Inspection of St Barnabas' Church of England Aided Primary School

Hart Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX2 6BN

Inspection dates:	18 and 19 March 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are ambitious and achieve well at this inclusive school. In recent years there have been many staff changes. Pupils now benefit from the school's high ambitions and expectations. Pupils achieve well and much better than they did. These improvements are reflected in the strong published outcomes in 2024.

The school is a happy place to be. Pupils enjoy attending. Pupils have warm, mutually respectful relationships with everyone in the school. Staff help pupils to recognise their emotions so they can manage them well. Pupils are considerate and calm. A sense of kindness and care permeates the school. Social times are harmonious because pupils take care of each other and their environment.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that nurture their talents and interests, for example through clubs such as choir. The choir performs to audiences at a range of public venues and this develops pupils' aspirations. Pupils also benefit from the numerous collaborations the school develops, such as working with the local university and museums. These experiences help pupils to learn more about the world around them.

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

The school has designed a logically ordered curriculum, which aims to meet all pupils' needs. This sets out the knowledge and skills that pupils will learn at each stage, including in the early years.

When pupils join the school in the Nursery or the Reception class, the school identifies their individual needs. Precise and individualised adaptations ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the curriculum successfully. For example, pupils use resources to help them remember important vocabulary. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

The school prioritises staff development and well-being. Leaders provide staff with well-focused training. This results in staff who know their subjects well. They structure lessons effectively. Pupils benefit from opportunities to discuss learning with each other, as it deepens their thinking. In most subjects, the school uses assessment well to check pupils' understanding. Teachers quickly address any mistakes or misunderstandings. However, in a few subjects, teachers do not check well enough that pupils have retained previously taught knowledge. This hinders pupils from connecting prior learning with what comes next.

Reading is a top priority. Teachers ensure that children in the early years learn phonics from the start. Pupils read fluently by the time they reach the end of Year 2 because well-trained staff support them effectively. Pupils discuss important vocabulary and events in the stories that they have read and what they have learned from them. Consequently, pupils develop a strong understanding of what they read and what it means.

The school develops pupils' writing skills well. Staff prioritise this area and connect the writing process to pupils' reading knowledge effectively. This begins in the early years. Pupils practise accurately forming the letters and sounds they know into words. Across the school there has been a focus on improving the accuracy of pupils' spelling and handwriting. The school dedicates time to this regularly. This helps more and more pupils become proficient writers.

The school analyses the reasons for pupils' absences effectively. It works with families to encourage pupils to attend school often, including disadvantaged pupils. Pupils enjoy being at school, and attendance rates have risen considerably in the last year. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They try hard in class, and any disruption is a rarity. Pupils show resilience when something is difficult. They use prompts to help them, such as discussing their thoughts with a partner. Children in the early years show sustained levels of concentration. They learn to share and collaborate well with each other.

There is a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' character, individuality and personal development. The school provides many opportunities to nurture pupils' talents and interests. For example, pupils learn to be good citizens and develop an understanding of democracy through opportunities such as fundraising for local, national and global charities. Pupils demonstrate tolerance towards each other and celebrate differences.

The governing body uses its strong knowledge of the school to carry out its statutory duties effectively. Leaders consider the impact on staff of any changes that they make. For example, adaptations made to the marking policy are helping staff workload. Staff work collaboratively to improve the school's provision further for pupils.

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 subjects, teachers' strategies to check pupils have remembered the most important knowledge are not used well enough. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. Therefore, these pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that there are effective strategies in place for checking how well pupils remember what they are taught and that teachers are confident using them.

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	123211
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10379819
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Hall-Matthews
Headteacher	Beccy Harris
Website	www.st-barnabas.oxon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 March 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Oxford. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in November 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will take place within eight school years.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

Neil Pilsworth, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Charlene Bakermault	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025