

Inspection of Beaminster St Mary's Academy

Clay Lane, Beaminster, Dorset DT8 3BY

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Beaminster St Mary's Academy is a highly positive, vibrant school community. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are motivated to learn. Strong relationships between staff and pupils mean they feel safe and happy.

Pupils behave well. Staff have high expectations of pupils. The school's values underpin these expectations. Pupils know that it is important to treat everyone with respect and kindness. They are clear about the rewards and sanctions and say teachers use these fairly. Any pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour are well supported by adults.

Pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen at the school. They know what bullying is and can distinguish this from fallouts with friends. They are confident that adults will help to resolve any issues they have.

Leaders' vision for the school to be an important part of the local community means that pupils take part in important events within Beaminster. They enjoyed the Remembrance Parade and Coronation events. Enrichment opportunities also happen within the curriculum, such as the live lecture from the British Museum. Pupils and parents value these experiences that broaden pupils' interests and talents.

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

The trust and the school's Academy Standards and Ethos Committee have kept a clear focus on the quality of education provided by the school. The new headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of pupils, parents and staff. There is a strong momentum of school improvement which has had a positive impact on pupils' learning in a short space of time.

Leaders have designed a well-sequenced curriculum. The knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn has been precisely identified. Pupils learn well in phonics and mathematics. This is because the specific knowledge is broken into small steps. Pupils secure these small steps of knowledge before moving on to new knowledge or using them in more complex tasks. In the wider curriculum, the knowledge leaders want pupils to learn is not always broken down into small steps and the learning intentions are sometimes too broad. This means that teachers are not clear about the specific knowledge pupils need to learn, which results in pupils simply completing tasks rather than securing knowledge. As a result, pupils, including some with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not learn as well.

Learning to read is a priority for children when they start Reception. Teachers implement the phonics programme with fidelity to the scheme, and pupils benefit from consistently accurate teaching. Pupils confidently segment words and blend sounds, developing good levels of fluency. Pupils who need help to keep up are identified quickly and effective support is put in place. As a result, the majority of

pupils start key stage 2 as fluent readers. Older pupils enjoy the range of texts they read and enjoy choosing from the class libraries.

Leaders have thought carefully about the larger concepts they want pupils to learn. For example, in history, they want pupils to learn about the meaning of 'conquest' through studying different periods of history. Leaders have also begun to identify where knowledge can be taught across curriculum subjects, such as drawing graphs to record weather data when learning in geography. However, the combining of these knowledge and skills has not yet been checked closely enough by leaders to ensure it matches pupils' knowledge across the curriculum.

Pupils with SEND have their needs accurately identified. Support plans are precise and bespoke to the individual. These pupils are proud of their 'Reach for the Stars' books, where they record their additional learning. The support they receive is effective in closing gaps for this group of pupils. In their classroom learning, pupils' support plans are not always used to adapt learning. This means that, in some subjects, pupils with SEND learn less well.

Children in Reception get off to a strong start. Staff focus on helping children to use spoken language accurately across the curriculum. Staff support children well through questioning and by modelling language. The variety of opportunities to practise using language helps children to become confident learners. Parents value the ways that staff support them to help with their children's learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure a robust culture of safeguarding. Regular training ensures that all staff and governors know the different signs of abuse. Staff are confident in using recording and reporting systems to share any concerns. This enables leaders to act swiftly where necessary. Leaders' work with a range of external agencies means that pupils and families get the help they need.

Leaders, including governors and trustees, regularly assure themselves of the effectiveness of safeguarding practice. This includes the safe recruitment and management of staff.

Pupils feel safe. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They learn about healthy relationships and personal space.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the essential knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn is not broken down into small enough steps. This means that teachers and pupils are

not clear enough about what knowledge is to be learned. Leaders must identify the precise knowledge they want pupils to learn in the curriculum so that pupils are able to know more, remember more and do more.

- Teaching does not always match the needs of some pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are skilled in matching learning precisely with pupils' needs so that all pupils learn well.

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	140560
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10268200
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rosemary Tong
Headteacher	Darren Marklew
Website	www.beaminsterstmarys.dsat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust.
- There have been significant changes to staffing, including leadership, since the previous inspection. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2022.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics and geography. 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.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, teaching and support staff. The lead inspector also spoke with members of the local governing body including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer, director of education and two trustees.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders to discuss how pupils are kept safe in school. Inspectors considered the school's recruitment procedures, staff induction and training, records of concerns and the school's engagement with external agencies. They also spoke with staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to an adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. In addition, they met with pupils informally and formally to hear their views.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text responses. Inspectors also took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plan and documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Angela Folland, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Debbie Tregellas

Ofsted Inspector

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