

Inspection of a good school: St Barnabas Church of England School

St Barnabas Street, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 3HB

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2023

Outcome

St Barnabas Church of England School continues to be a good school.

The executive headteacher of this school is Mrs Fiona Hull. This school is part of Peterborough Diocese Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mrs Ruth Walker-Green, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mrs Margaret Holman.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Barnabas Church of England School is a happy and caring place to learn. The school's values of love, obedience, respect, forgiveness, honesty and kindness underpin how pupils behave towards each other and to staff. Staff know pupils and their families well. Pupils and adults have a strong sense of belonging here. There is a 'family feel' to this school.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils. As a result, pupils try their best and strive to earn rewards, including 'hot chocolate Friday'. Pupils typically behave and learn well. They say that bullying does not happen. Pupils appreciate being able to talk to staff if anything worries them. They say that they feel safe in school. Staff and pupils are rightly proud of their school.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and wider opportunities. They praise the amount of lunchtime and after-school clubs on offer. Pupils are excited by these rich experiences. The activities, such as learning a musical instrument and dance club, help to develop pupils' talents and interests.

Pupils have opportunities to attend trust sporting competitions and have visits to the pantomime and seaside. The school makes sure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

Everyone at the school shares a common purpose. They want all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve their best. Working

together, they have designed a well-sequenced curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils.

The school's curriculum is organised so that pupils' learning builds on what they already know. The school has ensured that pupils can develop their vocabulary in each subject. In some subjects, the curriculum is new. It is too soon to see the impact on pupils knowing and remembering more in these subjects.

Pupils love to read. Staff promote a love of reading through their choice of high-quality texts and inviting reading areas in classrooms. Pupils enjoy their visits to the well-stocked library. In the early years, children start learning to read as soon as they start school. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme consistently well. Teachers make timely checks on how well pupils develop their phonic knowledge. Pupils who need extra support get the help they need to become fluent readers. As a result, pupils learn to read well.

Children in the early years get off to a flying start. There are clear routines and expectations of children's behaviour. The learning environments, both indoors and outdoors, support children's learning well. Children play and learn happily together. Adults are great role models for the children. They skilfully develop children's speech and language. Children are confident, independent and curious learners.

The school is welcoming and inclusive. There are clear systems in place for the identification of pupils with SEND. The school provides teachers with strategies and resources to support these pupils. In lessons, adults provide effective support and encouragement. This support helps pupils to confidently access the full curriculum.

Pupils are excited to learn and concentrate well in lessons. Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. While pupils say they enjoy coming to school, too many do not attend school often enough. These pupils are missing out on vital learning. They are not achieving as well as they could.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Comments such as, 'The school feels like a family. This is a fantastic school, which I often recommend to others' are typical.

Pupils experience a range of activities beyond the classroom. They have time to reflect on their beliefs during collective worship. Pupils benefit from visitors who teach them about keeping safe. They learn about different faiths and cultures. Trained staff support pupils' mental health and well-being.

Staff, including those new to the school, value the support the school provides. They thoroughly enjoy working at the school. They appreciate that the school is mindful of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Recent changes to the curriculum development for some subjects are still new. It is too soon to see the full impact on pupils knowing and remembering more in these subjects. The school should continue with their ambitious curriculum plans and monitor the impact developments have on improving pupils' knowledge over time.
- Despite the school's best efforts, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is too high. As a result, they miss too much learning and do not achieve as well as they could. The school should continue to work with pupils and their families to reinforce attendance expectations and to make sure that pupils attend school regularly so that they can achieve as well as they could.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2017.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141230
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10241742
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Holman
Headteacher	Fiona Hull (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.st-barnabas.northants.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England school within the Diocese of Peterborough. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in November 2016.
- The school is part of Peterborough Diocese Education Trust.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and early years leader have been appointed.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and a range of staff.
- The inspector met with the chair of the governing body. They also met with representatives of the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding, the inspector reviewed school policies, procedures and records. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke with staff, governors, trust representatives and pupils about the school's approach to keeping pupils safe.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, spoke with teachers and spoke with pupils about their learning. The inspector visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. They observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. She considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspector met with groups of staff and pupils and considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Kirsty Norbury, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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