

Inspection of Sutton Courtenay Church of England Primary School

Bradstocks Way, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4DA

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Rachel Hornsey. This school is part of Ridgeway 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, Rachael Warwick, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ruth Elliot.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and nurturing school. Staff know pupils well. This helps them to feel cared for and safe. Most pupils behave responsibly in lessons because expectations are clear. Pupils know and understand the school's values of 'ready, respectful and responsible'.

Conduct around school is calm and orderly for all but a few. Staff waste no time in teaching children routines in the early years. In lessons, pupils work cooperatively. While leaders are keen for all pupils to achieve well, some aspects of the quality of education need to improve swiftly. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not precise enough across the curriculum. As a result, the school is not aware of where gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are. However, this is not the case in phonics and art. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not achieve as well as they should in key stages 1 and 2. This is because learning activities have not been adapted to meet their needs consistently.

Pupils in key stage 2 welcome the opportunity to extend their talents and interests through clubs and after-school activities. The 'star challenge' encourages Year 6 pupils to take on responsibility and develop their citizenship skills. Younger pupils enjoy contributing to the Sutton Courtenay Class Award, which teaches them vital skills of teamwork and collaboration. Older pupils relish the opportunity to serve on the student council.

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

The school's curriculum is broadly ambitious. Recent improvements to the curriculum mean that the school has identified the knowledge and skills that staff want pupils to learn. Most pupils experience a well-structured curriculum that builds over time gradually. However, staff training and development has not ensured that consistently effective teaching of the school's ambitious curriculum takes place across all subjects, apart from phonics. In key stages 1 and 2, some pupils do not learn well enough in mathematics. This is because teachers do not systematically identify what pupils know and can remember before they move on. Too many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills.

There are, however, some areas of strength. Importantly, early reading is taught consistently well. Staff ensure that all pupils develop key skills and become avid readers. Although pupils build a wide range of vocabulary, some pupils cannot always use this in the correct context. Across the school, pupils read a range of high-quality texts. Staff help pupils who fall behind with reading to catch up quickly. Poetry features in the school prominently. This helps pupils develop a love of reading widely. Pupils thrive in art. They learn about different artists, remember who inspires them and know how to apply carefully chosen techniques to their own work skilfully.

The school has identified the needs of pupils with (SEND) accurately. However, staff do not always provide appropriate support for their needs. This is not the case in the

early years. Here, staff know children's needs precisely and adapt their teaching to support them successfully.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start. Staff set high expectations, then do all they can to help children achieve them. Staff support children to practise and build their knowledge and understanding of numbers effectively. The school's focus on personal, social and emotional development is highly effective. Children enjoy learning outdoors and treasure crunching in the leaves as they learn 'What makes leaves crispy in the autumn?' This topic skilfully links learning new vocabulary with finding out about the world around them. In Nursery, a strong focus on rhymes and singing helps build confidence and important communication skills.

The provision for the wider development of pupils is strong. The personal, social, health and citizenship education curriculum is well designed. The school has thought carefully about what pupils should learn and when. Through elections to the school council, pupils learn about voting and democracy. Pastoral care is strong. Expert staff provide carefully considered support to pupils who need it. Pupils are proud that their school is inclusive. They celebrate each other's different faiths and beliefs. Pupils recognise that some of their peers need extra support. They are respectful of each other.

Staff feel well supported by the school. They enjoy working at the school and value the strong sense of togetherness that exists. Staff feel that leaders consider their workload when planning for improvement. The trust has provided extensive curriculum support for the school and helped to raise aspirations. Improvements to the quality of provision have not been rapid enough in some critical areas, for example to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve their best outcomes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not established a clear and effective approach to assessment in all subjects. This means that not all teachers check how well pupils have learned the curriculum systematically. Most teachers do not use what they know about how well pupils have learned the curriculum to inform their future teaching. The school needs to ensure that there is precise and consistent use of assessment across the school so that the intended impact of the curriculum is realised.
- The school does not make effective adaptations to learning activities for pupils with SEND across all subjects in key stages 1 and 2. This means that pupils with SEND do not make the progress they should apart from in the early years. The school needs to ensure that all teachers have the right training to support all pupils with SEND to achieve their best outcomes.

- The school does not always consistently check how well its actions to improve specific aspects of the school are working. As a result, some strategies that it is working on are not having sufficient impact. The trust needs to ensure that it monitors and evaluates the impact of improvements more precisely.

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	146941
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10288078
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth Elliot
CEO of trust	Rachael Warwick
Headteacher	Rachel Hornsey
Website	www.suttoncourtenayprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Sutton Courtenay Church of England Primary school converted to become an academy in April 2019 and joined the Ridgeway Education Trust at the same time.
- When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2017, it was judged to require improvement.
- The school operates its own breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The most recent section 48 inspection took place in November 2022. The date of the next section 48 inspection is likely to be in 2027.

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.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders of the school, the chair of the board of trustees and governors and conducted a telephone conversation with a representative of the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to them about their learning in writing and science.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, 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 a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, published information about pupils' performance and minutes of trustees' meetings.
- Inspectors spoke to a wide range of pupils and observed their behaviour in lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also took account of the responses to the staff survey and gathered the views of parents, carers, staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Linda Culling, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lorraine Greco

Ofsted Inspector

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