

Inspection of St Gregory's Church of England Primary School, Marnhull

New Street, Marnhull, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1PZ

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

St Gregory's places Christian values at the heart of its work. Leaders ensure that pupils become respectful citizens by contributing to the life of the village. For example, pupils lead a Remembrance Day service in the local church. However, leaders still have work to do in the wider curriculum. In too many subjects they have not ensured the curriculum is implemented coherently. Pupils do not learn as much as they could.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. They say that bullying is rare, but that adults sort it out when it occurs. Leaders have recently made changes to the behaviour policy. This has had mixed results. In classrooms, most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. However, some pupils still do not behave well at social times.

Leaders plan trips to broaden pupils' experiences beyond the locality. For example, older pupils visit London annually. This also develops their understanding of different cultures to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Leaders place an emphasis on character development through planned opportunities, such as residential trips. They ensure pupils learn to manage their feelings through the use of dog mentors. Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs on offer, such as dance, forest school and construction.

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

Leaders want the best for their pupils. They lead with a sense of moral purpose. Staff enjoy working at St Gregory's. However, leaders have not acted quickly enough in improving the quality of education. This, combined with key staff leaving, has resulted in weaknesses in the curriculum.

Leaders have worked hard to produce a curriculum that identifies the broad knowledge that pupils need to know. However, this is not precise enough in the wider curriculum. This means that across subjects there are inconsistencies in the depth of knowledge taught. As a result, pupils could learn more than they currently do.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They have introduced a systematic phonics programme, which staff follow closely. Leaders promote the importance of reading to parents of children in Reception Year through workshops. Staff check that pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds they know. This means pupils become fluent in reading over time.

Teachers quickly identify pupils who fall behind. Well-trained staff help pupils to catch up. Leaders have created 'reading ambassador' roles for older pupils to help promote reading across the school. Pupils read widely and talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors.

Leaders have created a clear approach for the teaching of mathematics. Consequently, pupils can apply previous learning to new concepts. For example, pupils understand how to convert fractions, so they have a common denominator, in order to add them.

All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), experience a broad and balanced curriculum. For example, music has a high profile within and beyond the curriculum. From the early years, pupils learn to play instruments. Many participate in the school choir at public events.

While leaders have considered the order in which pupils build on their knowledge, it is not well implemented in the wider curriculum. Plans do not match the structure of the mixed-age classes. Staff are unclear about what pupils have learned previously or how current concepts will shape future learning, including in the early years. Therefore, pupils do not build their learning logically.

Some teachers are new to their areas of responsibility. As a result, they have not yet carried out checks on the implementation of much of the wider curriculum. Where checks have been made, they are often not precise or rigorous enough. This means leaders, including governors, do not have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum.

Where leaders' checks have been more effective, they have had a positive impact. For example, through highly focused monitoring, leaders have improved the accuracy of pupils' editing skills in writing.

Leaders promote inclusivity effectively. Staff identify the needs of pupils with SEND well, including those who join from other schools. The school manages the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. This is because all staff know the pupils and work closely together to support them.

Following the return of pupils after the national lockdowns, leaders prioritised personal development. Through well-planned assemblies and strong links to the church, leaders promote pupils' morality. Pupils understand the importance of tolerance and celebrate differences.

Leaders encourage pupils to take on leadership roles in the school such as young governors or sports ambassadors. Leaders ensure these roles contribute meaningfully to the school and the community. For example, the school parliament planned a family quiz to raise money for the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training. Staff can identify pupils at risk of harm. Leaders have recently changed their record-keeping in order to have a better oversight of concerns about pupils. As a result, they build up a clear picture of any

issues. Leaders work with external agencies to secure the help families need. Governors make regular visits to check on the school's safeguarding procedures.

Pupils know how to stay safe online. They know the importance of not sharing details and to tell an adult if there is anything that concerns them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the wider curriculum, leaders have not identified the specific knowledge that pupils should know and remember. As a result, teachers are not always clear about what they want pupils to know. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum thinking identifies the precise knowledge they want pupils to learn, so pupils know more and remember more.
- In the wider curriculum, including the early years, leaders have not adapted the curriculum well enough in the mixed-age classes. Consequently, staff are unsure what pupils have learned in the past. This results in pupils missing important concepts. Leaders need to ensure they know what pupils have covered in the curriculum so that pupils' knowledge is built on over time.
- Leaders' monitoring is not precise enough. As a result, they do not have a clear picture of how well the curriculum is being implemented. Leaders need to ensure that the monitoring of the curriculum is more precise so that they have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum.
- Not all staff manage behaviour as well at social times as they do during lessons. Therefore, some pupils do not behave well at social times. Leaders need to ensure that staff are supported to manage behaviour and that the behaviour policy is consistently applied.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113805
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10241241
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	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nick Chapman
Headteacher	Debbie Williams
Website	www.stgregorymarnhull.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. Its last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place in 2017, where it received a good judgement.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of staff and members of the governing body. The lead inspector also had telephone calls from a representative of the diocese and the school's external school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also met with the subject leads for writing and music and looked at samples of work in writing.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. The lead inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record of recruitment checks.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. They also considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicky McMahon

Ofsted Inspector

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