

Inspection of Bonsall C of E (A) Primary School

Church Street, Bonsall, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2AE

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 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

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils love coming to school and arrive on time. Pupils of all ages get on well with each other. They like sitting with their 'family' to share lunch and playing together outside. The oldest pupils organise activities for their younger peers to enjoy. Strong relationships help pupils feel included and well looked after.

Staff model good behaviour and most pupils follow their example. Pupils know they should always try their best. They like being rewarded with 'WOW whales' when they do a good job. Pupils usually settle well to their learning, although they occasionally get distracted from the task in hand. They understand that they will lose a behaviour point if they misbehave.

Pupils make a significant contribution to the local community. Their pictures are displayed as part of the local arts trail. They decorate the porch at the nearby church to mark Remembrance Day. Pupils in Year 6 share experiences with local elderly residents and write articles for the village magazine. These activities show pupils how their actions can make a positive difference.

A longstanding link with a school in London gives pupils a valuable opportunity to learn about other people's lives and experiences and how this compares to their own.

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

The curriculum in most subjects is carefully thought out. Children in the early years follow a well-planned programme. There are plenty of opportunities for them to develop their numeracy and literacy skills. They like to be creative, for instance by producing artwork in different styles, and they enjoy learning in the well-resourced outdoor environment. Close communication with parents and carers allows the school to share examples of children's achievements. Working alongside their older peers in key stage 1 prepares children well for Year 1.

Children start learning to read as soon as they join the school. Phonics is taught consistently well by skilled staff. Pupils recall the sounds they know already and practise recognising new ones. Their knowledge of phonics is tracked closely so that staff can quickly plug any gaps. Pupils read suitable books and can decipher increasingly difficult words. They make effective use of their phonic knowledge to help them write. Their handwriting gets better with practice, and they present their work well.

The school's recent focus on improving reading is having a positive impact. A new English curriculum is supported by books that help to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils explore the meaning of these texts and use them as a stimulus to improve the quality and complexity of their own writing. Teachers model reading well so that pupils improve their own reading fluency and expression. Pupils appreciate the increased range of books from which they can choose to read independently. While

the quality of education in school is currently good, this was not reflected in its published outcomes for reading and writing at key stage 2, in 2023.

The mathematics curriculum is devised carefully and implemented consistently. This helps pupils become fluent mathematicians. In many other subjects, it is clear what pupils need to learn and when. Teachers' strong subject knowledge and targeted questions help pupils explore their ideas and deepen their understanding. For example, pupils are keen to share their learning about local history. Work to improve the curriculum in other subjects is well on the way to being completed. However, in a few subjects, the progression of knowledge and skills between topics is not clear enough. The curriculum in some subjects is not always sufficiently ambitious.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get close support. Careful adaptations help most of these pupils access the same learning as their peers. Teachers track the progress of pupils with SEND carefully in case they need extra help.

Pupils are taught how to behave well. Any incidents of poor behaviour are tracked closely. Pupils get extra help, if necessary, to help them manage their emotions and feelings. The school has clear systems in place to monitor attendance. Strategies to support pupils who struggle to attend well have had a positive impact.

Pupils benefit from a rich programme of personal development. They learn how to be resilient and work as part of a team. Collective worship provides them with opportunities to reflect. Pupils take part in weekly sports activities and know how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They enjoy trips to museums, historical sites and places of worship, as well as visits to the pantomime.

In this small school, staff work together closely and look after each other. Governors play a key role supporting the school. They often provide practical help and they pay close attention to staff well-being. However, their oversight of some aspects of the school lacks rigour. Visits by the local authority help the school identify what is improving and what needs to be the next focus for development.

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 foundation subjects, the progression of knowledge and skills between topics is not sufficiently clear. In these subjects, pupils cannot always make links between new information they learn and what has gone before. The school needs to make sure that, in each foundation subject, the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn is defined clearly and builds on what pupils already know.

- Teachers do not always consider the needs of pupils carefully enough when planning learning, particularly in key stage 2. For some pupils in these classes, the work is sometimes not sufficiently demanding. The school should make sure that the curriculum is appropriately ambitious for all pupils.
- Governors are committed to their roles. However, their oversight of the provision is not always strategic enough. Their hands-on approach means that they sometimes miss the bigger picture. The school needs to ensure that governors understand their role in holding the school closely to account for its work.

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	112888
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10347378
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	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louise Stevenson
Headteacher	Rebecca Smart
Website	www.bonsall.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up the role in September 2020. The chair of governors was appointed in October 2023.
- The number of pupils on the school's roll has decreased since the previous inspection.
- The school offers a breakfast and an after-school club that are both run by school staff and overseen by the governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school works in partnership with a group of schools in the Derbyshire Dales.
- A section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in October 2023.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, spoke with teachers and pupils, looked at samples of pupils' work and visited lessons. An inspector heard some pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also considered the curriculums in a wider range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from different year groups. They spoke with pupils informally and observed the behaviour of pupils during social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, parents 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 reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information about governance and reports of visits by the local authority. Inspectors also considered information about pupils' attendance and behaviour, as well as the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Keay

Ofsted Inspector

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