

Inspection of a good school: St Cuthbert's Church of England Academy Infants and Pre-School

Keward Walk, Wells, Somerset BA5 1TZ

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 June 2023

Outcome

St Cuthbert's Church of England Academy Infants and Pre-School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Cuthbert's are happy and enjoy school. They benefit from strong and caring relationships with adults. Pupils feel safe. They say that everyone looks after each other and everyone is welcome. Pupils trust adults to help them if they have a problem or a worry. Children in the early years settle well and love learning.

Pupils live up to the school motto to 'be kind, take time to think, and try your best.' They work hard in lessons and are proud of their achievements. Pupils behave well. Leaders make sure pupils learn in a calm and harmonious atmosphere. Pupils play happily together at breaktimes. They enjoy the range of activities such as construction games or using the 'trim trail.' Pupils know right from wrong. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that staff will resolve any unkind behaviour quickly.

Pupils learn about life beyond the school gate. Visitors and trips broaden pupils' horizons and develop their interests. Pupils are particularly proud to make links with a school in Australia.

Most parents are happy with the school's care and nurture. They appreciate how positive their children are about learning.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. They have high expectations of what all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), should achieve. In most subjects, leaders have considered the important knowledge pupils need to know and remember. In mathematics, leaders have broken knowledge down into manageable steps. Children in the early years learn important mathematical vocabulary like

'more' and 'less'. They learn to count and solve problems with numbers to 10. Teachers revisit previous learning. This helps to make it stick in pupils' memories. Pupils use what they know to tackle mathematical problems with confidence.

However, this is not the case in all subjects. For example, in art, the important knowledge that pupils need to learn is not identified in full. Teachers do not always help pupils build their knowledge securely. Some activities do not focus on what pupils need to learn next. As a result, pupils do not have the building blocks they need to learn the curriculum well.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have put a strong phonics programme in place. Staff are well trained to deliver the programme. They quickly identify any gaps in learning. Pupils who fall behind get the help they need to catch up. Pupils read books that match the sounds they have learnt. Most children and pupils learn to read fluently by the end of key stage 1. Teachers promote a love of books by sharing a range of texts and authors with pupils.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND have their needs clearly identified. Leaders work well with parents and external professionals to check pupils' learning. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. They receive appropriate adaptations to help them learn well.

Children get off to a strong start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff select high-quality stories and songs for children to learn. This prepares them well for reading in Year 1. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not considered how the curriculum in the early years links with learning in Years 1 and 2. Teachers cannot build on what children have learnt before as a result.

The school is calm, and pupils work hard. Staff are quick to manage any lapses in pupils' concentration. Children in the early years focus attentively on their learning. Leaders have put a clear behaviour policy in place. Staff share the same high expectations. Pupils understand what adults expect of them. They are proud to receive rewards for kindness or as 'star of the week'.

Pupils get lots of opportunities to learn about the world around them, both locally and further afield. Pupils enjoy visits to the local church and the Bishop's Palace. Visitors enrich the curriculum, for example with poetry and music recitals. Pupils understand the importance of equality. They say that discrimination is never tolerated in school because people are 'all the same.' Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities. For example, members of the school council enjoy working with adults to improve the school environment.

Trustees and governors carry out their duties effectively. They challenge leaders well about the quality of education. Most staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the support that leaders give to their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff are well trained to identify risks to pupils' welfare. They know the school's procedures for reporting concerns. Leaders keep detailed records and use this information to identify if pupils and families need extra help. Leaders work closely with families and external professionals in the best interests of pupils. They check that all adults working at the school are suitable.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. They understand road safety and how to keep themselves safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the curriculum does not make clear the important knowledge that pupils should know and revisit. This means that pupils do not gain the depth of understanding that they should. Leaders must ensure that they identify essential knowledge in all subjects and check pupils' understanding.
- Teachers do not always design learning that enables pupils to build on what they know. As a result, pupils do not build knowledge as well as they could. Leaders need to strengthen teachers' pedagogical knowledge to ensure that pupils know and remember more.

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 to be good in June 2009.

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	138942
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10268595
Type of school	Infant
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Christine Raphael
Headteacher	Sheryl Cooper
Website	www.stcuthbertsinfantswells.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- Leaders provide nursery education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in July 2019, when this aspect of the school's work was judged as good.
- Leaders provide breakfast and after school club provision on site.

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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders and groups of staff. The inspector met with trustees and governors. They spoke on the telephone with an external advisor to the school.
- 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 some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector considered the curriculum and spoke with pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the start of the second day of the inspection.
- The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1 and 2 read to an adult.
- The inspector considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. The inspector spoke with pupils to gain their views about the school.
- The inspector considered responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including free-text responses, and responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Claire Mirams, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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