

Inspection of a good school: Swainswick Church School

Innox Lane, Upper Swainswick, Bath, Somerset BA1 8DB

Inspection date: 4 May 2023

Outcome

Swainswick Church School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, staff, parents and carers are proud to be part of Swainswick Church School and community. The school's vision of 'Let your light shine' is integral to every aspect of the day. Pupils are eager to learn and are ambitious for themselves. They work hard in lessons and take pride in their work. Pupils learn how to overcome difficulties from Reception Year onwards. As a result, pupils are resilient, confident and motivated.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have their needs met particularly well. Pupils meet the high expectations that adults have of them. Pupils follow the school routines well. They move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. Relationships between adults and pupils are respectful and positive. Pupils are extremely polite and kind to adults and each other. They say that 'kindness is contagious' in their school.

There is an abundance of opportunities for pupils to develop beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils learn to think deeply, take responsibility and have a voice. Pupils are passionate about their role as global citizens. They are proactive and determined to make the world a better place.

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

Leaders and staff share an ambitious vision to provide pupils with an excellent education. They continuously strive for improvement across all aspects of the school. Leaders have designed a curriculum that identifies the important knowledge they want pupils to learn and by when. As a result, the curriculum is coherent and well sequenced. This supports all pupils, including those with SEND, to build knowledge well over time.

Leaders support staff to develop expertise in the subjects they teach. Strong subject knowledge supports teachers to ensure that pupils learn the curriculum effectively. Teachers recap on previous learning regularly. They skilfully break down new knowledge into small steps. This helps pupils to build on what they already know. From Reception Year, children develop a curiosity and confidence with mathematical concepts. This provides a secure foundation for future learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 confidently calculate a quarter of an amount and explain the method using accurate mathematical vocabulary.

Pupils can recall what they have learned over the long term. They use this to make links with their learning. For example, in geography, pupils can confidently name the countries of the UK, continents and oceans. This helps them to explain their location on a globe using longitude and latitude references.

Staff use assessment effectively. They quickly identify misconceptions or gaps and help pupils to keep up with their learning. Leaders have introduced an assessment system for foundation subjects. This helps them to identify gaps in what pupils know and adapt the curriculum for future learning. Leaders identify that this needs further refinement to support them with future curriculum design.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils benefit from an effective phonics programme that supports them to learn to read well. Children in Reception Year get off to a flying start and learn to read as soon as they begin school. Carefully planned intervention lessons help pupils keep up with learning to read. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. This helps them to be confident and fluent readers. Pupils love to listen to stories of increasing complexity from a range of different cultures. The strong focus on vocabulary, imagery and word choice provides opportunities for pupils to contribute towards rich and in-depth discussions about the chosen texts. Pupils use this ambitious vocabulary in their writing.

Leaders ensure that pupils' personal development is woven throughout the curriculum and in everyday life at Swainswick. It is carefully designed to support pupils to develop character. Pupils discuss topical issues and take action when they feel strongly about something. For example, pupils worked alongside external agencies to reduce the speed limit within their school locality. Pupils are fully accepting of one another. They appreciate difference and know the importance of equality. They enjoy the responsibilities they have, including the Year 6 buddy system with Reception Year as well as tending to the school garden. Pupils have the opportunity to debate a range of topics. They respect that their views may be different from others.

Trustees and governors hold leaders to account well. They check regularly on aspects of the school's work. Their self-evaluation of the school is accurate. Leaders are not complacent. They know the strengths of the school and continue to refine different aspects.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders instil a view that 'it could happen here'. All staff are well trained and informed about the signs of abuse. Staff use systems for recording and reporting concerns effectively. Leaders have robust systems in place that help them to identify pupils who are at risk of harm. They work with outside agencies to ensure that pupils and families get the support they need in a timely manner. Leaders challenge decisions and escalate concerns where necessary.

Pupils feel safe. They know how to raise a concern and trust adults to help them. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

The school has suitable policies in place to raise awareness among staff and parents about the dangers of sexual harassment, online abuse and sexual violence.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not currently have a firm and common understanding of assessment in the foundation subjects. As a result, they do not modify the curriculum as precisely as they could. Leaders need to ensure that teachers use the assessment information with precision, to successfully adapt and design an ambitious curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Swainswick Church of England Primary School, to be good in February 2016.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	147555
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10287469
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Daniel
Headteacher	Grant Swarbrooke
Website	www.swainswickschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Swainswick Church School converted to become an academy school in November 2019. When its predecessor school, Swainswick Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school joined the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust in 2019.
- The school is smaller than average. There are three mixed-age classes.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The school was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in March 2023, when it was judged to be outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders 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 met with the headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and groups of staff. The lead inspector met with governors and representatives from the trust.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. The lead inspector met with the safeguarding team to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. The lead inspector scrutinised the school's single central record.
- Inspectors observed pupil's behaviour in lessons and around the school. They spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The lead inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. She also took into consideration the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Wendy D'Arcy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sandra Woodman

Ofsted Inspector

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