

Inspection of a good school: St Nicholas Church School

Kilmersdon Road, Radstock, Somerset BA3 3QH

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 May 2024

Outcome

St Nicholas Church School continues to be a good school.

The co-headteachers of this school are William Low, Jenni Simmons and Kirsty Biss. This school is part of Bath and Wells Diocesan Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Nikki Edwards, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Oliver Cofler. There is also an executive headteacher, Joe Beament, who is responsible for this school and three others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Inclusivity is a golden thread that runs through St Nicholas Church School. Pupils say that everyone is welcome at their school. Parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View reflect this. Pupils demonstrate the school values in their day-to-day interactions with each other and adults. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Pupils know that trusted adults will help them if they have a worry or concern. Pupils feel safe.

The school has high expectations of all pupils. This begins in Reception Year, where routines are well established. Children flourish in the well-organised classroom and outdoor area. They are inquisitive and keen to learn. Pupils, including those in the resource base, have positive attitudes to learning and are eager to share their ideas. As a result, classrooms are purposeful, and pupils learn without disruption.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities they get to develop their interests and talents. These include chess club, basketball club and singing in the school choir. Pupils make a positive contribution to their community through the leadership roles the school provides. They are proud to be house captains and pupil leaders. Pupils enjoy organising whole-school events, such as 'run for reading' to fundraise for new reading books. All of this helps pupils to understand the importance of being a responsible citizen.

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

The school is aspirational for all pupils. They ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully understood. Adults support pupils

with SEND well. Adaptations to learning, as well as providing a bespoke learning offer where necessary, supports pupils to thrive and progress well through the intended curriculum.

The recent changes to the leadership structure have brought momentum to the improvements in the curriculum design. The school has a clear vision for what they want pupils to learn. The curriculum is carefully sequenced and the key knowledge the school wants pupils to remember is set out in most subjects. Some subjects have had further time to embed. In these subjects, pupils learn and remember more over time. In mathematics, Reception Year children learn to understand number composition. In key stage one, there is a strong focus on developing number fluency so that older pupils can apply this knowledge to more complex problems, such as converting fractions to percentages. However, in some wider curriculum subjects, the precise knowledge the school wants pupils to learn is not yet as clear as in other subjects. In these subjects, pupils have gaps in what they know. For example, in geography, older pupils can recall their current learning on how mountains form but struggle to recall previous learning about continents and oceans.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. As soon as children start in Reception Year, they learn to read. The strong focus on listening to stories is integral within the curriculum. Staff are experts in the teaching of reading. They quickly identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Swift support helps pupils to catch up. Pupils in the early stages of reading have books that match the sounds they know. This helps them to develop confidence and read with fluency. Older pupils enjoy reading. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and stories. They are very excited about the new library and wide range of books that are available.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They listen well to one another and adults. They are keen to please and make good decisions. In and around the school, there is a sense of calm and order. This includes in the dining hall, where pupils enjoy eating together and socialising. Adults support pupils effectively to manage their behaviour. When pupils dysregulate, adults provide the necessary support which helps pupils to reintegrate back into their classrooms and focus on learning.

The personal social and health education (PSHE) curriculum supports pupils to understand the importance of consent and personal space. Pupils talk with maturity about relationships, including friendships. They describe important characteristics of a good friend, including trust, respect and care. Pupils learn about other cultures from their peers. They value inclusion and know that everyone is equal. The PSHE and computing curriculum supports pupils to learn how to keep safe, including when using online. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the time they have to reflect. They enjoy listening to the 'chimes' in the PSHE lessons. All of this supports pupils' mental health and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some wider curriculum subjects, the key knowledge the school wants pupils to learn is not clearly identified. As a result, pupils have gaps in what they know and remember. The trust needs to ensure that the key knowledge is precisely defined and then check that pupils have learned the intended 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 predecessor school, St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, to be good in February 2019.

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

Unique reference number	148516
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10322330
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	195
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Oliver Cofler
Headteacher	Joe Beament (executive headteacher) William Low (co-head of school) Kirsty Biss (co-head of school) Jenni Simmons (co-head of school)
Website	www.stnicholasprimaryradstock.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Academies Trust.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The last section 48 inspection of the school was carried out in January 2020. The school was judged to be good overall.
- St Nicholas Church school converted to become an academy school in 2021. When its predecessor school, St Nicholas Church of England School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

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 the school and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the co-headteachers, special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, teaching and support staff, representatives from the trust board and central team from the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. 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.
- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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 from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. In addition, she met with pupils, formally and informally, to hear their views.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. Inspectors also took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Wendy D'Arcy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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