

Inspection of a good school: Ashlands Church of England Primary School

North Street, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7AL

Inspection date: 4 October 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming and friendly school. They are happy and confident and speak highly of how teachers look after them. Pupils feel safe at school. They consider the school to be a caring place. Pupils are adamant that bullying is not a problem. Their good attendance shows that they value their education.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They are keen to do well. However, the curriculum in some subjects does not clearly identify or sequence the knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. This means that in some areas of the curriculum, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and well mannered. Leaders set clear expectations for behaviour. Positive relationships between pupils and staff reflect the school's Christian values. The school's vision of 'love of learning, love of life and love of one another' is lived out on a daily basis.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that the school provides. They talk about these experiences with enthusiasm. Parents are positive about the school. One parent's view was typical of many: 'This is a lovely school with a family and community atmosphere.'

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

The curriculum needs further development. Leaders have started to identify the key knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember in each subject. However, in some subjects, the order of learning is not clearly thought out. Therefore, pupils do not always build on what they already know, starting in Reception Year. Consequently, this slows the progress that pupils make in some areas of the curriculum. In geography, for

example, pupils struggle to make connections with learning that has gone before. Gaps in their geographical knowledge and skills are evident.

Reading is a high priority. Pupils talk about their favourite authors and the books they have written with enthusiasm. Their love of reading is evident. Staff are well trained and skilled in the teaching of phonics. Leaders have ensured that there is a phonics programme in place. There are ambitious endpoints for pupils to reach each term. Pupils who fall behind are given the right support to catch up. However, in some cases, phonics books are not matched closely enough to the letters and sounds that pupils are learning or already know. This limits their ability to read fluently.

Leaders have secured a strong curriculum offer in mathematics. The content that pupils cover is challenging and well ordered. Pupils enjoy mathematics and do well. Accurate teacher assessments identify pupils who start to fall behind. Children in Reception Year get off to a good start in mathematics. They develop their early understanding of number through counting, singing and using mathematical equipment.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully involved in all aspects of school life. Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of pupils with complex needs. Teachers adapt learning in lessons so that pupils with SEND complete the same learning as their peers and experience success. Pupils are set targets to help them learn. However, some of the targets are not sufficiently well focused on what pupils need to do next.

Leaders provide pupils with a broad range of opportunities to support their personal development. These include educational trips and visits. Pupils regularly participate in community events. For example, they performed a Christmas play at a local care home and contributed to 'Crewkerne in Bloom'. An effective programme to develop pupils' personal development ensures that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders establish clear behaviour routines and expectations as soon as children start in the Reception Year. Pupils display positive attitudes to their learning. Lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour.

Governors share leaders' ambitions. They hold leaders to account and have an accurate understanding of the school's work. Leaders are aware of the pressures their staff face. They manage their workload carefully. Staff feel well supported by leaders.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that curriculum development, target setting for pupils with SEND and ensuring that reading books match the sounds that pupils know may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Staff are well trained in identifying the potential signs of abuse. They report their concerns in a timely

manner. Records are thorough. Leaders act swiftly to secure the right help for families who need it.

Pupils know how to stay safe online. They understand the dangers of sharing personal information and what to do if something on the internet worries them.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding checks on adults are undertaken with suitable rigour. Governors understand their role in keeping pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified and mapped out the precise sequence of knowledge that pupils should learn and remember. Consequently, pupils are not building on previous knowledge that will enable them to know more and remember more over time. Leaders need to make sure that the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and remember in each subject is clear and carefully set out.
- A minority of pupils, who are at the early stages of reading, struggle to read fluently. This is because the books they are reading are too hard. Leaders need to ensure that these pupils access books that match their phonic knowledge so that they can develop their fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading.
- Individual targets for some pupils with SEND are too broad. They do not identify exactly what pupils need to do to further progress with their learning. Leaders must ensure that pupils with SEND have targets that are matched more precisely to their needs.

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 school to be good in March 2017.

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	123749
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10227186
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Roger Evans
Headteacher	Nicola Ball
Website	www.ashlandsfirstschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has been part of the Crewkerne and Ilminster strategic school review. This has brought about a move from a three-tier school system to a two-tier system. This has resulted in significant changes for the school and has been particularly demanding of leaders' time.
- The school was previously in a federation with Misterton School. This setting closed as a result of the strategic school review at the end of the summer term 2022. Most pupils and staff at Misterton have moved across to Ashlands.
- As of September 1, 2022, Ashlands became a primary school, increasing the age range to 11. The school now has a Year 5 cohort and will further expand next academic year to include Year 6.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the SEND coordinator, curriculum leaders, teaching staff and governors, including the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read to an adult.
- The lead inspector looked at the single central record and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. He also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The lead inspector reviewed key documentation, including school action plans, governors' minutes, headteacher reports and safeguarding records.
- The lead inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 35 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Neil Swait, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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