

Inspection of Ash Church of England Primary School

Main Street, Ash, Martock, Somerset TA12 6NS

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils come to school happy and eager to learn. The school has high expectations of their achievement. Pupils live up to these expectations. They talk enthusiastically about the subjects they study, such as about electricity in science and how different religions celebrate new year.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and friendly. They learn how to demonstrate gratitude to others, such as by writing 'thank you notes' which are shared in assemblies. Pupils develop an understanding of teamwork by earning reward 'buttons' for their class. Pupils and staff enjoy warm, respectful relationships with each other.

Pupils are active contributors to the school and wider community. They take on roles, such as becoming 'buddies' for younger pupils, librarians or 'worship leaders.' Pupils make posters to promote litter-picking and traffic safety in the local village. They help take care of their local community woodland. These projects help pupils to learn about civic duty.

Pupils understand the importance of appreciating and celebrating difference in others. They learn about spirituality and how people of different faiths pray, for example. The school hymn, 'all are welcome,' has been chosen to reflect the school's inclusive philosophy. Pupils know that any form of prejudice should be challenged.

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

Pupils follow an ambitious curriculum. In most subjects, the school plans for and teaches the most important knowledge and skills that pupils need to know. As a result, pupils build their knowledge in these subjects cumulatively. For example, in the Reception Year, pupils develop a secure understanding of number which prepares them to learn more complex mathematical concepts later.

However, in some subjects, pupils do not build the same depth of understanding. This is because the school has not identified precisely enough what pupils should learn and when. There are also fewer opportunities for pupils' personal development in these subjects. This hinders pupils from gaining wider knowledge and experiences.

Teachers have the subject knowledge they need to present new information clearly. This typically helps pupils to remember it. In geography, for example, pupils recall facts about different countries and climates well. In the Reception Year, teaching has a sharp focus on developing children's communication and language. This prepares children well for learning in key stage 1.

The school has designed and implemented a successful early reading curriculum. Pupils read books that are matched carefully to sounds they are learning. This builds pupils' reading fluency and confidence. The school celebrates 'admired authors' and

selects thoughtfully the books that staff read to pupils. The youngest pupils get to know familiar stories well. Older pupils read avidly.

In most subjects, the school uses assessment effectively to check what pupils have learned. Subsequent teaching uses this information to correct misconceptions and remedy gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. However, where the curriculum is less precisely defined, the school does not identify where gaps in pupils' understanding lie.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities early and accurately. Teaching is adapted successfully to meet these pupils' needs. As a result, they learn the curriculum confidently.

The school has a calm and orderly atmosphere. Pupils are safe and comfortable sharing their worries with members of staff. Staff are particularly attentive to the needs of the youngest children in the Nursery. In the Reception year, children learn routines to take care of themselves. Pupils, of all ages, arrive on time and attend well. The school takes timely action to support any pupil whose absence is a concern.

Pupils benefit from an appropriate personal and social education programme. They know how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy and have an understanding of healthy relationships, for example. The school adapts the curriculum according to topical issues that arise. It ensures that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe from current risks, including when online.

Pupils learn about the rule of law, democracy and representation. Older pupils participated in a 'mock trial,' for instance. Pupils vote for their school councillors who provide a voice for others in the school.

The school offers some activities and clubs to develop pupils' talents and interests. For example, some pupils learn the recorder or ukulele, whilst others attend Spanish or book club. However, there is not consistently strong take-up of these, particularly by disadvantaged pupils.

Governors provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. They ensure that resources are well managed and statutory requirements are fulfilled. School leaders use professional development successfully to continually improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

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 subjects, leaders are still working on identifying the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn and by when. This means that pupils do not gain the same depth of understanding as they do in other subjects. Leaders should ensure that they identify the key knowledge that pupils need to learn in all subjects.
- The school's curriculum and wider offer does not always contribute strongly to some pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils do not consistently benefit from opportunities to develop and stretch their talents, interests and wider knowledge. The school should ensure that the curriculum and extra-curricular activities provide wider development for all pupils.

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	123814
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10297937
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs of governing body	Jane Billington and Georgina Griffiths
Headteacher	Rebecca Bennett
Website	www.ashprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 September 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England School in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. It received its last section 48 inspection in July 2017.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school has a nursery that accepts two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

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 second inspection the school has 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 geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with

subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with senior staff about the other subject curriculums and support for disadvantaged pupils and met members of the governing body.

- 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.

Inspection team

James Oldham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tom Page

Ofsted Inspector

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