidence. Teachers give pupils work that allows them to develop deeper and wider learning. Staff expertly shape activities to grip pupils' interest. As a result, pupils' attitudes to their learning, and work, are excellent. Teachers assess whether pupils have learned the planned curriculum. If pupils have not, they receive help.

In core subjects, the most important content for pupils to learn is clearly defined and sequenced, so pupils' recall is strong. However, where essential content is less well defined, for example knowledge about artists or different religions, some pupils' recall is weaker.

As soon as they start in Reception, children in the early years begin to learn about phonics. The words in pupils' reading books contain only the sounds and words that they have learned, so they gain confidence. If pupils fall behind, swift support helps them catch up. Pupils become fluent readers who love books.

Pupils are quick to recall times tables. They are taught to use phrases, increasing in complexity, to help them reason and solve problems. Children develop their mathematics right from the start of Reception. Here they practise it through engrossing games and independent activities, while challenged by the adults.

Pupils learn about diversity through their reading, the music they listen to and the artists they emulate. They learn about the rich local heritage, including Stonehenge and how artists such as Constable painted views of Salisbury. Pupils understand democracy when they vote for the school council and church council. Pupils develop a wider understanding of their world from links with schools abroad and visits from authorities, such as the police and fire brigade. Leaders promote mental health and well-being very well. Pupils learn to regulate themselves, reflect and share their feelings.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with great care. Clear plans, very frequently reviewed, outline targets and the support pupils with SEND receive. Teachers adapt work to ensure that pupils with SEND learn the same things as other pupils. On the rare occasion where pupils' complex needs mean they learn a different curriculum, this is carefully sequenced.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They greatly appreciate leaders' care for their workload and well-being. Trust leaders provide the school with strong support and challenge, and in turn, staff support other schools. Succession planning is carefully thought through.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture. Staff receive extensive training that keeps safeguarding uppermost in their mind. Systems for safeguarding are rigorous, extensive and regularly monitored. Leaders make appropriate checks on adults working in school.

Leaders respond swiftly to any concerns staff may have. They keep detailed records of actions taken. Leaders provide a wealth of help for vulnerable pupils and families. Some staff are specifically trained to support pupils' emotional well-being.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, for example when using social media. They know who to speak to if they are worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum does not precisely identify essential knowledge that pupils need to remember. As a result, a few pupils do not learn this content well. Leaders should ensure that the essential knowledge is identified clearly for teachers and pupils.

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 first inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Bemerton St John Church of England Aided Primary School, to be good in March 2017.

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	146808
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10268562
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	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Owen
Headteacher	Claire Pearce
Website	www.bemerton.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bemerton St John's Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school in February 2019. It joined the Magna Learning Partnership. When its predecessor school, Bemerton St John's Church of England Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, teachers, groups of pupils, governors and representatives from the multi-academy trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector looked at samples of the curriculum in other subject areas and listened

to pupils read to an adult.

- The inspector considered pupils' behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school site and at playtime.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. She reviewed how well the designated safeguarding leads act on concerns about pupils' welfare. The inspector talked to pupils, staff and governors about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- The inspector considered responses to the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. She also considered responses from staff and pupils to the Ofsted survey.

Inspection team

Deborah Zachary, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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