

# Inspection of St Aldhelm's Church of England Primary School

Chelynch Park, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 4PL

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Inspection dates: 3 and 4 November 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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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

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy school. One pupil, whose opinion reflects the views of many, described school as 'another family'. Pupils feel safe and trust that staff will help them if they need it. They value the links between the school and the church. Leaders encourage pupils to develop and celebrate their talents through worship.

However, leaders have not ensured that some subjects are ambitious enough. Pupils do not always learn and remember what they could, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders expect pupils to behave well. Pupils understand that they should be 'ready, respectful and safe'. Pupils are calm and ready to learn in most lessons. Pupils say that bullying can happen, but that it is rare. They trust staff to deal with this effectively.

Pupils and staff say that they are proud to be part of the school community. Staff say that leaders are approachable and support their well-being.

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

Leaders and teachers ensure that reading is a priority through regular reading sessions. Teachers model their own love of reading in these sessions. Pupils enjoy reading too. In the early stages of reading, most pupils learn phonics well, which supports them to become fluent readers. However, the teaching of the school's curriculum is not yet consistent. For some pupils, books are not matched well enough to their understanding of phonics. Some staff do not have the required knowledge to support their teaching of phonics confidently. Consequently, pupils are not always supported as well as they could be.

The curriculum does not match the breadth and ambition of the national curriculum. For example, pupils do not study modern foreign languages until Year 6. Teachers do not always have sufficient knowledge to teach some subjects well. This results in pupils developing misconceptions.

Curriculum planning is less developed in some subjects than in others. Where teaching is not planned effectively, pupils do not build up their knowledge well enough over time. However, some subjects are further ahead in identifying the important content that pupils need to learn and when. This supports pupils to recall what they have learned before to share their ideas.

Leaders have not assured themselves that the curriculum meets the needs of all learners. Therefore, they do not have an accurate picture of the impact of the planned school curriculum. Consequently, pupils do not always learn as well as they could, including pupils with SEND. Teachers are not precise enough when setting or reviewing targets for pupils with SEND. This means that these pupils do not consistently receive the support they require to follow the curriculum successfully.

Children in Reception Year get off to a good start. They begin to develop independent learning skills, and the environment considers children's interests, for example within the small forest school area. Children in Reception learn well together.

Parents and carers, pupils and staff are positive about the school. Pupils are generally respectful, well-mannered and polite. They understand how to behave well. Most pupils are positive about behaviour at the school, but recognise that pupils can be 'noisy' or 'loud' at times. Nonetheless, pupils play well together at playtime and lunchtime.

Personal development in the school is strong. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions. They know how to lead a healthy lifestyle, including how to look after their mental health. Pupils understand the importance of respect. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to take pride in their achievements, through worship and in lessons. Pupils describe their 'proud slips' when talking about the learning they are most proud of. Prior to the limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, pupils valued the educational visits and extra-curricular clubs on offer.

School governors generally fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They have supported leaders with recent changes, such as to the way in which classes are organised. However, governors do not know enough about the quality of education to challenge school leaders with sufficient rigour.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils are safe. They have a clear approach that 'it could happen here'. Pupils feel safe in school. They understand how to keep themselves safe, including online. School leaders provide annual training for all staff so that they are aware of safeguarding issues. The headteacher also provides weekly updates. Staff, including those who have joined the school recently, know how to report concerns, using the school system.

Governors understand the importance of safeguarding and fulfil their statutory responsibilities in this area well. Leaders complete appropriate recruitment checks before new staff join the school.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have not assured themselves that the curriculum is being implemented as planned. Therefore, leaders are not able to say with confidence whether the curriculum is having the impact intended. Leaders need to ensure that they have

an accurate understanding of whether the curriculum is leading to pupils knowing and remembering more across all subjects.

- In some subjects, leaders have not planned the content and sequencing of the curriculum well enough. Teachers are not clear about what pupils should know and by when. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum plans are ambitious and well sequenced and match the expectations of the national curriculum.
- Staff do not have the subject and pedagogical knowledge they need in some subjects. This means that they lack the expertise needed to plan teaching effectively and support pupils sufficiently. Leaders need to ensure that staff have the support and training they need to support pupils well, including pupils with SEND.
- In the early stages of reading, there is inconsistency in the way in which phonics is taught. This means that pupils do not apply their phonics knowledge as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is consistently put into practice as planned.

## 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123753
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199666
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	156
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of governors
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Adam Underwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pippa Cohen
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.staldhelms.co.uk">www.staldhelms.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- St Aldhelm’s Church of England Primary School is a voluntary-aided school. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place on 30 November 2016.
- The headteacher has joined the school since the previous inspection in 2016.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of

pupils' work. An inspector looked at examples of curriculum plans. He also considered pupils' workbooks and spoke to pupils about their learning.

- The lead inspector met with designated safeguarding leads to discuss how they keep pupils safe in school. She considered the school's recruitment procedures, staff induction and training, records of concerns and their engagement with external agencies. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Donna Briggs, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nathan Kemp

Her Majesty's Inspector

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