

# Inspection of Motcombe CofE Primary School

Church Road, Motcombe, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9NT

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Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Motcombe is a happy place to be. Pupils feel well looked after and safe. They know that staff will help them if they need it. The school's vision of 'faith and friendship, learning and laughter' is central to every aspect of its work. This vision extends to many parts of school life, including during breaktimes when pupils can use the spiritual garden. Pupils are given the opportunity for self-reflection in this calming space.

Leaders ensure that they have high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They behave well during lessons and at social times. They know the school's rules and what staff expect of them. Pupils have a desire to learn. They are motivated by reward systems such as the 'cosy chair'.

Many parents comment that staff care deeply about pupils' happiness and well-being. They appreciate the many extra-curricular activities on offer to pupils. These include handball, rounders, choir, gardening and yoga. Pupils say that 'you don't have to be the best at sport to represent the school at a tournament'. This portrays the inclusive culture of the school.

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

Leaders are determined for all pupils at Motcombe to love reading. They work in partnership with parents to promote this ambition. Campfire reading events, workshops and a reading newsletter are just some ways leaders spark an interest.

Leaders train staff to use a consistent approach to teach pupils to learn to read. Children begin learning to read as soon as they start school. Staff ensure that books help pupils practise the sounds they know. Staff assess pupils regularly, which means any pupil who has not grasped a sound, quickly gets the support they need. After phonics, pupils learn from a well-organised reading curriculum. They learn about a wide range of genres and talk knowledgeably about vocabulary. Pupils become fluent and confident readers.

Leaders have identified the most important knowledge they want pupils to learn in many subjects. This helps teachers to know precisely what to teach and the order in which to teach it. Leaders provide training to support teachers in delivering the curriculum as they intend. For example, in mathematics, staff have had recent training on using mathematical resources to support learning. These were used effectively in lessons. In those subjects with well-sequenced curriculum thinking, pupils build on what they know and remember over time. However, in some wider curriculum subjects, leaders have not identified or carefully sequenced the precise knowledge they want pupils to learn. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their understanding and do not learn as well as they could.

Staff accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders provide staff with regular training. As a result, staff are confident to make any required adaptations and provide additional support if needed. Leaders regularly review pupils' targets. Consequently, pupils with SEND learn the curriculum well.

Lessons are calm and conduct is positive around the school. Pupils delight in helping one another through leadership opportunities, such as peer mentors, which help pupils to develop independence. Children in the early years know routines well. They show kindness and empathy towards one another. For example, in physical education (PE), children created dance routines to perform. They were respectful and gave constructive feedback to one another. Staff model the behaviours they expect to see. Pupils rise to these expectations.

Pupils learn from a well-planned personal development curriculum. They know how to spot right from wrong and have an age-appropriate understanding of consent. Pupils enjoy learning about other cultures and religions, as well as about those with no particular religious beliefs. Year 6 pupils say that leaders provide them with appropriate information so that they feel well prepared for secondary school.

Leaders encourage pupils to engage in events in the local community and further afield. A highlight for some pupils was singing for the Archbishop of Canterbury at Salisbury Cathedral. Each year, pupils pay their respects to the soldiers from the local area who fought in the Second World War. A visit from the local fire brigade complemented history learning on The Great Fire of London. Pupils benefit from trips to the aquarium, sailing and the Chalke Valley History Festival.

Staff value the training they have had from school and trust leaders. They say this helps them to do their job well. Staff appreciate the 'well-being workgroup' leaders have created. Governors and trust leaders know the school well. They provide leaders with effective challenge and support.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of vigilance. They train staff so that they know their responsibilities and can spot any pupils who might need additional help. Staff record all concerns. Safeguarding leaders take appropriate and timely action to ensure that pupils get the support they need. However, on occasion, leaders do not record the actions they take in enough detail.

Leaders check all staff to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Trust leaders and governors review leaders' safeguarding work to check it is compliant.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders respond swiftly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns. However, in a small number of cases, the information they record is not thorough enough. It is not clear what actions have been taken and by whom. Therefore, leaders could miss important information. Leaders must ensure that all actions taken in relation to safeguarding are clearly recorded and sufficiently detailed.
- In some wider curriculum subjects, leaders have not identified the key knowledge pupils should learn and the order in which it should be taught. As a result, some pupils do not always remember the intended learning and have gaps in their understanding. Leaders should ensure that they identify the important knowledge they want pupils to learn and the order in which to learn it so that pupils build secure knowledge over time.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141798
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268675
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	183
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Alan Morris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Barge
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.motcombe.dorset.sch.uk">www.motcombe.dorset.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Sherborne Area Schools Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. The school is in the Diocese of Salisbury. At the most recent section 48 inspection of the school, carried out in December 2016, the school was judged to be outstanding.

## 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the school leaders, staff, pupils, governors and representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics

and PE. 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.

- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. They looked at the school's single central record and records of concerns and at how staff work to keep pupils safe. The inspectors talked to pupils, staff, governors and trust leaders about safeguarding practices.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtimes and breaktimes. In addition, they met with pupils formally and informally to hear their views.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They looked at responses to the pupil survey and responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Lakmini Harkus, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Fox

Ofsted Inspector

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