

# Inspection of Bodiam Church of England Primary School

Castle Road, Bodiam, Robertsbridge, East Sussex TN32 5UH

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Inspection dates:	8 and 9 July 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This small school is welcoming, caring and nurturing. It is a happy place to be, where everyone is valued. Pupils, parents, carers and staff speak with warmth and positivity about being part of the school's community. Pupils are proud of their school and live up to the school values of compassion, friendship, tolerance and aspiration. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong and supportive. Pupils appreciate this, with one pupil noting that 'Teachers really respect us. They always listen and help us.'

The school is aspirational for pupils. Expectations are high, and pupils strive to meet these. Classrooms are calm and focused. Pupils are motivated. They are keen to share their ideas and understanding with their teachers and each other. Pupils achieve well and are ready for each new next stage in their education.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Around the school, pupils are courteous and respectful. The school's expectations and routines are firmly embedded. They expect every pupil to try their hardest and behave well. Pupils rise to the school's high expectations. Pupils enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities, such as members of the school council. Older pupils are proud to help the younger ones in the dinner hall and as playtime buddies.

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

The school has developed and refined its curriculum so that it successfully meets the needs of pupils. It is engaging and ambitious. Important knowledge and skills have been mapped out from Reception to the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well through curriculum adjustments and targeted adult support. This helps pupils with SEND learn successfully alongside their peers.

The school has thought carefully about the curriculum structure to ensure that pupils in the same class, but different year groups, are not disadvantaged. This enables pupils to build essential knowledge and skills over time. The development of pupils' language is prioritised. In all subjects the school has identified the most important vocabulary that pupils need to know and remember. This helps pupils to talk about their learning and explain their understanding clearly and concisely.

Children in Reception benefit from meaningful learning experiences. They maintain concentration well while they play and learn together. Staff are knowledgeable about what they teach in all areas. They encourage children to explore new learning in the indoor and outdoor provision. Children enthusiastically investigate, problem-solve and take managed risks. Children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1 and beyond.

The school prioritises reading. Staff skilfully implement the phonics curriculum. They routinely check what pupils understand and provide extra support if pupils need help to keep up. This enables pupils to build their understanding securely. Pupils regularly practise reading. Most pupils read books that include the sounds that they know well. However, occasionally books do not connect closely enough to the phonics that pupils

learn in lessons. This means that some pupils cannot fully apply their learning to develop fluency in their reading.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are highly respectful towards each other and staff. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils are motivated to learn. They are committed to their education and apply themselves to tasks set with determination and resilience. Pupils know the importance of attending school regularly and arriving on time. The school works effectively with parents to build relationships and address barriers to attendance. Robust procedures are followed if pupils are absent. This work is having a positive impact.

Through the school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum, pupils develop an understanding of the world beyond their small village school. This helps them to understand the lives of others and how they may differ to their own. Pupils develop an understanding of healthy relationships and learn how to keep themselves safe. They know that it is important to maintain positive physical and mental health. Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values and recognise how these link to their own school values.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders provide staff with high-quality, professional development. They are considerate for their workload and well-being. As a result, staff enjoy working at the school and are proud to be part of the school team. They appreciate the support given to them by leaders. Governors know the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They offer effective support and challenge to school leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- A small number of pupils are not consistently reading books that include the phonics knowledge they have been taught and need to practise. As a result, these pupils are not learning to read as well as they could. The school should ensure that the books that pupils read precisely match the sounds they are learning, so that all pupils are supported to become fluent readers.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114529
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341337
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	78
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Beverley Waldis and Louise Reader (Co-Chairs of Governors)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cherane Marshall
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bodiamceschool.co.uk">www.bodiamceschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 September 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Bodiam Primary School is a voluntary-aided school in the Diocese of Chichester. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in November 2024.
- There is a new headteacher in post since the previous inspection.

## 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 early years 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued 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 history. 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.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum and spoke to pupils. Inspectors sampled pupils' writing.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss aspects of the school's work, including behaviour, attendance, personal development and provision for pupils with SEND.
- An inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors considered pupils' views during meetings with them and talked to pupils when visiting lessons and at other times of day, such as lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector spoke with some parents on the morning of the first day of the inspection.
- Staff's views were considered during discussions with them and through their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- 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.

## **Inspection team**

Luisa Gould, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Adnan Ahmet

Ofsted Inspector

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