School report

Inspection of Benson Church of England Primary School

Oxford Road, Benson, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 6LX

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 July 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Amy Pearce. This school is part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Anne Dellar, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kathy Winrow.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy coming to this safe and nurturing school. They interact positively with staff, who know them well and care deeply about their well-being. Teachers listen attentively to pupils when they share their concerns or opinions. Pupils value the support that they receive and speak with enthusiasm about their learning and wider experiences, such as rock music lessons, residential trips and 'ambassador' roles.

The school sets high expectations for all pupils. From the early years onwards, pupils learn to read well and develop a secure understanding of mathematics. They make meaningful links between their learning and real-life experiences, such as connecting a visit to a local castle with their history work on the Tudors. Pupils talk with increasing confidence about their work in school.

Pupils behave well and understand what is expected of them. Pupils know that staff follow the behaviour policy routinely and rigorously when concerns are raised. Pupils know and live out the school's values of love, forgiveness, peace and understanding. These values shape how they treat one another and contribute to a calm and respectful environment, where pupils thrive. Pupils are proud of their school. They are confident and feel well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders have rightly prioritised the development of a broad and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum now specifies the important knowledge and skills required in each year group. The curriculum is well sequenced and builds from the early years onwards. As a result, pupils are increasingly able to make connections in their learning and build on what they already know. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Appropriate targets are set to support pupils with SEND. These targets, with appropriate adaptations in class, help pupils make effective progress through the curriculum.

Teachers gain from ongoing professional development and deliver the curriculum with consistency. They create opportunities for pupils to revisit and build on prior learning. Despite these strengths, in some lessons, a small number of pupils become distracted and lose focus. Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils. As a result, these pupils miss valuable learning and do not make the progress that they could.

Teachers check how well pupils are learning the curriculum in most subjects effectively. However, in some subjects in the wider curriculum, this process is not as effective as it could be in helping teachers identify what pupils need to learn next. This means that some pupils do not remember key knowledge as well as they could. Leaders are aware of this and are taking action but it is too early to see the impact that this is having on pupils.

Reading is a priority. Children begin learning phonics in Nursery. Staff deliver phonics sessions with consistency and precision. Teachers check pupils' knowledge, identify gaps, and address them quickly. As a result, pupils become confident and fluent readers. The

school promotes a love of reading through regular story time and pupil-led initiatives, such as reading ambassadors.

The school tracks and promotes pupils' regular attendance and punctuality. Most pupils attend school regularly. When pupils do not attend as often as expected, the school works with families effectively to support them. Staff help them to understand the impact of low attendance on pupils' outcomes. Resources like the nurture room allow pupils necessary time and space to regulate their emotions when needed. These have positive impacts on pupils' well-being and attendance. Pupils behave well in school and learn self-regulation strategies. They support themselves and each other effectively.

The school has a strong focus on pupils' personal development. Teachers prioritise developing pupils' resilience and independence. This begins right from the start of early years. Through '5 to thrive', the school teaches pupils to be kind, show respect, use manners, try their best and learn from mistakes. In the early years, these skills help prepare children for learning and to develop friendships. As pupils progress through the school, they continue to use these qualities and are increasingly resilient learners. This builds confidence and prepares pupils for life outside of school. Pupils also learn about what it means to live in modern Britain, including learning about different cultures, healthy relationships and how to stay safe online.

School leaders, governors and the trust are working to develop the school further. Governors know the school well and they understand their roles. This allows them to work with the school, providing challenge and support for further development. The school makes sure all staff receive appropriate training. Leaders offer continual development so staff can do their jobs well. Staff benefit from the support they receive. There is a shared goal of raising outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Expectations of pupils' engagement are not consistently high. A minority of pupils are not actively engaged during lessons and this means that they are not capitalising on every learning opportunity. The school should ensure all staff follow the agreed approaches to identify when pupils become distracted and help them to refocus. This will help pupils to make the most of their time in lessons and support them achieving the highest possible outcomes.
- In some foundation subjects, the checks that the school makes on what pupils know and can do are not used effectively. As a result, staff do not have the information they need to identify pupils' next steps in learning. The school should ensure that

assessment processes in all curriculum areas are effective and that teachers use them to identify pupils' next steps in learning, so that they achieve as well as possible across the curriculum.

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	147507
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10379935
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	312
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kathy Winrow
CEO of the trust	Anne Dellar
Headteacher	Amy Pearce
Website	www.bensoncofeprimary.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a Church of England school, within the Diocese of Oxford. The last denominational inspection (section 48 inspection) took place on 4 May 2023. The next scheduled inspection is due by May 2028.
- The school is part of Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees, a group of governors and representatives from Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust, including the chief executive officer. They also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, history and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils during the inspection and took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Ian Howie, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Howard Fisher	Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca Mayman	Ofsted Inspector

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