

Inspection of a good school: West Monkton Church of England School

Bridgwater Road, Bathpool, Taunton, Somerset TA2 8FT

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 May 2023

Outcome

West Monkton Church of England School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils describe West Monkton Primary School as one big family. They say that their teachers motivate them, support them and encourage them to learn. One pupil summed this up, saying: 'If we say we can't do it, our teachers say you can't do it yet.' All staff share high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils strive towards these expectations. They are glad to choose examples of their success to add to their 'proud work' display.

Pupils are safe. They are respectful to staff. Bullying is rare. It is not tolerated. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have at breaktimes to play creatively and adventurously. They know they can share any worries with the 'follow the rainbow' team. Many parents speak highly of the extra support given, for example through 'the nest'.

Leaders build positive relationships with pupils' families through family learning, the parent board and community cafe. Pupils take on responsibilities, such as being play-leaders or members of the collective worship council. Pupils are taught to be active citizens, through campaigning and raising money for charities. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular clubs. In these ways, pupils learn to be part of a thriving community.

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

Children make a strong start in the early years. Staff provide a broad range of thoughtful and enticing activities. They extend children's learning by asking them careful questions. They teach children routines that help them to learn well. Leaders make sure that learning in the early years prepares children for their next steps in school.

At the heart of the school's work is its carefully designed curriculum. Leaders identify the important knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn. Leaders' guidance supports teachers to have good subject knowledge. Teachers design lessons that build on what pupils already know.

For example, leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for mathematics. This builds pupils' knowledge step-by-step. Teachers explain mathematics clearly and precisely. They use discussions effectively. These help pupils to explain their thinking. Pupils are enthusiastic about the mathematics they learn.

Leaders have introduced systems to help pupils remember what they have learned. Lessons start with questions about previous learning. Teachers introduce important vocabulary with matching images. Pupils develop detailed knowledge. In physical education, for example, pupils used precise vocabulary to explain the importance of maintaining momentum in a relay race.

Leaders have put in place a clear system for teaching phonics. This starts from the early years. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics to read books for themselves. Older pupils read regularly in class and at home. They read high-quality texts as they learn to write. They enjoy the books that teachers read. Pupils learn to answer a range of questions about what they have read. Leaders check pupils' reading progress regularly. They arrange extra support so that all pupils can learn to read. As a result, pupils read with increasing fluency and expression.

Teachers make regular checks during lessons on how pupils are learning. They respond swiftly to what they find and give extra support to individuals. In these ways, teachers deal well with confusions or gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Teachers adapt learning to include all pupils. Skilled staff work with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They help them to become more independent. All pupils with SEND have clear plans and targets. Leaders review these plans with parents and pupils. This helps them to build a detailed picture of what works well.

Pupils respond positively to the reminders that staff give them about behaviour. There is a calm atmosphere in lessons and around school. However, some pupils do not take part properly in the activities that are designed to help them practise their learning.

Pupils learn and understand the school's values through a carefully planned assembly programme. All pupils are taught about being healthy and relating well to others. Leaders provide tailored pastoral care to individuals. This supports pupils well.

Staff appreciate the support that leaders, including governors, give them. Staff gain from working closely with others in the multi-academy trust. Leaders provide focused training. They check that this is effective.

Leaders introduce new projects and approaches carefully. They explain to staff the reason for changes and listen to their opinions. Staff work together as a team. They keep a strong focus on education and on improving the school for its pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that all adults and pupils know how they can report concerns. Staff are vigilant. The school's safeguarding team acts on all concerns. Staff carefully track and review the difference that their actions have made.

All staff are regularly trained. Leaders are well supported by expert staff from the multi-academy trust. Appropriate checks are made on all the adults involved with the school.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the particular risks to their pupils. Leaders make changes and additions to the curriculum to reflect these. The curriculum helps pupils learn how to stay safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not properly take part in the activities designed to help them practise their learning. These pupils do not secure their learning as well as they could. Leaders should support teachers to establish consistent expectations and routines so that all pupils practise and secure their learning.

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 predecessor school, West Monkton Church of England Primary School, to be good in June 2014.

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	146676
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10268509
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Dickson
Headteacher	James Blackmore
Website	www.westmonktonschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in December 2019.
- The school is a member of The Oak Partnership Trust.
- The school has a nursery which offers places to two-year-old children.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- There is a before- and after-school club managed by leaders.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 this into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, subject leaders, teachers, groups of pupils and governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: physical education, early reading and mathematics. 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 met subject leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work in other subject areas.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. He reviewed how well the designated safeguarding leads act on concerns about pupils' welfare. The inspector talked to pupils and staff about how leaders keep everyone safe.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. He also considered the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Jonathan Gower, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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