

Inspection of St Mark's Church of England Primary School

Talbot Village, Bournemouth, Dorset BH10 4JA

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 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 Good

The headteacher of this school is Andrew Bright. The school is a single academy trust, which means other people in the trust have responsibility of running the school. The trust is run by a board of trustees chaired by Lisa McGaw.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the heart of this friendly and caring school. The school is determined that all pupils will reach their full potential. They have constructed a curriculum that supports pupils both academically and personally. The majority of parents appreciate the care and support the school provides. One parent said, 'The school has a clear focus on pupils' academic learning, and they are also surrounded by staff who care about their wider development.'

Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. Classrooms are mostly calm and purposeful. When low-level disruption occurs, staff deal with it quickly. Pupils feel safe in school. They know they can talk to their friends and any adult if they have a concern.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They demonstrate this by their high levels of attendance. Pupils enjoy the range of extra-curricular opportunities that are open to them. They understand how the school supports their personal development and well-being. Pastoral support is strong.

The school is shaped by its values: to 'respect, aspire and rejoice'. These are well understood by the whole community. Pupils understand difference. They are respectful of different cultures and beliefs. Pupils know that everyone should be treated the same, whatever they think or believe in.

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

The school is ambitious for all pupils. The school has set a clear direction, where staff expertise is developed well through helpful training. Those new to the profession feel particularly well supported.

Reading is prioritised. Texts are carefully selected to encourage a love of reading. Younger pupils learn to read through a well-designed and implemented phonics programme. Staff ensure pupils access a variety of texts that enthuse them and support their enjoyment of reading. Books match the sounds children are learning. This helps them to build their fluency well. Staff carry out regular checks to ensure those at risk of falling behind get the support they need to keep up. Older pupils talk positively about reading. They say how they like to 'dream' about what might happen next.

The school has created a coherently designed curriculum. It develops pupils' knowledge development over time, including in the early years. In mathematics, pupils engage well in their learning. Teachers make regular checks to focus on any gaps in knowledge pupils may have. However, in some subjects across the wider curriculum, teachers do not use assessment well enough. For example, in physical education (PE), staff check on prior learning but do not always use any misconceptions to support pupils' next steps. As a result, pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

The school systematically identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers adapt learning so most pupils can access the same curriculum as their peers. Nonetheless, some pupils with SEND have targets that are too broad. For these pupils, their individual needs are not being well met in the classroom.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They have recently introduced a new 'regulation and engagement' policy. This is developing a positive culture in relation to behaviour. As a result, behaviour incidents have reduced. Pupils' attendance is high. The school tracks absence closely and takes effective action to improve the overall rates of attendance for some pupils.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. Pupils are proud to take on a range of responsibilities, including being members of the school council. The pastoral team supports pupils in developing resilience and independence. Pupils have a clear understanding and acceptance of those from different backgrounds. They are aware of how to keep safe, maintain a healthy lifestyle and deal with risks outside of the school environment. They know how to stay safe online and who to talk to if they are worried about anything. Pupils feel well prepared for their transition to secondary education.

Those responsible for governance provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support. They are knowledgeable about how the school has worked to strengthen the quality of the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment information across some subjects in the wider curriculum is not always used precisely enough to strengthen pupils' understanding. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not addressed. The trust needs to check systematically what pupils know and can do when implementing the curriculum and adapt learning to ensure pupils build their knowledge well.
- For some pupils with SEND, targets are too broad. Their individual learning needs are not met well in the classroom. This slows their learning. The trust needs to ensure that pupil targets are precise and learning meets their individual needs.

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	142445
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10298047
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust board	Lisa McGaw
Headteacher	Andrew Bright
Website	www.st-marks.bournemouth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2018 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a standalone academy converter. It is part of Bringing Schools Together Ltd which is an umbrella trust working in partnership with four other schools in Bournemouth.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staffing changes in leadership roles. The current headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2021.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Salisbury. When the school had its last section 48 inspection in March 2018, it was judged to be outstanding.
- 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leads, the school's challenge partner and members of the trustee board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions with subject leaders about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to groups of staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads, checked the single central record of adults working in the school, took account of the views of staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the 141 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 97 free-text responses, and 46 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jo Walker	Ofsted Inspector
Adam Matthews	Ofsted Inspector

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