

Inspection of Winterbourne Valley Church of England Aided First School

Winterbourne Abbas, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 9LW

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

This school was last inspected 11 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enact the school's values with pride. They learn how to respect and care for one another. Adults nurture pupils so that they grow in confidence and become self-assured. Pupils cooperate well in class. The youngest and oldest pupils enjoy playing together at social times. The focus on promoting pupils' physical and mental fitness shines through in abundance.

Many exciting opportunities enrich the curriculum. 'Woodland School' teaches pupils to be resilient and enables them to manage risk safely. Pupils perform to audiences in, for example, Samba music ensembles. They take part in sports festivals. Year 4 pupils go on a residential visit. There are many educational trips such as visiting the Sealife Centre in Weymouth. A range of lunchtime clubs are on offer, including golf.

In the early years, children's early language and physical development is fostered well. Right from the start, children learn about important issues such as recycling and climate change. Across the school, pupils study a broad range of subjects and many enjoy their learning. However, some pupils do not learn the essential subject content they need at the right time. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge in some subjects.

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

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The curriculum to develop pupils' resilience and self-worth is a strength. The curriculum teaches pupils about equality and the diversity of the world in which they live. The headteachers' stringent work ensures that pupils attend school regularly. Governors are increasingly strategic in their decision-making. Their work to gain greater oversight of how well the school is performing is making a positive difference.

In the early years, children in the pre-school learn routines quickly and gain a love of stories. In Reception, children learn how to be independent, make friends and sustain their learning well. A sharp focus on learning to read prepares children for Year 1. Much positive work is already underway to secure crucial improvements to the school's curriculum elsewhere. Even so, leaders know that more work is required to ensure that all pupils learn the breadth and depth of knowledge across the curriculum they should.

The school has faced a myriad of challenges, including staff change. Admirably, the headteacher makes every effort to ensure that any necessary school improvement work does not disrupt teaching arrangements in this small school. Leaders are using the external advice they receive to improve the content and sequencing of subject curriculums increasingly well. Many subject curriculums now include the knowledge that pupils need to learn. However, much of this work is recent. There remain some weaknesses in the implementation and impact of the curriculum across subjects and classes.

Teaching in some subjects does not build well enough on what pupils already know. For example, at times, sequences of work in mathematics are not demanding enough. In key stage 1, some pupils have gaps in their writing knowledge because the curriculum does not teach pupils essential subject content early enough.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. There is a suitable phonics programme in place. Pupils usually read books that are matched to the sounds that they know. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 who need to catch up in reading receive precise and high-quality support. However, not all staff have the knowledge they need to teach reading well. For example, staff do not pick up pupils' misconceptions swiftly in lessons or when pupils are practising their reading.

Leaders identify pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. However, there are inconsistencies in how well teaching meets the needs of these pupils. At times, learning aids available to pupils do not provide structured support for their learning effectively. While some pupils have very precise short-term targets to help them learn, other pupils do not.

The personal, social and health education curriculum includes all the subject content it should, including online safety. Pupils learn about right and wrong. The woodland curriculum enables pupils to gain a love of nature. This is one example in which pupils find 'awe and wonder' in the world around them.

Governors recognise that staff workload is high. Staff value being part of the team, and they support each other well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders complete all the relevant checks to assure staff's suitability to work with children. Staff are diligent in recording and referring on any concerns they have if they suspect a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders respond swiftly to any such concerns and take appropriate action. They work determinedly with external agencies to minimise risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' work to revamp the school's curriculum is not yet complete. There remain some weaknesses in the implementation of the curriculum in some subjects and classes. Pupils do not learn all the essential subject content across the curriculum. Leaders must make sure that the intended curriculum is implemented well in all subjects so that pupils know and remember the breadth and depth of knowledge they should over time in all classes.

- Teaching does not always build precisely enough on what pupils already know. Some sequences of work are not sufficiently demanding. When misconceptions occur, some staff do not pick this up sufficiently well. Leaders must ensure that staff are adept at using their assessments to ensure that the curriculum meets pupils' needs consistently well.
- The curriculum does not ensure that some pupils learn the essential knowledge they need at the right time, including when developing their foundational writing knowledge. Some teaching, including for pupils with SEND, is not tailored to meet pupils' needs. Pupils have gaps in their learning. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum includes all the necessary knowledge it should, and the resources pupils use are consistently appropriate and help all pupils learn well across the curriculum.

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

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| Unique reference number | 113820 |
| Local authority | Dorset |
| Inspection number | 10267912 |
| Type of school | First |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 66 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Peter Steel |
| Headteacher | Rachel Horne |
| Website | www.winterbournevalley.dorset.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 1 February 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There is a pre-school provision for three- and four-year-olds.
- There is before- and after-school provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 met with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, other staff and representatives of the governing body, Dorset local authority and the Diocese of Salisbury education team.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and music. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of

lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to children about their learning and looked at samples of work. An inspector also held discussions with staff about the science, history and geography and English curriculums and reviewed pupils' work.

- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation and discussed safeguarding with leaders, governors and other staff.
- In making their judgements, the inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. There were no responses to the pupil and staff surveys; however, inspectors sought the views of staff and pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stewart Gale

Ofsted Inspector

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