

Inspection of Backwell Church of England Junior School

Church Lane, Backwell, Bristol, North Somerset BS48 3JJ

Inspection dates:	12 and 13 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2025

Ofsted has not previously inspected Backwell Church of England Junior School under section 5 of the Education Act 2025. However, Ofsted previously judged Backwell Church of England Junior School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as Backwell Church of England Junior School as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

The headteacher of this school is Nick Webster. The school is part of the Lighthouse Schools Partnership Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Gary Lewis, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Adele Haysom.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school and attend well. They are proud to be in one of the four 'federation houses'. This added dimension to school life enables pupils to work in teams and gain rewards for their positive work ethic and behaviour.

The school has high expectations of pupils. Pupils strive to do their best. As a result, they become confident in taking risks when learning is hard. Pupils learn a lot and are well prepared for their next stage of education. In lessons, pupils behave well. Staff provide caring support. Everyone is treated as an individual.

There is a strong 'family feel'. Pupils of all ages play well together at social times. There are many opportunities to lead, for example, as a science ambassadors. Many pupils learn a musical instrument. Sport is for all.

Enrichment activities strengthen the curriculum. For example, pupils serve the community through charity events and fundraising. A unique feature is the 'Easter creative arts concert'. This celebrates pupils' talents and interests. Other activities, such as swimming galas, a residential visit and school workshops, broaden pupils' experiences well. There are a range of clubs, such as choir, library club and sports.

Almost every parent or carer would recommend the school to another parent.

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

The trust and leaders identify the school's strengths and aspects that need refinement accurately. The well-established governing body holds the school to account for ensuring that the quality of education is continually improving. Staff have strong subject knowledge in the subjects they teach. By the time pupils leave the school, they achieve exceptionally well in some subjects. For example, pupils become avid readers and they articulate their understanding of scientific knowledge particularly well.

The school's work to make changes to the English and mathematics curriculums is proving successful. The teaching of phonics ensures that pupils at an early stage of reading increase their reading accuracy. A whole-school approach to pupils applying phonics to spell accurately is paying off. Pupils become capable mathematicians. They tackle complex mathematical problems with confidence. Staff routinely check what pupils know and understand. They address any misconceptions that pupils have by revisiting any necessary knowledge successfully.

The wider curriculum subjects set out clearly what pupils will learn and when they will learn it. Staff follow these curriculums year on year. Notably, the school's work to increase the depth of subject content pupils will learn in a few subjects is still recent. As a result, in a few subjects a minority of pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding or they are not moved on in their learning when they are ready.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Typically, staff provide effective pastoral and academic support. Many staff are proficient in using a variety of classroom strategies, such as visual schedules and structured routines to scaffold teaching. This ensures that these pupils access the full curriculum successfully.

Pupils with the most complex needs receive bespoke curriculums. This ensures that over time these pupils progress through the curriculum well. However, there are occasions when the school is not adept at making important changes to teaching and the curriculum to directly address all aspects of pupils' individualised targets. This means that sometimes a small number of these pupils do not readily practise the most essential knowledge they need to learn next.

Pupils typically follow the school's behaviour policy well. They are respectful when debating important issues. Pupils listen intently to each other and show high levels of support and care for one another.

The curriculum to develop pupils' character is comprehensive. It teaches pupils not to discriminate. Pupils learn to be respectful of the beliefs of others. They know the importance of keeping a healthy diet and what constitutes a healthy friendship and relationship.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective, but some minor improvements are required. There have been inconsistencies in the school's practice and record-keeping. When on site, inspectors assured themselves that the school completed any outstanding actions and that records were complete. The trust ensures that staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training. This ensures staff understand what action to take should they be concerned that a pupil may be at risk of harm or has been harmed. The school works with external agencies when necessary. The curriculum is effective in making sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not have detailed enough oversight of some important aspects of its work. There have been occasions when the school has not followed the trust's agreed procedures relating to safeguarding practice, record-keeping and implementing bespoke curriculums for pupils with the most complex needs. The trust must ensure, and assure itself, that necessary improvements are put into place so that school and trust policies are implemented promptly, securely and consistently.
- The school's work to refine a few subject curriculums is not complete. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge in a few subjects or are not moved on in their learning when they are ready. The trust must ensure that the school implements its curriculum

consistently well so that pupils retain the depth of knowledge they should and make strong progress through the curriculum in all subjects.

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	145265
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10344808
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adele Haysom
CEO of the trust	Gary Lewis
Headteacher	Nick Webster
Website	www.backwellfederation.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Backwell Junior school joined The Lighthouse Schools Partnership in February 2018.
- The school is federated with West Leigh Infant School. The headteacher is the executive headteacher across the federation.
- The school uses two unregistered settings for alternative provision.

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 evaluation 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: English, including reading, mathematics and physical education. 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.
- In addition, an inspector reviewed the impact of some other subject curriculums.
- The lead inspector met with trust leaders, including trustees, the chief executive officer and director of education. She also met with four members of the local governing board and a representative of the North Somerset local authority’s SEND commissioning team.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and other staff.
- Inspectors met with pupils to talk about their experience of school life. They visited tutor time and observed breaktimes, the start of the school day and transition times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted’s surveys for school staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Claire Baillie

Ofsted Inspector

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