

Inspection of Toddington St George Church of England School

Manor Road, Toddington, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 6AJ

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Toddington St George 'let their light shine' just as their school motto encourages them to do.

Pupils are happy and achieve well, including those in the early years. Pupils show high levels of involvement in their learning.

Pupils are taught to be 'respectful, ready and safe'. Pupils understand that they are expected to behave well. Pupils say they feel safe and know that they can talk to staff if they have any worries. Bullying rarely happens, but if it does, staff are quick to sort it out.

Well-being is a priority. Pupils are cared for and encouraged to think about and express their feelings. This enables pupils to discuss and resolve any issues that might arise with their peers.

Everyone is included at this school. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum and opportunities as pupils in the main school. Pupils are proud to be members of the school council and help make positive changes to the school.

Pupils' talents and interests are recognised and developed. Pupils benefit from the visits and the sports and music clubs that leaders provide.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that clearly sets out what pupils will learn from Nursery to the end of Year 4. Curriculum leaders have provided support and training to ensure staff have the knowledge to teach the curriculum confidently. Teachers focus on pupils learning important concepts and key vocabulary.

Throughout lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching to address pupils' misunderstandings. However, in some foundation subjects, the use of assessment is not as effective. On occasion, teachers move pupils on to more complex learning before they are secure in their knowledge of more basic concepts. This results in pupils having gaps in what they know. This hinders them from successfully understanding and remembering more complex information.

Leaders have ensured the reading curriculum is delivered effectively. Staff have received training to teach the phonics programme consistently well. This means that most pupils can read well. Pupils who find reading more challenging benefit from extra opportunities to practise and apply the sounds that they have learned. Pupils across the school read books that are suitably matched to their reading knowledge and skills. Pupils are keen to get better at reading. They enjoy using online quizzes to check their understanding of the books they have read.

Children in the early years benefit from an engaging and interesting curriculum. Leaders ensure that children are introduced to a wide range of vocabulary linked to the world around them. Staff make sure that children can use different resources to practise their learning. Staff have high expectations that children, including those in the Nursery class, will listen to and follow instructions. Children respond positively to staff and learn routines quickly.

Pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of school life. This includes pupils who attend the specially resourced provision. Teachers use specific resources and give lots of reminders about what pupils know already so that pupils with SEND access the curriculum and learn successfully.

Leaders and staff make sure that pupils are cared for and that they feel valued. Pupils recognise this. They want to behave well for their teachers and help each other. The school values of 'love, respect, perseverance and thankfulness' thread through the daily life of the school. Pupils are proud to receive rewards linked to these values.

Leaders place a great emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development. Pupils show respect for differences and commonalities within the school community. However, the opportunities to explore some aspects of diversity are limited as the school community is not culturally diverse. This means pupils are not as confident in their knowledge of other cultures as they are about different family groupings or disabilities.

Governors hold leaders to account and offer appropriate support. Leaders, including governors, are committed to further improving the school. They have sought the support of external specialists to assist them in carrying out their roles and responsibilities effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are confident and well trained to identify when a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff are quick to take action if an issue arises. Similarly, leaders follow up any concerns, however small. Leaders make sure that vulnerable families can access the support they need.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships and personal safety in their personal, social and health education (PSHE). This helps pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that the right checks are in place regarding safer recruitment and that safeguarding policies are kept up to date.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some of the foundation subjects, teachers are not always accurate in their checking of pupils' understanding. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of basic concepts. This hinders pupil's ability to fully understand and apply their new knowledge. Leaders must ensure teachers are always using suitable assessment methods to check that pupils have remembered the basic knowledge before moving on to more ambitious content.
- Opportunities for pupils to experience cultural and religious diversity are currently quite limited. This means that pupils lack confidence when talking about this compared to other strands of diversity. Leaders need to maximise opportunities for pupils to gain greater knowledge of different cultures and religions, so they are more confident when comparing and contrasting any form of diversity.

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	139372
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10242263
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs of governing body	Claire Murphy-Snape & Henry Croft
Headteacher	Colette Lamb
Website	www.toddingtonstgeorge.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected.

Information about this school

- Toddington St George Church of England School converted to become an academy school in March 2013. When its predecessor school, Toddington St George Lower School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The headteacher started at the school in January 2021. The current leadership team has been in place since September 2022.
- All members of the governing body, except one, have taken up their roles since January 2021.
- Since January 2021 there has been a high turnover of teaching staff.
- Toddington St George Church of England Academy has a Christian character. The religious aspects of the school's provision were last inspected in April 2018 under section 48 of the Education Act, 2005.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with hearing impairment.
- The school has a nursery class of 24 children. Children are admitted in the September following their third birthday. Children attend the nursery class on a part-time basis for mornings only.

- Leaders make use of one registered alternative provider.

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 held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, other leaders, staff, pupils, a representative from the local authority, the co-chairs of governors and five other members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. In early reading, this took the form of listening to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans and spoke to the PSHE leader and the teacher of the specially resourced provision.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form and improvement plan, school policies and minutes from governing body meetings.
- As part of the evaluation of the school's safeguarding processes, inspectors reviewed the single central record, met with the designated safeguarding leads, reviewed safeguarding files, looked at behaviour and attendance records and spoke to pupils and staff.
- Inspectors reviewed the 78 responses that were submitted by parents to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the 78 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also considered the 28 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the six responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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