

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Bayford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Ashdene Road, Bayford, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 8PX

Inspection date: 11 February 2025

Outcome

Bayford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Bayford is a happy school that welcomes everyone warmly. Staff build strong relationships with pupils. This helps pupils to feel safe and secure. Pupils know they can talk to someone if they have any worries. They trust that staff will help and care for them.

Pupils try their best to follow the school's behaviour code of 'ready, respectful, safe' in everything they do. They understand how this helps them to learn and be kind to each other. Social times are calm and friendly.

Pupils enjoy learning a broad range of subjects. Across the curriculum, most pupils achieve well. Typically, pupils are attentive and work hard in lessons. A highlight for pupils is learning in the beautiful outdoor areas of the school and the village.

There are many chances for pupils to develop their character and talents. Pupils talk excitedly about events, such as residential trips and musical performances with other schools. They are proud to take on roles as house captains, sports ambassadors or collective worship leaders. Pupils show respect and understanding towards others who are different to themselves. They know everyone should be treated equally.

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

The school has worked to improve its curriculum. The new curriculum is broad and ambitious. What pupils will learn and how learning builds have been carefully thought through. The curriculum is more established in some subjects than others. For example, in well-established subjects, such as English, mathematics and science, the important

knowledge that pupils should learn and remember is clearly set out. Teachers have secure subject knowledge in these subjects. They deliver the content in a way that meets pupils' needs. In lessons, staff adapt their teaching methods and recognise when pupils need help. They support pupils to revisit knowledge and skills frequently. This helps pupils remember and build on their knowledge. However, in a few subjects, that are still being developed, this is not the case. In these subjects, teachers do not have the strong subject knowledge and expertise needed to teach as effectively as in the rest of the curriculum. Their expectations for pupils' achievement are not as high, which affects how well pupils learn in these subjects.

Pupils enjoy reading. They understand that reading helps them to learn and broaden their knowledge of the world. Teachers introduce a variety of diverse literature to pupils. This helps prepare them for life in modern Britain. The early reading programme helps younger pupils to learn the letters and sounds they need. Pupils feel confident using this knowledge to read and write new words. Pupils read often and enjoy books that match the sounds they know. However, the early reading programme is sometimes delivered inconsistently. This means that, although pupils achieve well in reading overall, some pupils could progress even more quickly when they are in the early stages of learning to read.

Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. Their needs are accurately identified. Teachers adapt tasks appropriately when needed. This enables pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and work successfully alongside their peers. Pupils show respect and understanding for each other's needs.

There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. On the few occasions when behaviour disrupts learning, adults deal with this effectively. Pupils respond positively to staff. Children in the early years, including nursery, adapt well to school life. Staff help them build skills and routines, such as sharing and becoming more independent in their learning and play. The school closely monitors attendance and lateness. Leaders follow up any absences quickly. While attendance has improved, leaders recognise that more needs to be done to bring about further improvements.

The school provides pupils with valuable support for their personal development. While most pupils come from white British backgrounds, they have a strong awareness of different religions, lifestyles and cultures in today's society. They recognise issues like racism and learn why they should be tolerant and respectful to everyone. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of staying safe and healthy relationships. The school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain effectively.

Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and those areas that need improvement. They offer the right support and challenge. Staff members value how leaders help them to maintain a reasonable workload and prioritise their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to early reading is not implemented consistently. As a result, some pupils do not secure their phonics knowledge as well, or as quickly, as they could. The school should ensure that staff have the expertise in the early reading programme required to help all pupils make rapid progress with reading and, in particular, their phonics knowledge.
- Some subject curriculums are not as well established as others. In these subjects, teachers do not have the depth of subject knowledge required to teach them as effectively as most other subjects. Teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve are not as high. The school should ensure that staff have the expertise required to teach the full range of subjects effectively and consistently high expectations, so that pupils achieve as well as they can across the curriculum.

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 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2016.

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	117387
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345200
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Brenda Lambie
Headteacher	Malcom Foster
Website	www.bayford.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a nursery provision catering for three-year-olds.
- The school is within the Diocese of St. Albans. Its most recent inspection of its denominational education and collective worship, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in July 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due within eight years.
- The school does not use any 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account for their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, pupils and parents; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. They also met with members of the governing body and the school effectiveness adviser.
- Inspectors met with teachers to talk about the curriculum, workload and the behaviour and personal development of pupils.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement and self-evaluation document, together with minutes of meetings of the local governing board.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during lessons, around the school, in the canteen and on the playground. They looked at behaviour and attendance records and considered leaders' analysis of these.
- Inspectors considered the online responses to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text comments. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Karen Stanton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Bryony Surtees

Ofsted Inspector

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