

Inspection of The Cowbit St Mary's (Endowed) CofE Primary

Barrier Bank, Cowbit, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 6AE

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

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?

The headteacher and his staff have created a warm and welcoming school where pupils feel happy and safe. Pupils appreciate the care and support they receive. They know that staff will act promptly if they post a concern in the 'Worry Box'. One pupil, typical of many, said, 'If ever you feel distressed, you can always go to the teachers, and they will always help – they're always there for us.'

Pupils understand the school's values of forgiveness, trust, responsibility, perseverance, compassion and respect. As one pupil stated, 'We focus on a new value every half-term. We try hard to behave like them and show them.'

Pupils are polite and well behaved. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is not tolerated and does not really happen at their school. They are confident that staff deal with any issues quickly.

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should across the curriculum, including in the early years. This is because some subjects are not well planned. Pupils do not gain the knowledge they need to succeed in all areas of the curriculum. The school's approach to phonics is not helping all pupils to learn to read as well as they should.

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

In mathematics and science, learning has been planned in a logical order. In these subjects, knowledge and skills are taught in small steps. Teachers go over what pupils have learned in the past and help pupils remember what they need to know.

Leaders have not set out the knowledge that pupils need in all areas of the curriculum. In several subjects, leaders are uncertain about what pupils need to know as they move through the school. It is unclear how teachers should add to pupils' prior learning in these subjects. Consequently, pupils do not build their understanding step by step, and they do not gain a sufficient depth of knowledge by the time they reach the end of key stage 2. Leaders, including governors, cannot accurately assess the effectiveness of the curriculum in these subjects because it is not clear what pupils are expected to know.

In the early years, the curriculum is not planned in enough detail. It does not identify clearly what teachers want children to learn. Leaders are not sure how the early years connect to learning in other subjects as children get older.

Pupils have a positive attitude towards reading. They enjoy listening to their teachers read to them at story time. However, those in the early stages of learning to read are not as well supported as they could be. Younger pupils are not always given books to read that match the letter sounds that they know. This prevents them from developing their confidence and fluency. Some staff do not teach children how to say letter sounds precisely. Leaders are not clear about what letter sounds

pupils are expected to know and when they are expected to know them. In some cases, pupils move on from learning phonics too quickly.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support that is closely matched to their individual needs. Parents of pupils with SEND appreciate the care provided for their children. Systems are in place to quickly identify and respond to pupils with additional needs. Teachers adapt lessons to ensure pupils' individual needs are met. All pupils, including those with SEND, would benefit from a curriculum that is clearer about what they are required to know and remember.

Classrooms are calm places where pupils can concentrate and learn. Leaders work hard to improve attendance. The school has effective systems in place to monitor absence and address any issues as soon as they occur.

The promotion of pupils' personal development is a strength at The Cowbit St Mary's. Pupils know about the importance of fundamental British values. They show tolerance and respect towards diversity and difference. Pupils have been taught how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. Pupils appreciate the clubs and trips on offer at the school. The daily lunchtime club run by the school's sports coach is very popular. Pupils value their daily collective worship. Older children enjoy leading collective worship by choosing Bible verses to read.

Staff are proud to work at The Cowbit St Mary's. They appreciate the consideration given to their workload, well-being and training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have regular safeguarding training. Staff are aware of the signs that might show that a pupil is suffering from abuse. Staff know how to report safeguarding concerns. Leaders take appropriate actions to ensure pupils get the support they need. Governors carry out regular visits to make sure recruitment checks and safeguarding procedures are as they should be. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in the community and online. Pupils know to report anything that may be worrying them to a trusted adult.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' expectations for pupils' progress through the school's phonics programme are unclear. Not all staff have the expertise to teach phonics precisely. The books that some pupils are given to read are not matched to the letter sounds that they know. As a result, some pupils struggle to read unfamiliar words, and they do not develop sufficient confidence and fluency in reading. Leaders must ensure that they have ambitious expectations for progress in

phonics, that all staff are trained to teach phonics well and the books that pupils are given to read are closely matched to the phonics they know.

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the knowledge they want all pupils to learn. In these subjects, leaders have not set out what must be taught and in what order. This means that pupils do not build their understanding step by step, and they do not acquire a sufficient depth of knowledge by the time they reach the end of key stage 2. Leaders must ensure that the precise sequence of learning, and the most important content that pupils must remember, are clear in all subjects from the early years through to Year 6. Once this has been established, leaders must check that it is being implemented consistently well and pupils remember what they have been taught.
- In the subjects where the curriculum is not well sequenced, teachers are unable to make precise checks on prior learning or build on what pupils already know. As a result, pupils do not reliably recall what they have previously been taught or connect their learning in these subjects. Leaders must develop approaches in all subjects to ensure pupils remember the most important content and make links between what they are learning now and what they have learned before.

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	120611
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10241082
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	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pauline Start
Headteacher	Bruce Johnson
Website	www.cowbit.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2022. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.

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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and physical education. For the deep dives, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke to subject leaders, looked at subject plans and viewed pupils' work for art and geography.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, curriculum leaders and a sample of teaching and support staff. Inspectors met with the leaders responsible for the early years, pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of governance and documentation relating to attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from across the school.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Shaun Carter, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jackie Thornalley

Ofsted Inspector

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