

Inspection of St Nicholas CofE Primary School, Henstridge

Ash Walk, Henstridge, Templecombe, Somerset BA8 0QD

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The executive headteacher of this school is James Webb. This school is part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Nikki Edwards, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Pamela Cosh.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has recently gone through a period of significant improvement. It has joined a multi-academy trust, and a new leadership team has been appointed. As a result, pupils are increasingly well cared for and beginning to make more consistent progress in their learning. The school is clear that there is still a great deal to do.

Most parents and carers are positive about the school and would recommend it to others. A small number of parents are concerned about some aspects of behaviour and how this affects what their children learn. Pupils say that bullying happens, but staff deal with it quickly. Pupils feel safe at school but recognise that sometimes the behaviour of other pupils can distract them from their work in lessons.

The school's ambition that every pupil receives an excellent education is not being realised. This is because the curriculum is not delivered in a way that ensures all pupils learn what they need to know. Although some pupils get everything they need, others struggle to remember the basics. This means that pupils' learning is too 'hit or miss' and leaves some unready for the next stage in their education.

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

The trust has provided a wide range of very effective support to ensure pupils benefit from a broad curriculum designed to meet their needs. The success of this work can be seen in the recent improvements in the early years and in the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school is rightly proud of these improvements.

Children in Reception are on track to become confident readers and writers. These children now benefit from a well-delivered curriculum that builds their knowledge over time. However, pupils in Years 1 and 2 did not experience this same good start. Many pupils in key stage 2 are very enthusiastic about the books they read and are read to them. However, other pupils have gaps in their knowledge that stop them from being able to read and write as well as they should. This gets in the way of their learning in other subjects. These pupils are not getting the targeted support they need to become confident readers and writers quickly. A well-sequenced curriculum is in place for mathematics. However, it is not followed closely enough to make sure pupils gain the knowledge needed. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that slow down their learning. For example, some pupils do not have the secure knowledge of multiplication tables they need to solve more complicated tasks.

Most pupils are respectful, kind and honest. They enjoy the opportunities they get such as roles on the school council and eco-council. The school wants to provide every pupil with high-quality personal development. This is intended to give pupils the knowledge and understanding they need to become confident global citizens. However, the intended ideas and activities pupils should experience have not been delivered consistently over time. This means some pupils do not learn what the school wants them to understand. As in other subjects, a new approach is being developed to rectify this.

The identification and support for pupils with SEND have improved significantly. Many pupils now receive the right support and are making better progress. This has also resulted in a big reduction in the number of pupils not attending school or receiving part-time timetables. The school prioritises good attendance for all pupils. Staff work hard to ensure pupils attend as much as possible. Consequently, attendance is improving.

Most pupils behave well. However, the expectations of pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school are not consistent. A new approach to managing pupils' behaviour has been introduced, but this is not ensuring that all pupils behave well. This means that sometimes pupils' learning is disrupted by the behaviour of others.

Leaders, including trust leaders, have acted quickly to address the most significant weaknesses. Governors have a secure understanding of the performance of the school. Staff feel well supported and recognise that sometimes there is a lot of work to do. The school has accurately identified what needs further improvement. However, the school is trying to do too much too quickly and not ensuring that all the basics are securely in place before they move on to the next task.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all pupils have learned the basics in reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum's implementation does not ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge are quickly identified and addressed. This means some pupils are not ready for the next stage in their education. The trust should ensure that all pupils have the secure knowledge they need to become confident in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school are not consistent. This means pupils do not always know what is expected of them. Sometimes this results in pupils not working as hard as they could. The trust should ensure pupils are supported by high expectations and able to make the most of the learning opportunities on offer.
- The school is trying to improve too many aspects of the school at the same time. This means some improvements are in danger of being lost as staff move on to the next area for development. The trust should identify the most important things that need improving and then make it as easy as possible for staff and children to adopt the changes.

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	150587
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10344872
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pamela Cosh
CEO of the trust	Nicki Edwards
Headteacher	James Webb (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.stnicholashenstridge.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Significant changes in senior leadership have occurred in the school. A new executive headteacher, head of school and special educational needs coordinator have been in post since September 2024.
- The school uses one 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, considered curriculum information, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to a member of staff.
- 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

Phil Minns, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jyotsna Paranjape

Ofsted Inspector

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