

# Inspection of a good school: The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic Primary School

Beardsley Drive, North Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 6ZQ

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Inspection dates:

18 and 19 July 2023

## Outcome

The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The Bishops' way is summed up by the pupils' happy, smiling faces. Pupils laugh often in this delightful school. They are enthusiastic about their learning and want to do their best in lessons. Children in Reception chat eagerly about what they think the answers are to their teachers' questions. Older pupils want to explore whether there is more than one answer. Pupils extend their interests outside of lessons, such as writing stories in their lunch hour or singing with gusto in the 100-strong choir.

Pupils appreciate the many opportunities that staff provide to enrich the curriculum. These include celebrating diversity and other cultures during international week. Pupils' views influence how leaders run the school. A lovely touch is in the way in which the school celebrates birthdays, so pupils have a special day.

Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils rise to the high expectations of staff. They listen closely in lessons and work together to be successful. Pupils view the school as an extended family. Older pupils look after the younger ones, making sure they have someone to play with. Pupils demonstrate consideration for others. They are generous in their encouragement and praise of each other.

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

Leaders have developed an interesting and thought-provoking curriculum. Each subject provides experiences that help pupils apply their learning in a variety of ways. There is an emphasis on providing pupils with the tools that they need to be a global citizen. Leaders plan 'lightbulb moments', so pupils can discover and develop a rich memory bank of learning and experience.

Leaders have made sure that the order in which pupils learn makes sense. They provide teachers with regular training so that they can deliver the curriculum effectively. Staff are precise in their use of subject vocabulary. Pupils are given clear explanations, breaking down more complex ideas into manageable, bite-sized chunks. Staff have high expectations of how pupils should respond to questions. Pupils answer in full sentences and with the correct use of terminology. In the early years, staff take every opportunity to talk to children to develop their knowledge and vocabulary. In the older classes, teachers ensure that pupils have the opportunity to discuss ideas before they write, so responses are more accurate. While the curriculum and its delivery are working well for the most part, opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning are inconsistent. In a few subjects, leaders have not yet identified the key content that they want pupils to remember. Where this is the case, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders have implemented the new phonics programme well. There is a consistent approach to its delivery. Staff in Reception listen closely to children to make sure that they learn new sounds precisely. This helps children when they blend to make sense of an unfamiliar word. In key stage 1, pupils quickly gain momentum with learning to read. Pupils experience success because they read books that are matched to the sounds they know. From the start, adults' enthusiasm for reading inspires pupils. Pupils love reading and their reading corners. They have many opportunities to escape into a good book.

This is a highly inclusive school. Classrooms are calm and joyful. Staff manage pupils who have complex behaviour well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) work successfully alongside their peers in lessons. This is because teachers think carefully about pupils' needs and how best to support them. They work well with the additional adults who provide extra help, so they can pre-teach new content effectively. Teachers check closely whether pupils with SEND have grasped key concepts. They ensure that there is timely intervention to revisit material where necessary.

Reception children who join the school with SEND are ably supported. Leaders work closely with Nursery providers to ensure that teachers have the information they need. Staff plan learning activities carefully, based on what they know that children need to learn next. Effective liaison with a local speech, language and communication unit ensures that children with this need get appropriate support.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on pupils' wider development, including fitness and well-being. Recently, the school celebrated receiving a platinum award for school games. The school's vibrant walls display the wealth of activities experienced by pupils. This includes enjoying performances from visiting theatre groups and taking part in the Chelmsford Music Festival. Most pupils frequently take part in one of the many clubs on offer. Visits to places of worship and curriculum links to Kenya broaden pupils' understanding of others' faith and cultures.

Staff are proud and happy working at the school. Leaders consider the impact of their decisions on staff workload before they introduce any new initiatives. Those responsible for governance carry out their roles effectively. They have a clear oversight of the school's strengths and those aspects that leaders want to develop further.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture at this school. Staff know pupils very well. Pupils trust adults to help them with their concerns. Staff have a good understanding of the risks that pupils face. They make sure that pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of how to keep safe in their community as well as online.

Leaders have robust safeguarding procedures in place. They act promptly when a child is at risk, liaising effectively with external agencies. They secure the necessary support for families. This includes spiritual support for families when in crisis.

Governors discharge their monitoring role diligently. They employ staff after making the necessary pre-employment checks.

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

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

- In a few foundation subjects, leaders have not yet identified the key content that they want pupils to remember. Opportunities to revisit and recall prior learning are not consistently well planned in the curriculums for some subjects. This means that pupils have differing experiences according to whether the teacher remembers to revisit information and make connections across learning. Leaders should continue with the work to develop retrieval of key knowledge further, ensuring that it is part of curriculum planning so that pupils recall their learning, as well as spark their curiosity to find out 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 school to be good in October 2012.

## 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>	115204
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288446
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	437
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Rob Higgs
<b>Headteacher</b>	Greg Waters
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bishops.essex.sch.uk">www.bishops.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school has a Christian religious character. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in January 2016. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.

## 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 that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the chair and members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, staff and pupils about the school's provision.

- The inspector spoke with representatives from the Diocese of Brentwood and the Diocese of Chelmsford.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in and around school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To ascertain the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the school's information on behaviour and bullying. In addition, she reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with governors, leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' and carers' free-text comments. She also reviewed responses to Ofsted's survey for school staff and the survey for school pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Liz Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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