

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School

Ann Street, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 4GP

Inspection dates

11–12 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since starting at the school in 2017, the headteacher has shown strong, inspiring leadership. Together with the deputy headteacher, she has united the staff team in a drive to provide the best possible education for the pupils at the school.
- The quality of teaching in the school is good. As a result of leaders' decisive actions, the teaching of mathematics has improved greatly and is now a strength of the school.
- As a result of improvements in teaching, learning and assessment, outcomes for pupils have increased, especially in key stage 1, and across the school in mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress. The progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is similar to that of their peers.
- Senior leaders have spared no effort in improving behaviour in the school. Staff, including the well-trained teaching assistants, understand how to promote good behaviour and maintain calm, purposeful classrooms.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy positive attitudes to learning. They benefit from the positive, mutually respectful relationships between everyone in the school.
- Children get off to a good start in early years. Staff know each child individually and understand how to enable them to achieve well and make good progress.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the way that staff enable pupils to enjoy learning and stay safe. One parent said, 'My child literally skips to school and doesn't want to miss a day.'
- In recent years, attendance has been well below the national average and too many pupils have been persistently absent from school. Leaders and governors recognise that much work needs to be done to engage parents and carers and to ensure that pupils attend school more regularly.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent in key stage 1. Not all staff are clear about how to teach phonics well, and the school lacks a consistent approach to this aspect of the curriculum.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the awareness of parents and carers of the importance of regular attendance and increase their engagement so that levels of attendance and rates of persistent absence improve rapidly to be at least in line with national figures.
- Improve the teaching of phonics so that pupils achieve at least in line with their peers nationally by:
 - adopting a more consistent approach to the teaching of phonics across classes in key stage 1
 - making sure that all staff are sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable in the approaches to teaching phonics agreed by the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher started at the school in April 2017 after a period of significant turbulence, when there was no permanent headteacher. She united the staff and parents with a clear vision, encapsulated in the phrase, 'no ceiling to learning'. This has brought about a change in the culture of the school. Staff, parents and pupils alike now have higher expectations and aspirations for the school and for what pupils can achieve. One parent said that the headteacher has, 'transformed the school'. This view is echoed by staff, the local authority, governors and many parents.
- Senior leaders and governors have a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils can make stronger progress and achieve better outcomes.
- Leaders and governors have a comprehensive understanding of the school. Their self-evaluation is accurate and draws on a range of evidence to reach secure judgements. The school's development plan is detailed and thorough. Senior leaders understand the importance of including measurable success criteria so that governors can evaluate the impact of leaders' actions and hold them closely to account.
- Middle leaders have had the right training and support to equip them to play an important role in improving in the school. They understand their areas of responsibility well and have secured many improvements since the last inspection.
- Morale among staff is high. Staff form an inclusive, cohesive team, united in a drive to enable pupils to become successful, happy learners. Staff appreciate the way that the headteacher leads by example, especially when dealing with pupils whose behaviour can be challenging.
- Parents are very happy with the school. All agree that pupils enjoy school, are making good progress and are well looked after. One said that her child 'is happy going in every day and enjoys her time at school'.
- The curriculum focuses on ensuring that pupils develop the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in English and mathematics. Pupils also learn across a range of subjects and enjoy the many experiences that teachers plan for them, including visits to interesting places locally and further afield.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well provided for. Pupils take time to reflect on their learning and celebrate their many achievements. School assemblies are a focus for these celebrations, but positive reinforcement and encouragement are threaded through every lesson.
- Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and enjoy taking responsibility for various aspect of school life, such as serving on the school council or taking leading roles in acts of worship. Staff draw on the rich diversity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds represented in the school to provide pupils with a variety of learning experiences to develop their spiritual and cultural education.

- The physical education and sport premium is put to good use. Pupils benefit from high-quality physical education, including opportunities to enter competitions against other schools.
- Senior leaders and governors make wise decisions about the spending of the pupil premium funding. The action plan resulting from the review of the pupil premium has been implemented thoroughly and this has seen disadvantaged pupils making better progress.
- The local authority and the local Anglican diocese have both played a vital role in driving improvements in the school. They have provided strong support for the headteacher and other leaders and have offered a clear strategic view when identifying the most important areas for improvement.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has been through a turbulent time and most governors are new to the role. However, they have the right blend of skills and experience to fulfil their role thoroughly. Governors know the school well. They use a range of evidence to inform their views, including regular visits to the school.
- Governors have undertaken a review of their work, as recommended in the previous inspection report, and acted on the findings. They now have many strengths and use these to offer the right balance of support and challenge to senior leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders and governors ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school, underpinned by thorough training, policies and procedures. All staff understand and fully embrace their responsibility to care for children and report any concerns, however small. Children say that they feel safe in school. Parents and staff fully endorse this view.
- Staff take timely action to refer pupils who may be vulnerable to the relevant agencies. They ensure that the right action is taken to protect pupils from harm and provide helpful support for vulnerable families. Staff have a good understanding of the potential risks posed by radicalisation and have not hesitated to report concerns when they arise.
- Governors play an important role in safeguarding pupils, including by undertaking a range of checks, such as ensuring that only suitable people are allowed to work in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan lessons that interest and challenge pupils. Teachers have a good understanding of the age group with which they are working and show good subject knowledge.

- Teachers build on pupils' knowledge and understanding by planning lessons that engage pupils' interest and spark their curiosity. Staff offer regular advice and guidance, both in pupils' books and during lessons, so that pupils understand how to be successful. In one lesson observed, pupils were completely absorbed in crafting phrases and sentences to describe the atmosphere at a football match. Pupils worked very hard to meet the high expectations set by the teacher.
- Leaders have developed an accurate system of assessment. Teachers use it successfully to record pupils' achievements, plan for future learning and notice when any pupils start to fall behind, so that staff can intervene quickly.
- Teachers use the age-related expectations of pupils found in the national curriculum to inform their planning and to engage pupils in assessing their own work. Much care and time are spent in helping to ensure that pupils understand clearly what their next steps are. This results in pupils becoming increasingly reflective and able to evaluate their own learning, which helps them improve.
- Teaching assistants play a vital role in supporting pupils' learning. Staff know pupils well. They respond promptly to meet pupils' needs and help them to overcome obstacles in their learning.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved significantly during the last academic year because leaders prioritised this subject for rapid improvement. Parents, staff and pupils all recognise the improvements that have taken place.
- Teachers provide a rich variety of activities to help pupils to understand and practise mathematical skills and concepts. These activities include solving problems and tackling work that requires pupils to think and reason mathematically. Staff listen carefully to pupils and are quick to correct any misconceptions that arise.
- Staff have a range of opportunities to develop their skills and extend their knowledge. Leaders ensure that staff are properly trained and prepared when new approaches to teaching and learning are introduced.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching thoroughly. Whether observing a lesson, looking through pupils' work, or evaluating teachers' lesson plans, leaders always focus on the progress that pupils are making.
- The teaching of reading is mostly effective. Pupils read a range of books, and older pupils discuss their opinions and preferences about authors. However, work needs to be done to improve the teaching of phonics in key stage 1.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils respond well to teaching, work hard and try to achieve their best. Pupils are confident and happy to initiate conversations with their classmates and adults. Their exercise books show that pupils take pride in their work. Pupils responsibly put away equipment to keep the school a tidy and safe place to move around.

- Staff take good care of pupils. If a pupil feels unhappy or needs to talk to an adult, they are confident in approaching staff. Pupils trust adults in the school to listen and quickly sort out any problems that arise.
- The school is a warmly inclusive place. All feel included and valued. Pupils are treated equally and fairly. Pupils who need extra support receive it.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils agree that when it does happen, staff intervene promptly to nip it in the bud.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils of all ages learn how to stay safe on the road, including on bicycles and scooters. By the time they reach the upper part of the school, pupils cycle from the school to Hove Lawns some distance away. Visits from the police and fire service reinforce pupils' understanding of how to stay out of harm's way. Older pupils have a secure understanding of how to stay safe when they are online.
- Pupils' personal development is well catered for. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and the many rewards that this brings.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In recent years, attendance has been well below the national average. Leaders and governors are working very hard to improve this aspect of the school. Senior leaders can identify several examples where their actions have resulted in the attendance of individual pupils improving significantly.
- Some pupils who have left the school and others who have left the country are still on the school's roll and recorded as persistently absent. This is beyond the school's control. When these exceptional situations are taken into consideration, rates of persistent absence are much closer to those seen nationally. However, much work needs to be done as a matter of priority to engage parents and to ensure that pupils attend school more regularly.
- The headteacher has wasted no time in tackling poor behaviour in the school. Behaviour has improved enormously since her arrival and the overwhelming majority of pupils behave well and are keen to learn. Pupils whose behaviour is more challenging have their needs met well because staff have been taught how to de-escalate potential challenging behaviour and help all pupils focus on learning. Where there are rare instances of low-level disruption, it is often due to pupils not understanding the task and waiting for help.
- The school is a calm, orderly place where pupils and staff enjoy positive, mutually respectful relationships. This is equally true in lessons and at other free times. Behaviour in an assembly was described by an inspector as 'impeccable'. Pupils listened carefully, sang well and joined in enthusiastically.
- Rates of exclusion have declined significantly as a result of a clear behaviour policy that is understood and implemented by all staff. Leaders have worked hard to engage with families of pupils who have challenging behaviour and can point to many success stories.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment and progress are improving across the school as a result of more effective teaching, particularly in mathematics. The school's own assessment information shows that pupils across the school are making good progress.
- In 2017, pupils made good progress in key stage 2, but the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading and writing was below the national average. In mathematics, pupils attained much less well than other pupils nationally.
- Provisional results from the tests at the end of key stage 2 and assessments in 2018 show a marked improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and especially mathematics. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher score in mathematics increased sharply, although the number of pupils who achieved this higher standard in reading declined slightly. Attainment and progress in writing are lower than in other subjects, with no pupils reaching greater depth. Senior leaders understand the reason for this and have learned valuable lessons to ensure that more pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to achieve this higher standard.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2017 was well below the national average. Standards in 2018 were much closer to those seen nationally in recent years.
- Leaders and governors recognise that attainment in mathematics across the school has been too low in recent years. In the last academic year, there have been significant increases in the proportion of pupils achieving both the expected standard and higher standard in almost all year groups. These came from improvements in the quality of teaching resulting from leaders' closely targeted actions.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making rates of progress similar to those of other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. In some year groups, they are making stronger progress than their classmates. The support and the intervention work provided for them match their needs and enable them to achieve well.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities mostly achieve in line with their peers who have similar starting points. Staff understand their needs well and ensure that they have the right provision, both in class and in interventions, to enable them to make good progress.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been below national figures in recent years. Too many pupils start key stage 2 without the phonics skills needed to be successful, fluent readers. However, most catch up in Years 3 and 4 and make good progress across key stage 2.

Early years provision

Good

- Children join the Reception class with skills typical for their age in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development. However, their skills in other areas are lower than what is typical for their age. They make good progress, and the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been above the

national average in recent years. There is no significant difference between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged children and their peers. However, relatively few children exceed the early learning goals, especially in mathematics.

- The leader of early years is enthusiastic and effective, providing strong leadership to staff. She has an accurate picture of the needs of individual children and has ensured that they have the right provision to enable them to achieve well. Consequently, children are well prepared to move on to Year 1 by the end of their time in early years.
- Staff prioritise children's personal, social and emotional development so that children settle quickly, learn each other's names and get along well together. This leads to good behaviour and nurtures positive attitudes to learning.
- The environment indoors and outdoors is stimulating and well resourced, covering all areas of learning. Children learn well and use their imagination when playing alone and with friends. This is reflected in children's 'special books'. Staff are skilled in recording any key activities using written notes or photographs, and helping children to take the next steps in their learning.
- Leaders have taken decisive action to improve the system for tracking children's progress. Staff now have a detailed understanding of each child's learning and stage of development. This represents a marked improvement from the previous inspection. The local authority noted this in a recent moderation visit.
- Children get off to a rapid start with learning phonics in early years. Although they had only been in school for a few days, almost all could identify the initial sounds of their name and form the letter with their finger in the air.
- Parents are very positive about the way that staff provide for children, including those who have SEN and /or disabilities. This is because children are all fully included and given the right support to help them flourish.
- Children visit the early years class for play sessions in the term before starting school. This has a wholly positive effect because they quickly feel at home and grow in confidence.
- Safeguarding procedures are secure because all staff know that it is their responsibility to keep children safe. Staff are diligent in recognising and recording any concerns about a child's welfare. Due regard is given to health and safety so that children are well looked after and kept safe.

School details

Unique reference number	114538
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10052994

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Berry
Headteacher	Katie Blood
Telephone number	01273 692463
Website	www.st-bartholomews.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-bartholomews.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 Sep 2016

Information about this school

- St Bartholomew’s Church of England Primary is a Church of England (Aided) school located in the heart of the City of Brighton and Hove.
- The headteacher is new to the school since the previous inspection.
- This school is smaller than the average primary school. There are seven classes, one for each year group.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- Just over half of the pupils are White British. There are several groups of pupils from different ethnic minorities. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is above that seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above that seen in other schools across the country.

- The school had its most recent inspection of denominational education given to pupils, and the content of the school's collective worship, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, in December 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors had several meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher about various aspects of the school's performance, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school and how well pupils are currently achieving.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and three other governors, including the vice-chair of governors. He also spoke to representatives of the local authority and the local Anglican diocese on the telephone.
- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Some of these observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. An inspector observed an assembly.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in mathematics and English from all year groups. Work included that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors met with several senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for mathematics, English, and early years and SEN provision.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to a group of them about school life. They also met pupils on the playground and observed behaviour at free times around the school.
- An inspector also held a meeting with a group of four staff members, including teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff. Conversations were held with a number of staff members throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and the five written comments that were submitted. The lead inspector also considered an email from a parent that had been sent to Ofsted. Responses from eight staff were also considered.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of both days of the inspection.
- An inspector visited the breakfast club run by the school.
- The inspectors looked at a range of school documents, including those recording the work of the governors and the single central record of checks on people who work at the school. They examined information on pupils' current progress and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Bruce Waelend, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kusum Trikha

Ofsted Inspector

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