

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Blandford St Mary Church of England Primary School

Birch Avenue, Blandford St Mary, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 9QD

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Inspection dates:

25 and 26 March 2025

## Outcome

Blandford St Mary Church of England Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Rosaleen Beaver. This school is part of the Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust (DSAT) which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mark Lacey, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sian Thornton.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming and inclusive school. Staff ensure that the needs and interests of pupils are considered in everything they do. This reflects the school's values, which include love, respect and responsibility. The warm and nurturing relationships between staff and pupils shine through. Pupils describe it as a school where 'every smile is contagious'. Pupils are happy and safe. They are extremely proud of their school and attend regularly.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' learning. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes and achieve well. The recent refinements to the curriculum to identify the most important knowledge pupils need to learn have been agreed and are mostly in place. Typically, pupils build on their previous learning and develop a broad body of knowledge across the subjects they study.

Pupils behave well in lessons and social situations such as playtimes and lunchtimes. They demonstrate high levels of respect and kindness towards one another. Pupils are extremely polite and well-mannered.

Parents and carers praise the school and what it provides for their children. 'A compassionate and nurturing atmosphere' and 'go above and beyond in supporting and protecting' are typical of the views shared by parents.

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

The school has an ambitious curriculum in place. Recent refinements have been made to determine the essential knowledge and vocabulary pupils need to know and remember across all subjects. This supports most pupils to build their knowledge well over time. For example, in mathematics pupils were able to find percentages of amounts using a pie chart with success to calculate the number of children playing sport. However, the school and trust are aware these curriculum changes are not yet securely embedded across all subjects. Consequently, there remains some gaps in some pupils' subject-specific knowledge.

Pupils are keen to learn, and work hard during lessons. They are able to explain their learning articulately and with confidence in most subjects. From the Reception Year, there is a firm focus on reading, writing and mathematics. This ensures pupils have the essential knowledge they need as they move through the school and on to the next stage of their education.

The school has the aspiration that every pupil will develop a love of books and become fluent readers. This starts in the Reception Year, where children enjoy stories and join in with enthusiasm. Staff are skilled in the teaching of phonics and reading. Books match the phonics knowledge of pupils. Those pupils at risk of falling behind are given the help they need to catch up quickly. As a result, they become confident readers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who are disadvantaged are at the core of the school's work. Staff identify pupils' barriers to learning accurately. Adaptations are made to ensure these pupils get the support they need to access the curriculum. This helps pupils with SEND to learn the same curriculum as their friends and achieve well.

The school's work to develop pupils' personal development is a strength. It provides pupils with rich developmental experiences, such as the residential trip to an outdoor centre. Such opportunities develop pupils' perseverance, resilience and team skills. Trips are carefully considered to enhance pupils' learning experiences, including farms, whole-school beach trips, an ancient technology centre and a local castle.

The school provides pupils with plentiful opportunities to expand and develop their interests and talents. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the activities on offer. There is a wide range of clubs available, which include choir, netball and football. These clubs are open to all and are well attended. Pupils learn how to become thoughtful and caring citizens. They respect and appreciate the diversity of the world in which they live. They enjoy their involvement in and support for charities.

The school is proactive in finding out what children and families need and how best to provide it. The school promotes positive mental health across the community and offers effective support and guidance to those who need them.

Staff are extremely proud to work at the school and consider themselves 'lucky' to be part of the 'BSM family'. They welcome the efforts of leaders to look after their well-being and to ensure that the workload is manageable. The trust offers strong support, guidance and challenge which the school welcomes and embraces. Staff appreciate how the trust promotes and celebrates the uniqueness of their school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school keeps pupils safe. It responds promptly to support pupils in need of help. Staff carry out the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. Leaders provide a curriculum that teaches pupils to understand risk, including healthy relationships and how to stay safe online. Pupils are confident that adults will listen to them if they have any worries or concerns. However, there are examples where safeguarding records lack sufficient detail. This could lead to vital information being missed when connecting new incidents with older records.

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

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

- The recent refinements made by the school to the curriculum are not yet securely in place across all subjects. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their subject-specific knowledge. The trust needs to ensure that the important content that has been explicitly identified is securely in place so that all pupils build their knowledge well.
- Sometimes the information the school records about safeguarding incidents lacks sufficient detail. This means the school could miss vital information. The trust needs to make sure that records clearly and consistently demonstrate the action taken in response to any safeguarding concerns.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection

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 for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141046
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10344680
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sian Thornton
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Mark Lacey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rosaleen Beaver
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.blandfordstmary.dsat.org.uk">www.blandfordstmary.dsat.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	8 and 9 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection the school has joined DSAT.
- This is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Salisbury. The school received its section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character in December 2017, when it was judged to be satisfactory. The school is due its next section 48 inspection during the next academic year.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, heard pupils read, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and wider staff.
- The inspector met with the CEO, the deputy CEO and the regional director of education from the trust.
- The inspector met with governors and the chair of trustees.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered key documentation, including the academy's self-evaluation and the academy improvement plan.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. She met with school leaders to discuss and review how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils' attendance.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys. She considered the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Jen Southall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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