

Inspection of St Andrew's Bulmer Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road, Bulmer, Sudbury, Essex CO10 7EH

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
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?

Pupils relish coming to St Andrew's Bulmer Primary School. The school ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), participate in a wide range of activities. Pupils enjoy an extensive, carefully considered range of trips, including visits to castles and a mosque. They interact with visitors, such as from a planetarium. These activities spark their curiosity for learning about the world around them. There are several well-attended clubs, such as sports, construction and story making, which broaden pupil' interests.

Pupils get on very well with each other in school. They play happily together. Pupils say that this is a welcoming place for everyone. They treat each other, and adults, kindly. Older pupils develop their confidence when they help lead activities at play times and 'buddy' children in Reception.

The school has high expectations of how well pupils can do. There is much effective and engaging teaching. As a result, most pupils achieve well.

Pupils feel safe. They know that if they need support, they will receive it. The school teaches pupils about topics such as water safety and healthy relationships.

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

The school identifies the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. Once pupils have grasped what they need to know, they move onto new learning. Activities at the start of lessons recap what pupils have previously learned. This helps pupils know and remember more.

Teachers typically have confident subject knowledge. They use this to introduce new learning in clear and engaging ways. Teachers often check what pupils know carefully. They use this to adjust the curriculum to close gaps in pupils' knowledge and address any misconceptions. Sometimes, however, teachers do not check pupils' knowledge well enough in lessons. When this happens, they do not spot gaps and errors in pupils' learning. Some pupils do not, therefore, always secure the knowledge that they should.

The school promotes a love of reading. Pupils read widely and often. The school's new phonics scheme is well planned and increasingly well taught. Books are carefully chosen so that they match letters, words, and sounds that the pupils learn. Books are matched to pupils' ability to read. The school rigorously checks how well pupils can read, and how often they do so. When pupils need additional help with their reading, they receive it. This helps them become more fluent, accurate readers who can access the curriculum.

Children in Reception get a solid foundation for future learning. They become confident in using numbers. Stories and rhymes help children learn about numbers. Children enjoy the wide range of activities in the bright, cheerful environment. They enjoy learning from, and with, Year 1. Staff widen children's vocabulary when they ask questions about their learning and play. Children learn about how people are different but equal.

Staff are passionate about providing a high-quality education for pupils with SEND. They identify pupils' needs effectively. Staff adapt tasks carefully. They work closely with parents. This ensures that pupils' needs are met. As a result, pupils with SEND enjoy school and achieve well.

Pupils behave well here. Most pupils focus very well on their learning. They are enthusiastic and respond well to high-quality teaching. If pupils do not make appropriate choices about how to behave, the school helps pupils understand their mistakes, so they can improve their behaviour. The school works closely with families to help pupils come into school every day. The school is a happy place to be. Pupils therefore attend well.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. Pupils follow a comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. They learn how to care for their own physical health and mental well-being. Pupils learn about how to be a good citizen. They look out for each other. Pupils develop their confidence and widen their interests when they participate in collective worship and sports competitions with other schools in the federation. The school is working to develop further opportunities for pupil leadership.

The school has an inclusive vision for the school. This is well understood by everyone here. The school, including governors, has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and how it can be further developed. The school effectively uses staff who work across the federation to build up teachers' knowledge and support them with their workload. Consequently, staff enjoy working here. Parents and carers greatly value the support and communication they receive from the school.

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 has not yet ensured that all staff check pupils' knowledge and understanding well enough. This means that teachers do not always identify gaps in all pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that all staff check pupils' knowledge carefully. They should use these checks to adjust the curriculum to close any gaps in pupils' knowledge and address any misconceptions.

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	115067
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10287088
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Penny Doe
Headteacher	Jinnie Nichols
Website	standrews.chorusschools.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Andrew's Bulmer Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a small, rural primary school. Pupils are currently taught in mixed-age classes in Reception and Year 1, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- The school is part of the Chorus Federation with two other local primary schools. The schools have a single local governing body. They share an executive headteacher, executive deputy headteacher and other senior and middle leaders.
- The school is a member of the Diocese of Chelmsford. The school received its most recent Section 48 inspection in January 2023, and it will receive its next inspection within five years of that date.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders from the school and the Chorus Federation.
- The lead inspector spoke to the local authority's school effectiveness partner and an advisor from the Diocese of Chelmsford.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in 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 scrutinised a range of records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector considered the five responses and four free-text responses received during the inspection to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 11 responses to the pupil survey. They also spoke to parents.

Inspection team

Steve Woodley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

John Crane

Ofsted Inspector

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