

Inspection of Oakhill Church School

Oakhill, Radstock, Somerset BA3 5AQ

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of this school is Jude Clements. This school is part of Bath and Wells Multi Academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Nikki Edwards, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Oliver Cofler.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is emerging from an unsettled time. Significant changes to leadership and staffing arrangements mean that leaders' expectations of what pupils can achieve have not been consistently high. Until recently, the curriculum has not been well planned. Therefore, pupils have gaps in their knowledge across a wide range of subjects. Despite the school's strong aspirational vision, pupils do not receive a good quality of education.

Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Pupils are safe, and staff care about their well-being. Pupils know that, if they have any worries or concerns, staff will help them to sort these out. Many pupils recognise that behaviour and attitudes have improved markedly. Nonetheless, some pupils do not have positive attitudes to their learning, which causes disruption to others.

Pupils understand the importance of treating everyone fairly. Pupils take on positions of leadership and responsibility. For example, older pupils are 'buddies' to younger children and help them at playtime. However, wider opportunities for pupils to extend their talents and interests are limited.

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

The school has begun to introduce a revised curriculum that sets out the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn in all subjects. While some pupils now experience a better grounding in some subjects, this work is in its infancy. Staff do not have the subject knowledge they need to meet the needs of pupils. Therefore, the curriculum is not taught in a way that supports some pupils to build their subject knowledge over time. This, coupled with significant staffing challenges, has hampered how effectively this new curriculum has been put in place.

Children learn to read as soon as they start at school. Books match the sounds they know. However, not all staff have sufficient training to provide effective support. This means that pupils do not develop the knowledge and skills they need to read confidently. Once pupils have learned to read, there are opportunities for them to read for pleasure. Older pupils speak positively about their favourite authors and the books they have read. They enjoy listening to shared class reading books.

Children engage well with their learning in the well-resourced 'Roots' nursery provision. Children share books and join in with songs and rhymes. Staff know children very well and support children to develop new skills. However, children in Nursery and in Reception Year do not learn well enough in all the areas important for their development. As such, they are not well prepared for Year 1.

The school works with external agencies to provide support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has been particularly successful in meeting pupils' emotional and social needs. However, the curriculum is not taught in a way that supports pupils to develop their subject knowledge.

The school's behaviour policy, developed in partnership with the trust, parents and pupils, centres around the expectation that pupils 'be ready, be responsible, be respectful.' This has had some impact on improving the way in which pupils behave. Pupils understand why these rules are important, and strategies have been implemented to help pupils adhere to these rules. For example, pupils use the 'Palm room' for reflection. However, there is more work to do to ensure that behaviour expectations are understood by all pupils and that these are insisted on by all staff.

Pupils learn about cultures and religions that differ from their own. For example, pupils visit places of worship and learn from visitors to the school. However, pupils do not develop an age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of the protected characteristics and why these are important for life in modern Britain.

The trust, the local governing committee and the school have identified accurately what needs to improve. The trust and local governors have the necessary expertise to support the school to remedy the areas that require improvement. These actions have begun to have some positive impact on pupils' experiences.

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, the design of the curriculum is at an early stage. Therefore, it does not support pupils to build confidently on what they already know or prepare for what comes next. The school and the trust need to ensure that the way in which the curriculum is organised supports pupils to build their subject knowledge securely.
- Staff do not teach the reading curriculum effectively. This means that some pupils do not develop the knowledge and skills they need to read well. Such pupils do not receive the support they need to catch up when they fall behind. The school and the trust need to ensure that the reading curriculum supports all pupils to read confidently and fluently.
- Staff do not have the subject knowledge to teach the curriculum in a way that supports pupils to build a depth of knowledge. This hinders the learning of some pupils. The trust needs to ensure that all staff have the expertise to teach the curriculum in a way that supports all pupils to learn successfully.

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	141800
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10288204
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	122
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Oliver Cofler
CEO of trust	Nikki Edwards
Headteacher	Jude Clements
Website	www.oakhillchurchschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is designated as having a religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in July 2022.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school is part of the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust.
- The school includes provision for two- and three-year-old children.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and took that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, subject leaders, those responsible for governance, trust leaders, those responsible for safeguarding and other leaders.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. The inspectors held discussions with teachers, pupils and subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons and reviewed pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector 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.
- The inspectors listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The lead inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. She also reviewed the responses to the online pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Liz Geller, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Neil Lankester

Ofsted Inspector

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