

Bishops Lydeard Church School

Mount Street, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton, Somerset TA4 3AN

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils make enough progress from their widely varying starting points. Governors have not acted swiftly enough in holding leaders to account for low standards.
- Senior leaders do not provide middle leaders with sufficient time to be able to improve teaching across the curriculum and bring about change effectively.
- Teachers' expectations of children in the early years are not high enough. The outdoor area in the early years does not provide adequate provision for children across the different areas of learning.
- For the past two years, absence and persistent absence rates have been above national averages.
- Communication with parents and carers is not fully effective, particularly when addressing parental concerns.
- Teachers do not use assessment information precisely enough. Too often, work is matched poorly to pupils' needs. In mathematics and writing, work is regularly too easy, particularly for the middle-ability and most-able pupils. Teachers do not insist that pupils use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling in their writing.
- Some pupils are not supported well enough to practise their reading. Adults do not assist pupils to choose reading books that match their ability.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive. There is low-level disruption in some classrooms.
- Safeguarding is effective, and pupils feel safe in school. However, leaders' checks require a greater degree of thoroughness to go beyond compliance.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher's strong leadership has already brought about improvement to the school. Parents recognise and value the changes made by the interim headteacher.
- Leaders strongly promote pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development through the school's values.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, by:
 - supporting middle leaders to check on and influence improvements in teaching
 - making sure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessments is consistently strong
 - adding additional rigour to the administration and recording of pupils' safeguarding information
 - strengthening systems of communicating with parents, so that parents' concerns are addressed in a timely fashion.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure teachers:
 - use assessment information about what pupils can already do to adjust work with greater accuracy, so that pupils are sufficiently challenged, particularly for middle-ability and most-able pupils
 - assist pupils to select reading books that are carefully matched to their ability
 - address misconceptions in spelling and punctuation which cause pupils' writing to fall below the standards expected for their age.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and well-being of pupils, by:
 - ensuring that staff make consistent use of the school's behaviour systems to eliminate incidents of low-level disruption
 - improving attendance, so that it is at least in line with the national average, including for pupils who are persistently absent.
- Improve the effectiveness of the early years by:
 - making sure teaching meets children's needs more precisely and challenges them in all areas of learning
 - improving the outside space so that children can flourish in their development of key skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has been through a period of staffing turbulence and transition. The recently appointed interim headteacher has taken effective action to bring about stability and positive change. Her precise understanding of the school's strengths and weakness is accurate. As a result of the headteacher's swift actions, there are clear signs of improvement across the school. However, teaching is not yet securely good.
- Leaders' plans accurately identify the areas in which the school needs to improve. The impact of this work can be seen in leaders' evaluations of teaching. However, some teachers do not respond swiftly enough to use this information to improve. As a result, pupils' progress is hindered.
- Middle and senior leaders are benefiting from a range of professional development opportunities that develop the skills they need to lead effectively. These include using national leaders of education from within Bath and Wells Diocesan trust. While a good start has been made, middle leaders are not yet evaluating the impact of their work to drive forward school improvement.
- A large proportion of parents who spoke with inspectors, or responded to the online questionnaire, are happy with the school. They recognise that the significant turbulence in leadership has been challenging. Parents are pleased with the improvements they are seeing under the leadership of the interim headteacher. However, several parents highlighted that the trust needed to improve its communication with them.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development effectively. The school's core values of 'respect, endurance and friendship' permeate the school. These values are used well in classrooms and collective worship to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils demonstrated to inspectors that they understand these values and why they are important in society. For example, pupils take part in an initiative known as the 'Archie Project', where they meet and read or play games with members of the local community who have dementia.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils benefit from the extra funding provided for them. Leaders monitor closely the impact of the funding and make swift adjustments when it is not having the desired impact. As a result, most disadvantaged pupils across the school achieve well.
- The curriculum has been refined with a topic-based approach to ensure that pupils improve their understanding across a wider range of subjects. The school's approach now provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils report that they enjoy the curriculum, particularly the educational visits that underpin their learning. An example of this was when pupils in Year 5 and 6 visited the Quantock Hills to develop their understanding of the local area and map work in geography. Displays around the school reflect the many opportunities pupils have to develop their understanding of British heritage and culture. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have used the additional funding for physical education (PE) and sport to

improve the quality of PE teaching in the school. Specialist coaches work alongside teachers to develop their knowledge. The school has had recent local success in football and netball. Pupils speak highly of the extra-curricular sporting opportunities on offer, such as 'skate surfing'. Leaders' plans for 2018 will provide children from the early years with an improved outside environment to support their physical development.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have not challenged leaders sufficiently. They have not ensured that achievement is high enough, particularly across key stage 2.
- Minutes of meetings show that governors meet regularly and challenge leaders about different aspects of the school. However, some of their questions do not probe deeply enough, nor are they followed up to a tangible conclusion.
- Following the resignation of the previous post-holder, governors, with support from the trust, acted swiftly in appointing the interim headteacher. Governors' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is precise. They acknowledge that more work is needed to improve the school. Governors have high ambitions for the school and share a determination, alongside the trust board, to achieve this.
- Governors keep themselves up to date with safeguarding training, including safer recruitment.
- Governors have a secure understanding of how additional funding is spent and the impact this has on pupil outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The interim headteacher has provided all staff with the appropriate training to safeguard pupils. Staff have received further training to develop their understanding of specific forms of abuse, including child sexual exploitation, the 'Prevent' duty and female genital mutilation. However, more needs to be done to ensure that the safeguarding culture is strong, and goes beyond compliance. For example, a few staff who have read the recently updated documentation are still unclear about their responsibilities to keep children safe.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's administration processes are sufficiently precise. For example, the documentation for securing alternative provision is not all complete.
- Pupils can clearly identify risk and how to stay safe, including when outside of the school and online. The vast majority of parents and carers say that their children feel safe in school. Pupils also report they feel safe in school. They are confident that their teachers will help them if they have any concerns or worries and will take the appropriate action if necessary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable across the school and, as a result, is not yet consistently good. Teachers do not use their knowledge of what pupils already know and can do to adjust their teaching to meet pupils' needs. This results in tasks that are not suitably matched and often lack challenge, particularly for middle- and higher-attaining pupils.
- Mathematics teaching does not challenge pupils, particularly the most able pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they often find mathematics easy. Work in pupils' exercise books demonstrates that, once pupils have secured the learning, teachers do not provide them with the opportunity to grapple with even more challenging activities. Consequently, pupils make weaker progress than they are capable of.
- Staff teach phonics effectively and pupils use their phonic skills to decode unfamiliar words. However, teachers do not check pupils' reading regularly enough to ensure that the text they are reading matches their ability and develops their reading capacity. Pupils read books that contain text that is too difficult or too easy for them. This is limiting their ability to make good progress in reading. A small proportion of parents who responded to the online questionnaire raised this as a concern.
- The teaching of writing is becoming more effective. Pupils write for a variety of audiences and purpose. However, weaknesses still exist in pupils' use of grammar and punctuation. In key stage 2, pupils will often complete extended pieces of writing that have no punctuation included. In key stage 1, pupils regularly use capital letters in the middle of sentences or repeat spelling errors. As a result, pupils are not able to achieve the higher standards of writing.
- Additional adults are generally used well to support pupils' learning. They use their knowledge of the pupils effectively to support and intervene in a timely manner.
- Where teaching is stronger, pupils enjoy greater challenge and want to please their teachers by achieving their best. Teachers who have secure subject knowledge plan sequences of learning that pupils are eager to work through.
- Teachers and other adults support the small proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities well. Pupils benefit from specifically targeted adult support, either in a group or one to one. Typically, this helps them make progress that is at least in line with the national average.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Adults do not always establish high enough expectations of pupils.
- Leaders and staff work hard to promote the school values. Many pupils were able to speak about their values, such as respect and friendship, and the impact that they have on their daily life. Pupils also said they liked school and that staff are kind and are always there to help.
- Pupils say that on rare occasions bullying occurs, but staff take effective action to stop

it. Pupils know how to report any worries or concerns that they have, including when outside of the school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including how to stay safe online. Pupils told inspectors that they feel that the curriculum has helped them develop their understanding of how to stay safe. For example, pupils spoke favourably about the work from the local police officer in learning about 'stranger danger'.

- The majority of parents and carers say that their children are happy, well looked after and cared for at school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. However, where teaching is not well matched to pupils' needs, pupils lose interest and their concentration is not focused upon learning. Pupils say that, at times, poor behaviour of others limits the progress that they make.
- Adults are not sufficiently vigilant during transitions between lessons. This results in some inappropriate low-level disruptive behaviour, especially for those pupils who have difficulty in managing their own behaviour.
- Attendance remains below the national average and rates of persistent absence are high. Although there is a positive trend of improvement, rates of absence remain too high. This has a negative impact upon the outcomes of pupils who do not attend school regularly enough.
- Where teaching is most effective, pupils participate in learning with a greater focus. They are eager to please their teachers and produce work they are proud of.
- Most pupils conduct themselves well around the school, are polite, welcoming and well mannered.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The school's own assessment information and work scrutinised during the inspection show there is variability in pupils' progress across the school. Evidence collected shows that middle- and higher-attaining pupils are not challenged well enough to make consistently good progress.
- Achievement at the end of Year 6 has been consistently below average since the school became an academy in 2015. Too few pupils achieved the combined expected standards for reading, writing and mathematics in the 2017 key stage 2 national tests. However, provisional results for 2018, particularly in reading, demonstrate a significant improvement on those achieved by pupils in 2017. Nonetheless, at key stage 2, outcomes remain below the national average.
- Across key stage 2, too few of the most able pupils and middle-ability pupils achieve the higher standards. This is particularly noticeable in mathematics and writing, where learning is not challenging enough for this group of pupils. Leaders have planned actions to raise standards so that the most able and middle-ability pupils achieve more

highly. However, the impact of these actions is not yet evident in pupils' outcomes.

- Standards in writing are improving. Pupils make better progress in writing than in reading. However, pupils' exercise books show limited evidence of their ability to develop and apply wider grammatical skills to their writing. As a result, too few pupils achieve the higher standards in writing.
- In 2017 and 2018, a large proportion of pupils by the end of key stage 1 achieved well in reading, writing and mathematics, including the most able pupils.
- Since 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has at least been in line with the national average.
- While there are small numbers of disadvantaged pupils in each year group, most are making similar progress to other pupils nationally.
- As a result of effective support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, they make at least comparable progress to their peers.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The interim headteacher swiftly prioritised the early years as being a key area for improvement. She identified the outside learning environment as needing more work to facilitate learning. There are early signs of improvement, but leaders recognise that much more work is needed.
- Teaching and learning in the early years is not effective enough. This is because teachers do not structure children's activities carefully enough to make sure that all groups of children develop and learn across the curriculum.
- Since 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years has been similar to that of children nationally. Most children enter early years with skills typical for their age. However, adults are not building upon children's skills rapidly enough and, for too many, progress is slowed.
- Children do not always settle quickly with a ready-to-learn attitude. Adults spend a large proportion of time getting children ready for learning. This wastes a significant amount of time and, consequently, impedes children's progress.
- Children are happy and safe in the early years. Safeguarding is effective and welfare requirements are met. Children mostly play well together but, occasionally, underdeveloped social development among boys can cause frustrations, such as having a lack of understanding of the value of sharing resources.
- Leaders have ensured that transition for all children into the Reception class is well planned. Adults routinely meet children from other settings before they start, enabling them to prepare well for the next stage of their education.
- Parents are positive about the Reception class. Leaders have ensured that they are able to be part of their children's learning journeys and parents regularly contribute to the school's assessment system.

School details

Unique reference number	142402
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10053479

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Williams
Interim Headteacher	Tracey Trood
Telephone number	01823432582
Website	www.bishopslydeardbwmat.org
Email address	office@bishopslydeard.bwmat.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bishops Lydeard Church School opened as an academy in December 2015. When its predecessor school Bishops Lydeard Church of England Primary School was inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate. The school is part of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Academies Trust.
- The trust board takes full responsibility for challenging and supporting leaders to ensure positive outcomes for pupils.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well below that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who

are supported by an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.

- The school is designated as having a religious character and received a Section 48 inspection in September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons across the school. Some observations were undertaken jointly with the interim headteacher. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at breaktime and lunchtime. An inspector visited the breakfast club provision.
- Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, senior leaders, mathematics and English leaders, the leader with responsibility for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, the person responsible for safeguarding, and several representatives from the trust, including the chief executive.
- Inspectors also held a meeting with two governors, including the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during their breaktimes and lunchtimes and in class. They also held a more formal discussion and listened to groups of pupils read.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors examined a sample of pupils' books from across the school, jointly with the interim headteacher and senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning and considered 42 responses to the Ofsted online survey Parent View. They also considered the 10 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tonya Hill

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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