

Inspection of a good school: Martock Church of England VA Primary School

Elmleigh Road, Martock, Somerset TA12 6EF

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are welcoming at this inclusive school. They have a strong understanding that everyone is different. Pupils are adamant that this understanding is the reason that bullying is so rare. Learning and break times are harmonious and collaborative. Pupils show their respect for one another by listening and responding carefully.

The school is working hard to stem the decline in outcomes for pupils. Curriculum evaluations have identified mathematics and reading as focus areas. However, actions are not sharp enough to bring about the rapid improvement required. As a consequence, too many pupils leave the school unprepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils know the three school rules; ready, respectful and safe. They are clear about the rewards and consequences of their actions. They feel that teachers generally apply the rules fairly. Even so, occasionally pupils feel less well listened to, particularly at lunchtimes when they need help to sort issues out.

Pupils enjoy exciting enrichment activities. They benefit from these because they bring classroom learning to life.

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

The school has prioritised reading to make sure that pupils have the knowledge and skills to learn across the full curriculum. Children start learning phonics as soon as they start in Reception. However, the ambition for Reception children is not high enough. A large proportion of children are well behind where they should be in phonics. The environment, particularly the outside area, does not promote curiosity. There are too few opportunities for children to practise or explore new learning. Staff in the early years do not have the

subject knowledge they need to teach phonics well, or to support children's learning in their play.

Pupils progress more quickly through the phonics curriculum in key stage 1. Here, teaching is more effective and ambitious which helps pupils to catch up. Older pupils enjoy reading. They appreciate the variety of books they can choose from the school library. They like listening to stories read to them by adults. They learn to use different skills to interpret and understand texts once they can read fluently.

The school is currently designing the wider curriculum. Planning ensures that links between subjects are clear. This enables pupils to make links in their learning across the curriculum. The vocabulary pupils need to know is well-defined and they can use this to describe what they have learned. The big ideas are set out in each subject, but the school has not identified the small steps of knowledge within these. For example, in history, the school has identified 'settlement' as a key concept they want pupils to learn. However, planning does not identify how pupils will build up a progressive understanding of this concept over time. Learning, therefore, is not always building on pupils' prior knowledge.

The delivery of the curriculum is variable across subjects and ages. The school has not clarified the teaching strategies it expects. Subject leadership does not consistently focus on improving teachers' subject knowledge or pedagogy. A high proportion of staff feel professional development is not as effective as it could be. Where this is stronger, for example in mathematics, staff know how to ensure that pupils build on the knowledge they already know. This is because teaching is accurately matched to what most pupils know and need to learn next. This is not the same for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). At times, the mathematical content is not carefully matched to their starting point. As a result, they struggle to develop a secure understanding or fluency.

Governors are committed to the school. They are diligent in their oversight of safeguarding. However, they do not have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum delivered to pupils. They are not rigorous enough in assuring themselves about the quality of education provided. As a result, the necessary improvements to the curriculum have not been tackled urgently enough.

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 have not identified the specific knowledge they want pupils to learn within subject planning. This means that pupils struggle to build on what they already know. The school must identify and sequence the key knowledge it wants pupils to learn from

Reception to Year 6 so that pupils know more, remember more and can do more across the curriculum.

- The implementation of the curriculum is stronger in some subjects than others. The school has not specified 'how' it wants the curriculum to be delivered. Staff use a range of different strategies with varying degrees of success. As a result, pupils do not learn well in all subjects. The school should rapidly improve the consistency of the implementation of the curriculum so that pupils learn well across subjects and ages, including in the early years.
- Teaching is not consistently matched or adapted to the needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, pupils with SEND do not learn key concepts well enough. Often, they are highly dependent on adults to support their learning. As a result, pupils with SEND are not developing the independence they need for future learning. The school must ensure teachers accurately match, and scaffold, learning for pupils with SEND so they build successfully on what they already know.
- Subject leaders do not develop staff's subject knowledge or set expectations for shared policy and practice well enough. This limits staff's skills and knowledge. The school should develop subject leadership to focus on developing staff expertise so that pupils learn well across the curriculum.

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 March 2018.

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	123856
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10297941
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Jackson
Headteacher	Sarah Lafferty-Jenkins
Website	www.martock.somerset.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	13 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England primary academy in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. It was last inspected under section 48 in March 2017 when it was graded outstanding.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, teaching and support staff, members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. She also had telephone conversations with the local authority and the diocese.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector listened to pupils read to an adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. In addition, she met with pupils informally and formally to hear their views.
- The inspector considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. She also took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school.

Inspection team

Angela Folland, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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