

Inspection of St Mary's Bentworth Church of England Primary School

Church Street, Bentworth, Alton, Hampshire GU34 5RE

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this very happy school. They love learning here. The school's atmosphere is calm and pupils are focused. In lessons they listen carefully, show determination and support each other during group work. Children make an excellent start in the early years. By the end of Year 6, most pupils secure strong achievement in reading, writing and mathematics and are well prepared for secondary school.

The school has very high expectations for pupils' conduct. The school is proud of how kind and considerate pupils are. Pupils fully demonstrate the school's values of 'love, respect and belong' throughout the school day. They attend well and show highly positive attitudes to school life. Pupils are proud of what they and others achieve both in and out of school.

The very well-considered provision for pupils' personal development aims to give pupils the tools and skills that they need for the future. Pupils value the many and varied activities the school offers them. For example, pupils learn about the fundamental British values and how to debate and discuss differing opinions. Pupils know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy, as well as how to stay safe online and in the wider community.

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

The school is developing an ambitious and purposeful curriculum. In English and mathematics, as well as in some wider subjects, the curriculum is designed well to build and deepen pupils' learning carefully over time. It clearly details the knowledge, skills and vocabulary pupils need to learn and when. This helps to ensure that pupils achieve very highly in these subjects. However, in some other subjects, the school has not identified the precise knowledge it wants pupils to learn. This means pupils' learning does not build as strongly over time in these subjects.

The provision in early years is excellent. Children are very well cared for. The school prioritises children learning the key early reading, writing and mathematics skills. Through the school, knowledgeable and skilled staff ensure that those pupils who struggle with reading receive the right support. The writing curriculum is designed well to allow younger pupils to develop and practise their technical skills so they become competent writers. Almost all pupils, as they move through the school, are able to read and write extensively, confidently and fluently.

When teaching is at its strongest, including in the early years, subject matter is presented clearly. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. This, combined with their personal knowledge of each pupil, means that they extend pupils' learning according to what they know and can do. When misconceptions arise, teachers are typically very quick to address them. Pupils recall their learning over time with great enthusiasm.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the full curriculum successfully alongside their peers. The school quickly identifies the needs of pupils. The

thoughtful and collaborative work that the school does, alongside parents, carers and external agencies, is highly effective. This enables staff to adapt learning well so that pupils with SEND are able to make strong progress through the curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' behaviour and conduct. Right from the Reception Year, children learn to cooperate, take turns, play purposefully with each other and be responsible. Attendance levels are very strong. Pupils want to come to school. Should a pupil's attendance be too low, the school takes constructive and effective action to address this. The school successfully promotes the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

Pupils benefit greatly from the school's unwavering focus on the wider curriculum. The opportunities pupils have to develop talents and interests are many and varied. The school is particularly proud of the significant offer for music and sporting opportunities. The school ensures that all pupils can take part in these. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of British values such as democracy and tolerance. As a result, they have a strong moral compass. Pupils benefit from initiatives that help them to talk about and manage their emotions. They value opportunities to be active citizens and are more than happy to take on leadership responsibilities.

School leaders, including governors, make decisions in the best interests of pupils. They have an accurate picture of the school because of robust quality assurance systems. Staff appreciate the strategies in place to reduce their workload. Governors know the school, its staff, pupils and the community well. They have considerable knowledge and expertise, which allows them to fulfil their roles effectively. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects in the wider curriculum, the school has not identified the precise knowledge it wants pupils to learn. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could in these subjects. The school should identify the most important knowledge that all pupils need to know and remember to meet the curriculum's ambitious endpoints.

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	116351
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10341445
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Maria Fordyce
Headteacher	Joanna Ayres
Website	www.bentworth.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school in the Diocese of Winchester and Portsmouth. Its last section 48 inspection took place in January 2024.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school runs its own wraparound provision both before and after school.

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.

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders within the school. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing board, including the chair, and an educational representative from both the local authority and the diocese.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View and an inspector also spoke with parents on the first day of the inspection.
- The views of staff were gathered through interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection, as well as through Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views throughout the inspection, including through the classroom visits, group discussions and Ofsted's pupil survey, as well as at playtime and lunchtime.

Inspection team

Chris Parker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

James Munt

Ofsted Inspector

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