

St Edburg's Church of England (VA) School

Pioneer Way, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX26 1BF

Inspection dates

23–24 November 2016

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| 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

- This is an improving school. In recent times, leaders have embraced a change in location and new buildings. Despite these significant challenges, leaders provide a good education for pupils.
- The recently appointed leadership has secured wide-ranging improvement since the last inspection. Leaders are well supported by hard-working and committed staff. As a result, this is a good school.
- Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and have identified the right priorities to improve the school further. However, leaders do not measure the impact of their actions on pupils' progress regularly enough.
- Teaching is good in the school. The choice of topics and enthusiasm of teachers inspire children and so they concentrate well and are eager to learn.
- Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors have a good understanding of the effectiveness of the school. However, governors do not consistently hold school leaders to account fully about pupils' performance.
- The curriculum is exciting and incorporates many different aspects of learning. However, pupils are not always given the opportunities to put new skills into practice quickly enough.
- Overall, pupils attain in line with other pupils nationally who have the same starting points. Pupils who have been at the school for a substantial period of time make good progress overall. Sometimes most-able pupils' progress slows because they are not challenged enough.
- Staff know pupils well, so pupils' social and emotional needs are met effectively. However, in some cases, incisive action to support pupils' progress is not taken swiftly enough.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They know how to keep themselves safe and feel happy. The reflective, inclusive and positive attitude of the pupils is a strength of the school.
- Children make a good start to their learning in the early years. The early years' provision is strong because the early years leader creates an environment where children enjoy learning and are keen to do their best.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all leaders, managers and governors evaluate more regularly the difference that leaders' initiatives make to accelerating progress for different groups of pupils.
- Ensure that support is more timely and strengthened for pupils who are identified as not working at age-related expectations, especially for those pupils who join the school mid-year.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress by ensuring that teachers plan tasks that routinely offer pupils high levels of challenge, including for the most able.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders have a good grasp of the school's strengths and development points. The school's development plan shows a clear overview of actions, resources and time required to bring about change. Where some actions have already been undertaken, for example the introduction of a new phonics programme, middle leaders have evaluated the impact well. Overall, however, all leaders do not review the impact of their actions on pupils' learning regularly enough.
- Leaders are ambitious for the school. Since the last inspection, leaders have shown a determination to improve the school further. In the early years, strong leadership and well-resourced classrooms ensure that there is a rise in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development.
- Throughout the school, the well-planned curriculum ensures that most pupils are motivated, engaged and able to make progress in core subjects and other areas of learning. Some topics are taught across the whole school at the same time and this leads to excitement and enthusiasm among pupils, who want to share their experiences with other children in different age groups. During the inspection, there was an air of vibrancy in some classes as pupils, with soot marks on their cheeks, acted out an escape from Pudding Lane and developed freeze frames of scenes at different stages of the Great Fire of London.
- The pupil premium spend is well documented and is used mainly to support disadvantaged pupils' social and emotional needs to remove barriers to their learning and increase their attainment and progress. The recruitment of a home-school link worker has ensured that extensive work is undertaken with families and individuals, ensuring that pupils are in school and ready to learn. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve broadly as well as other pupils.
- Leaders and teachers have a detailed understanding of the needs and attainment of individual pupils and are able to say how they are being supported and the progress they have made. They recognise that some pupils' needs are not identified quickly enough and that this could be remedied by monitoring groups of pupils more thoroughly, including those who are from a low prior attainment group.
- The physical education and sport funding for primary schools is spent on an annual affiliation to the North Oxfordshire School Sport Partnership. This has led to increased training for staff, improved fitness for children and greater participation in competitive events. The school's physical education leader documents this well on the school's website.
- The school's Christian values and spirituality thread through the ethos and culture of the school. Pupils are given ample time to reflect on themselves, their relationships and the world around them. A heightened self-awareness has led to an inclusive school community in which pupils are respectful of others. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in all aspects of the school's work and the pupils talk enthusiastically about themselves and others. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain with a good understanding of other faiths.

- Effective challenge and support from the diocese have contributed well to the improved leadership capacity and provision within the school. A constructive relationship has ensured that this partnership is productive and beneficial providing guidance, training and support. Consequently, leaders are now more effective in raising standards across the school.

Governance of the school

- A review of governance took place following the last inspection and governors have reorganised and refined their approach. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors can talk knowledgeably about the school, the community and pupils. They recognise the challenges that face the school in the coming years as the housing development and community grows.
- Governors embrace training opportunities and, on their regular visits, use their new skills to monitor and evaluate the work of the school.
- Governors have a good grasp of the external and internal assessment information for the school and can identify groups that need support to achieve expected or better outcomes. However, they do not always hold leaders stringently to account for outcomes in statutory tests or have a full understanding of leaders' strategies to improve pupils' progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding policy is up to date with relevant information about keeping pupils safe. Staff have received appropriate training. Pupils feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they are worried or feel sad. When staff have concerns about pupils, they are quick to report these. Concerns are acted upon in a timely manner, with appropriate referrals made to other agencies.
- Staff are given regular and relevant training, including training around the 'Prevent' duty. Appropriate checks are made on new staff and recorded on a central register, which is well maintained by the school business manager. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding monitors this aspect closely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning in the school has improved. Clear routines and strong relationships between all staff and children build good levels of trust and engagement. Most pupils are absorbed in their learning due to an interesting curriculum and the enthusiasm of teachers. Teachers are quick to support pupils when they do not understand something and build on pupils' strengths in all subjects.
- Teachers set tasks that are well matched to pupils' abilities. In one lesson, pupils were drawing on previous knowledge to plan an information text about the Great Fire of London. Some were supported by writing frames and key words and the class teacher intervened at appropriate times to reshape the task, enabling pupils to improve their work effectively.
- Staff have adopted a well-structured, regular approach to the teaching of phonics. This is still in its early stages in Year 1 and Year 2, but initial assessments show that the speed of learning has increased and more pupils are on track to reach the phonics

standard than in previous years.

- Mathematics is taught well and use of a variety of resources effectively supports learning. Pupils are encouraged to talk to each other and, in some classes, participate in fast-paced question and answer sessions that deepen and consolidate their learning.
- In some classes, repetition of basic skills does not challenge the most able pupils and their pace of learning slows.
- Communication is a strength in the school and pupils are given lots of opportunities to discuss their work and explore the language and vocabulary associated with different subjects.
- Feedback, both in books and verbally, is generally consistent with the school's marking policy. Pupils can identify what they need to do to improve and, in most cases, use the feedback to help them move forward with their learning.
- Teachers develop pupils' love of reading and reading skills effectively, particularly among the younger pupils. Pupils are keen to read and report that they read 'lots', both at home and at school. They adopt a consistent approach to reading and have a wide range of strategies to help them. Where reading record books are used effectively, they support pupils to improve and provide communication opportunities with parents.
- In some classes, there is a lack of opportunity for pupils to put new skills into practice quickly enough. This means that they do not achieve as well as they could. For example, a role-play exercise was used to inspire pupils to write a diary entry but further work on vocabulary and describing a picture of the fire meant that some lost focus and were unable to succeed as well as they could.
- Where intervention is in place, it supports pupils' learning and helps them to catch up with other pupils. In some cases, the identification of pupils with specific needs, including those who join the school mid-year, is not fast enough. Leaders do not ensure that appropriate support is put in place as quickly as it could be.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a happy place. The great majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and learning well. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the whole-school topics and different ways in which they learn. They are proud of their school.
- Pupils show a high degree of respect for each other. They say that friendship is 'one of the things we are known for'. The school's 'friendship charter' and circle times support this well.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in school. They are able to give clear examples of how to keep themselves and others safe in school, on the roads and online.
- Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their beliefs and their experiences. A Christian ethos permeates the school and leads to a selfless and positive attitude in many pupils. In whole-school assemblies, the atmosphere is calm and serene and pupils and staff members who are absent are included through thought and prayer.

This inclusive, reflective attitude is a strength of the school.

- Although still below average, attendance has increased over recent years due to the direct action taken by leaders. Leaders have ensured that no group of pupils is disadvantaged by low attendance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is calm and orderly. Pupils move around with confidence, considering others and respecting the school building. They play together well at breaktimes, ensuring that everyone is included.
- Pupils take pride in their work, their appearance and the school in general. In lessons, the great majority of pupils retain focus, responding quickly to instructions. There is little low-level disruption. However, occasionally the teaching for some pupils lacks challenge and they lose concentration and focus.
- There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour across the school. Leaders address any behaviour issues swiftly and effectively. Leaders do not analyse patterns of behaviour for specific pupils or groups of pupils, although they have the right actions in place to do this.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Detailed assessment information shows that the progress of current pupils, in a range of subject areas, is consistently good. This information is used to provide extra learning opportunities for those pupils who need to catch up. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported through planning, teaching and additional adult support.
- The most able pupils achieve well overall. However, at times their progress slows because they are offered insufficient challenge in lessons.
- Unvalidated data shows that overall attainment for most groups of pupils in key stage 2 in 2016 was broadly in line with, or higher than, the national average in English and mathematics. The school met the government floor standards at key stage 2 and almost all pupils met the expected standard in science.
- The decline in pupils achieving the expected standard in the national Year 1 phonics check is directly attributable to the mobility of pupils. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have reached the expected standard. Pupils in key stage 1 read widely and enjoy reading.
- The mobility of pupils has had a negative effect on outcomes. Following the school's move to a new site in January, over 30 new pupils have joined across the school and some have left. This has had a negative impact on the data for some groups, particularly in key stage 1. Where pupils have remained in the school throughout key stages, they have made consistent progress from their varying starting points. The school recognises that the identification of pupils with specific needs, including those who come to the school mid-year, needs to be more rapid, and support should be put in place. This is being addressed to ensure that the difference between these and

other pupils' attainment does not increase.

- The pupil premium is used effectively to remove barriers for learning for disadvantaged pupils and increase their attainment and progress. The progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, is improving across most subject areas.

Early years provision

Good

- The appointment of a new early years leader has improved the early years provision at the school. She sets high expectations across the early years and uses performance management, information from books and lesson observations in a constructive manner to improve outcomes for the children. As a result, unvalidated 2016 information shows that the proportion of children who left early years well prepared for key stage 1 is broadly average and the disparity between boys' and girls' literacy is narrowing.
- The Reception team bring an incisive clarity to the teaching of phonics. They use a structured and systematic approach that is focused on the needs of the children and is informed by regular and precise assessment. The Reception environment is language-rich, including signs made by the pupils at the early stages of writing on their own. For example, the Great Fire of London role-play area is labelled 'samyl peeps haws'. The development of literacy skills in Nursery is not as well established as in Reception, but this is improving.
- A good balance of resources across different areas of learning is available both inside and out, ensuring that children's interest is sustained and progress is well supported.
- Staff interact positively with different groups of pupils. They extend learning by asking open-ended questions that prompt children to undertake further activities. As a result, children remain engaged and in some cases are totally engrossed, for example when three children were trying to work out why water flows downwards.
- Parents are involved in their children's learning. At a 'stay and play' activity in the Nursery, parents were positive about their child's experience within the school. Parents are keen to support their children and are given opportunities to contribute through recording when a child can first do something at home: 'popcorn' moments.
- Safeguarding is effective and child protection procedures are implemented consistently.
- Children are happy and enjoy discussing their learning with visitors. They follow instructions and show good understanding of routines.
- Staff know the children's individual needs well and are careful to construct learning opportunities that are suitable. In a whole-class role-play activity, all children are included, and are given varying and appropriate levels of support and challenge to ensure that progress towards the early learning goals is made.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 123188 |
| Local authority | Oxfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10019889 |

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

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| 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 | 202 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mark Smith |
| Headteacher | Margaret Kunzer |
| Telephone number | 01869 252393 |
| Website | www.st-edburgs.oxon.sch.uk |
| Email address | head.3505@st-edburgs.oxon.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 17–18 September 2014 |

Information about this school

- St Edburg's Church of England (VA) school is a smaller than average-sized primary school. In January 2016, the school community moved from its original site, where it had been established for over 150 years, to a bespoke building on the new Kingsmere housing development.
- The school has below average stability. This has further decreased since the last data collection as the intake of pupils from the new housing development increases.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is slightly above average.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is below average.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the current government floor standards at key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- In the course of the inspection 20 lessons were visited, many jointly with school leaders. An inspector also attended an assembly.
- Inspectors conducted meetings with governors, senior leaders, a local authority representative, a diocese representative, a local authority officer with responsibility for the early years, middle leaders and a range of other staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils within lessons, at breakfast club, at lunchtime and playtime. The lead inspector spoke more formally with a group of pupils from across the school.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils read, to check how their reading skills were developing.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents by talking to them at the school gate and took account of 15 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and five free-text responses.
- 21 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were taken into account.
- Inspectors analysed a range of school documentation, including the school's own information on pupils' progress and attainment, the school's self-evaluation documents, child protection and attendance case studies, the single central record, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records of visits by diocese representatives.

Inspection team

Tracy Good, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Phillips

Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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