

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Old Road, Writhlington, Radstock, Somerset BA3 3NG

Inspection dates:	10 and 11 December 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Cathie Lampert. This school is part of The Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Emily Massey, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Belinda Deery.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils understand the school's vision to 'be the best you can be'. It is a golden thread that runs throughout the school. Pupils demonstrate this in their daily interactions with each other and with staff. Staff know the pupils well. As soon as children join the Nursery, they form positive relationships with staff. Pupils feel happy, safe and cared for. They are considerate of one another. They respond well to the school's high expectations for their behaviour.

The school is ambitious for what pupils can achieve. Pupils rise to these expectations and achieve well. Supported by the trust, the school is improving teaching effectively in mathematics.

The school's programme for personal development is exceptional. Pupils' character development is at the core of this offer. Pupils learn about the importance of equality. They celebrate difference and play an integral role in developing and demonstrating the school's 'heart' values.

The school is determined to identify each pupil's individual gift and talent. The wide variety of enrichment opportunities harness this. Pupils' visit to the Houses of Parliament supports their understanding of democracy. Pupils' visit to a former prison enhanced their learning about crime and punishment.

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

The school ensures that pupils get off to a strong start with their education. This begins in Nursery where staff quickly identify any children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school works closely with families to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support they need to achieve well.

Reading is at the core of the school's curriculum. The school has identified the stories it wants pupils to enjoy from Nursery to Year 6. Communication and language is a priority in the early years. Staff model the pronunciation of the ambitious vocabulary they want children to learn. As soon as children join Reception, they begin learning to recognise letters and sounds. Staff are experts in the delivery of the reading programme. They quickly identify pupils at risk of falling behind. These pupils receive the help they need to catch up. Pupils in the early stages of reading read books that match the sounds they know. This supports them to develop fluency and confidence. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors. They enjoy reading books about inspirational people who influence and shape our world today.

An ambitious and well-structured curriculum is in place. This sets out what pupils should learn from Nursery to Year 6. With support from the trust, the school ensures that staff are trained to deliver the curriculum well. The school has particularly focused on strengthening the delivery of the mathematics curriculum. This work is proving effective. Pupils build knowledge securely as they progress through the school. For example, children in Nursery learn to count by singing number songs. Older pupils apply this

knowledge to more complex operations, such as dividing and multiplying fractions. Similarly, in some wider curriculum subjects, pupils remember their current learning well. However, some pupils struggle to remember what they have learned over longer periods of time and have gaps in their knowledge. Teachers do not systematically check that pupils remember what they have learned previously. On some occasions, the activities that some teachers select do not enable pupils to learn the important knowledge identified in the curriculum. This prevents pupils from building a depth of knowledge in some curriculum subjects.

Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils are keen to share their ideas and contribute to class discussions. Children in the early years follow the school's routines and expectations. For example, during a lesson outdoors, children in Nursery understood the importance of the 'safety circle', and children in Reception follow the rules when choosing which area of the classroom they want to learn in. The playground is a busy and active environment. Year 6 buddies enjoy helping the younger children during social times.

Pupils enjoy school. The school takes effective action to ensure that pupils attend regularly. This has improved attendance overall. Where pupils need more support to improve their attendance, the school liaises with families to ensure that they are supported well.

The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum teaches pupils about the importance of consent and healthy relationships. Pupils are exceptionally proud of the leadership roles they hold, including worship warriors, class captains and school council. Opportunities for pupils to sing in the abbey for royalty, dance and perform in a public forum and represent the school in local sporting events are carefully considered by the school. This broadens pupils' horizons beyond the school community.

Governors and trustees share leaders' ambition for all pupils to benefit from a high-quality education and provide an effective balance of challenge and support. Staff appreciate the professional development the trust provides.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few wider curriculum subjects, some teaching does not support pupils to remember long term what they have been taught. Teachers do not systematically check that pupils have learned the curriculum over time. As a result, there are some gaps in pupil's knowledge. The trust should ensure that teaching supports pupils to secure knowledge in their long-term memory and then check they have remembered it.

- At times, the work given to some pupils does not support them to learn the intended curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not secure the knowledge they need or develop a sufficient depth of understanding. The trust should ensure that staff are supported to design learning activities that enable pupils to learn the curriculum 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	147993
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10344841
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	155
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Belinda Deery
CEO of the trust	Emily Massey
Headteacher	Cathie Lampert
Website	www.stmaryswrithlington.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Partnership Trust.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The last section 48 inspection took place in February 2024.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.
- St Mary's Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy in May 2019. When its predecessor school, St Mary's Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement for overall effectiveness.

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, mathematics and geography. 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 also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, representatives from the trust board, representatives from the local governing body and the CEO.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey, pupil survey, and Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including free-text replies. Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Wendy D'Arcy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Fox

Ofsted Inspector

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