

Inspection of Bridport, St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Skilling Hill Road, Bridport, Dorset DT6 5LA

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Kate Batorska. The school is part of Initio Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Elizbeth West, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Deborah Fleming.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mary's Church of England Primary School is a 'caring community where all can learn and shine'. Pupils are proud of their school and feel well looked after by adults. The school is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders strive to improve outcomes so that pupils of all ages can achieve as well as possible.

The school has high expectations for behaviour. Adults help pupils to understand why poor behaviour should not be repeated. The Den effectively supports pupils to improve their behaviour and attendance. Consequently, the school is calm and pupils learn with little disruption.

Pupils enthusiastically earn reward points for being ready to learn, respectful and safe. Pupils like to take on responsibilities to help make the school a better place. For example, the well-being ambassadors are ready to help pupils at breaktime and lunchtime. Pupils understand the importance of being kind and respectful towards each other. They have opportunities to reflect on big questions and consider their own and others faith.

The school provides opportunities to learn outside of the classroom. Trips and visits bring the curriculum alive. For example, fossil hunting and visits to the local museum. Musical performances celebrate pupils' talents. Pupils learn how to stay active, enjoying sport for fun and competition.

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

The trust prioritises reading. Children learn phonics as soon as they start school in Reception. All adults receive training and coaching on how to deliver early reading sessions. Most staff use effective strategies to ensure that pupils learn sounds securely. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know so they increase their accuracy and fluency. The school provides additional support for pupils who need help to catch up or keep up with their peers. Pupils are read to regularly, sharing stories to interest and light their imagination. For example, inspired by a story, children in Reception draw and write about their own magical plants. Pupils are keen to recommend books to each other and this love of reading continues into events such as Reading in the Wood.

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum. It has been sequenced to ensure that pupils from Reception to Year 6 build their knowledge and understanding. Most subjects have clearly set out the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn. Where the curriculum is delivered as intended pupils are confident about their learning, remembering themes and concepts over time. For example, older pupils can talk about how they use what they have previously learned in music to create their own compositions. However, when the planned curriculum is not followed as closely pupils do not revisit important knowledge or make links between topics covered. Consequently, pupils do not recall their previous learning as well as they might.

Formal assessments check pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, opportunities for checking understanding between these assessments are less well established. This means that sometimes there is insufficient adaptation of the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. For example, pupils who have already grasped concepts may not learn more complex ideas swiftly enough. While others may have gaps in their knowledge that remain unresolved.

The school accurately identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Adults know pupils well as individuals. The recently opened Hub resource base support pupils effectively with individual bespoke intervention and care plans. They learn the curriculum and engage in extra-curricular activities alongside their peers.

The personal development curriculum teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe and well. Pupils are confident how to stay safe when online and learn strategies to help their own mental health. For example, they learn through visits to the 'affirmation station' where pupils celebrate their strengths. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and how their bodies are changing in an age-appropriate way. Pupils are preparing for adult life by learning about values such as democracy and tolerance. From Reception, children learn about how to work with others collaboratively, reinforcing the community feel of the school.

Leaders are considerate of the workload and well-being of staff. Those responsible for governance have an accurate understanding of the schools' strengths and areas for development. The trust provides the school with challenge and support to continue to improve the school for the benefit of all pupils.

Parents are positive about the school. They appreciate the care and support their children receive. The school encourages parents to be part of school life. For example, parents are encouraged through the community garden and reading workshops. The school, families and the wider community work together to provide opportunities to improve the lives of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The planned curriculum is not always implemented as intended. This means that pupils do not all have the same opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. The trust and the school should ensure that the curriculum is implemented as intended in all subjects.
- At times, assessment is not informing future planning and curriculum adaptations. As a result, some pupils are moved on too quickly and others not quickly enough.

Consequently, pupils don't learn as well as they might. The trust and the school should make sure that assessment information is used to inform future implementation of 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](#)' 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	142691
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10334718
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	202
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Deborah Fleming
CEO	Elizabeth West
Headteacher	Kate Batorska
Website	www.stmarybridport.co.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	1 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Initio Learning multi-academy trust.
- This school is a Church of England School in the Diocese of Salisbury. A Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools was carried out in March 2023. Inspections are normally carried out every five years.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school club led by the school for pupils who attend the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also spoke with teaching staff, support staff, trust executive leaders, local committee members and trustees.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative of the Diocese of Salisbury.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, including representatives from the pupil leadership group.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also discussed the curriculum in history, music and physical education.
- The early years provision was considered through the deep dives as well as through additional visits during the inspection.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime and breaktimes.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for pupils with SEND and considered the support provided to meet the needs of these pupils. They visited the specialist resource base provision.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including the minutes of the governance meetings, the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans.
- 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 pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sara Berry, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tom Page

Ofsted Inspector

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