

# Inspection of Swaffham Bulbeck Church of England Primary School

84 High Street, Swaffham Bulbeck, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB25 0LX

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Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Helen Bartley. This school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Adrian Ball, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Jackson.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Swaffham Bulbeck Church of England Primary School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

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

The school's Christian ethos of 'Shine Brightly' underpins all the opportunities pupils experience at this school. Pupils know everyone has the chance to 'shine' in sports tournaments, productions, clubs and community projects. Pupils appreciate that they are all treated equally and fairly. They feel included in all aspects of school life.

Pupils know adults want the best for them. Pupils study a range of interesting topics, including learning about local historic figures such as Molly Rose Marshall when studying the history of flight. Their learning is also supported through trips and visitors to school, for example to deepen their understanding of Anglo-Saxons or science. They are helped to remember key knowledge through regular checks on what they have been taught.

Adults give high priority to pupils' mental well-being. Pupils know adults check in with them regularly. This makes them feel secure. Pupils are respectful to each other and develop solid friendships. They know the school rules and how to make good behaviour choices.

Through the school council, pupils help leaders improve school life, such as safely accessing the wooded area at playtimes. Many run their own lunchtime clubs and plan ways to raise money for charity. They like how adults support them to realise their ideas.

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

The school has established an engaging and broad curriculum from early years upwards. Teachers are knowledgeable and present information clearly to pupils. Pupils gain knowledge in a logically defined order, building on what they know already. Teachers also think carefully about how pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can successfully access the curriculum. Staff ensure that they act on specialist advice and offer bespoke help. As a result, pupils achieve well at this school.

In Nursery Year and Reception Year, the curriculum accommodates the learning experiences children need to be independent, to know letter sounds, and have a good awareness of early mathematical concepts. Children engage with stories, rhymes and poems to develop their language. Therefore, they are prepared well for English and mathematics lessons when they move to Year 1. Children enjoy learning about a diverse range of topics, such as Diwali and the Gunpowder Plot. However, the early years curriculum does not yet explicitly lay out all the essential knowledge children must cover to be fully ready for the wider curriculum subjects in key stage 1.

Across the school, pupils are given time to consolidate knowledge before learning something new. This prevents misconceptions. For most pupils, gaps in knowledge are quickly spotted and filled as staff regularly and robustly check pupils'

understanding. Most pupils can recall what they have learned. However, for a few pupils with significant learning gaps, their current provision is not sufficiently well adapted, so they are not achieving as well as they should.

The curriculum has been designed to allow pupils to make connections in knowledge across subjects to deepen their understanding. However, sometimes, the work given to pupils does not yet provide them with enough opportunity to show they are fully able to apply these connections and meet the ambitious curriculum aims.

Pupils enjoy reading and being read to. Reading happens daily and pupils access high-quality texts deliberately selected for their rich language. Pupils are taught to read well and so many are fluent, expressive and confident readers. Younger pupils read books appropriately matched to the sounds they know. Pupils who find reading tricky are supported effectively to catch up.

Almost all pupils learn and play well together. A few pupils need reminders to focus in lessons, yet do heed the advice of teachers. Pupils are confident that bullying is rare and would be sorted quickly. Leaders' actions have ensured that most pupils attend school regularly. Families are very appreciative of the welfare support offered by the pastoral team.

The school makes sure pupils know about keeping healthy, staying safe and how to develop respectful relationships. Pupils have a developing understanding of discrimination. They understand how to show empathy to others through charity work. They also are taught about rights and responsibilities. Collective worship and lessons provide time to reflect on the advantages of living in a democracy and the importance of helping others.

Staff are proud of working here and are committed. Working closely with their neighbouring school has had a positive impact on their well-being and workload. Staff also benefit from access, if needed, to the well-being leader.

Governors know the school well and perform the role of 'critical friend' regarding the curriculum and safeguarding. The trust also ensures that statutory governance duties are met. It provides effective challenge to leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- A few pupils with significant gaps in learning are not catching up quickly enough. These pupils need to have their targets broken down into smaller steps. Staff should check more frequently that these pupils are achieving what they are

capable of achieving. Staff need additional training to ensure that they have the confidence and skills to support these pupils most effectively.

- Sometimes, work given to pupils limits how well they can demonstrate their depth of knowledge. This means that teachers cannot fully check on how well the pupils are applying their knowledge from across subjects in the way the ambitious curriculum intends. Staff need to ensure that checks on pupils' understanding allow more opportunity for pupils to show they have grasped these curriculum connections independently and in detail.
- In the early years, some of the key knowledge children need ready for the wider curriculum in Year 1 is not stated explicitly enough in plans and covered in the provision. This means these children are not as fully prepared as they could be for all subjects in Year 1. Leaders need to ensure that this knowledge is explicitly signposted, and that staff check robustly that this knowledge is specifically covered.

## 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146469
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288564
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	92
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Helen Jackson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Bartley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://theswaffhams.demat.org.uk">theswaffhams.demat.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in September 2018 and is now part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust.
- When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- This is a Church of England School. It had its last Section 48 inspection in June 2023. The next Section 48 inspection is due within eight years of the previous one.
- The headteacher is also the headteacher of a neighbouring school and so some staff work across both schools.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## 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 the headteacher, assistant headteachers, special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, pastoral leader, teachers and support staff.
- The inspectors also met leaders from the trust's central and school improvement team, including the trust director of education and the hub director.
- The lead inspector had an online meeting with the chair of the local governing board and in person with the trust's chief executive officer.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with teachers and support staff. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector also looked at a sample of work from across the curriculum.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation, school improvement plan and governor minutes.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses gathered through Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, which included 34 free-text comments. There were 13 responses to the staff survey. 10 pupils answered the pupil survey. The inspectors spoke to several pupils from different year groups during the inspection, as well as a range of staff.

### **Inspection team**

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jess Pearce

Ofsted Inspector

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