

Inspection of Belchamp St Paul Church of England Primary School

Vicarage Road, Belchamp St Paul, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 7BP

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

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 Ana Da Piedade. This school is part of the Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Emma Wigmore, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Karen Bilner.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this encouraging school, which is in the heart of the village. They benefit from the close-knit community and family atmosphere. Pupils love using the rural location and the forest school. They care for nature and the environment. Pupils learn how to be healthy and active. They enjoy coming to school, where they develop their courage and resilience.

Pupils behave well in classes and around school. They comment on one another's work to help each other make it better. This helps them to reflect and achieve well. Pupils are recognised for their efforts as well as their achievements. They have positive attitudes to challenges and respond well to the school's high expectations. Pupils know that this is a necessary part of trying hard. In early years, children learn well through exploring and testing. Trusted adults know them well.

Pupils have opportunities to develop responsibility and to cooperate. They can be school councillors, eco-members and prefects. Older pupils enjoy playing alongside younger pupils. Pupils learn about tolerance, respect and acceptance. They understand why we need rules and laws. Pupils feel safe in school. They know how to be safe when they are online.

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

The school has put a new curriculum in place. It starts in early years and prepares children well for Year 1. The curriculum is mostly planned well. The school has rightly prioritised some subject areas, such as mathematics, phonics and early reading. In these subjects, teachers are clear about what needs to be taught and when. They check carefully to see what pupils have learned and remembered.

Other subjects are at different stages of development. In a few subjects, the school has not yet broken down the precise knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn and remember. In these subjects, the work given to pupils and teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not well defined. Consequently, pupils do not always achieve as well as they could in these subjects.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) promptly. They get the right help that they need to succeed. Expertise from the trust ensures that lessons are adapted effectively for pupils with SEND. Extra resources are given to pupils who need them. Pupils with SEND learn well alongside their peers. Most pupils with SEND make strong progress.

Reading is a strength. Pupils enjoy sharing books by a range of authors. In early years, children start learning to read well. Children use their phonics knowledge to correctly match sounds to letters. They quickly learn to apply this to breaking down words and reading sentences. Pupils build on this knowledge in Year 1. Pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds that they know. They can practise using their phonics knowledge and become confident in reading unfamiliar words.

Adults receive effective training, so they have the expertise to teach reading well. Teachers identify quickly any pupils who need extra help with reading. Pupils get support to catch up. As a result, most pupils quickly become fluent readers.

Pupils behave well. If pupils lose focus, teachers quickly bring them back to the task that they are doing. This means that little learning time is lost. Pupils are keen and enjoy their lessons. They learn to critique and advise each other respectfully. Pupils' attendance is improving. The school supports pupils and families to understand why regular attendance is important.

The trust and the school have ensured that they promote pupils' mental health. Pupils can articulate and use the values they are taught. Visitors and trips give pupils wider opportunities to learn about the world and to develop their interests. Recent examples include visits from a conservation trust and a professional artist and the chance to try skiing, sailing or climbing. Pupils talk positively about these experiences and why they enjoy them.

Leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development. They have considered ways to reduce staff workload while making improvements. The strong networks for professional training allow staff to share their knowledge and expertise.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the school has not yet broken down the knowledge and skills that pupils should learn. Consequently, pupils' next steps are not always clear. There are also inconsistencies in how these subjects are assessed. The school should ensure that, for all subjects, it sets out precisely what pupils should learn and when and ensure that teachers use assessment procedures effectively to check that pupils are learning the knowledge intended.

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	144866
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10255013
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	30
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Karen Bilner
CEO of trust	Emma Wigmore
Headteacher	Ana Da Piedade
Website	www.belchampstpaulschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher, who took up the role in January 2023.
- There are new permanent staff in place following a period of instability during the previous academic year.
- As a Church of England primary school, the school received an inspection for schools of a religious character under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in October 2017. The next section 48 inspection of its religious character will be within eight years of this date.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art and design, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, listened to pupils read, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Other aspects of the curriculum were also scrutinised to provide further evidence of the quality of education. An inspector listened to some pupils reading to staff. They also spoke to pupils about reading.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour across the school. They met with groups of pupils to seek their views of the school. They also spoke to pupils informally in class, around the school and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including curriculum plans, trust reports, minutes of meetings and school development plans.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers. They spoke with groups of parents and considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 16 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Pamela Finch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Craige Brown

Ofsted Inspector

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