

# Inspection of Borden Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Borden, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8JS

---

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2022

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy learning at Borden. They say that they are 'continuously getting smarter'. One spoke enthusiastically of her interest in finding out about George Seurat in art lessons, for instance. The older pupils recounted a recent skiing, snowboarding and tobogganing trip with great excitement.

Pupils are clear about teachers' expectations and want to do well. They work hard and behave well in lessons. Some of the older pupils spoke maturely about the impact changes in teacher have had on their learning this year. One said, 'It's been rough.' Children in Reception Year have settled into school very well. They are keen to learn and they join in with activities happily. The caring, welcoming and stimulating environment in their classroom helps them to flourish.

Pupils feel safe in school. They say that differences are respected and that they support one another, although occasional name-calling can be upsetting. Pupils are happy that any worries reported to staff are usually sorted out quickly. Discussions with leaders and a review of safeguarding records indicate that they take appropriate action where concerns about bullying are raised. However, records are not always completed well enough.

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

Leaders have developed a broad, rich and engaging curriculum during the past few years. It clearly sets out what should be taught, and when. The school's 'wisdom and wellbeing' programme underpins pupils' personal development. They have plenty of opportunities to contribute to the local community, and so develop a sense of personal responsibility. Recent projects, such as providing 'pampering packs' for a local care home and inviting a Member of Parliament to speak to pupils about sustainability, have been arranged in response to pupils' interests. The school's Christian ethos provides a firm framework for school life. For instance, during the inspection, one pupil quoted a line from the school prayer, 'This is a place where everyone is respected and all are valued', in response to an inspector's question.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the school in the past year. Staff changes have led to inconsistencies in teaching and expectations for some pupils, especially for the oldest. Leaders have worked tirelessly to recruit teachers to cover staff absence. The deputy headteacher's work with agency staff has helped to maintain continuity, and the situation has been more stable since February 2022. The quality of work in pupils' books has improved since then and progress has accelerated. However, some pupils are not as far ahead with their learning as they should be, despite these improvements.

Arrangements to cover staff absence in Reception Year have been more successful. Teaching assistants have played a key role in making sure that routines and expectations have been maintained. Children know what the rules are and follow

them. They listen carefully to their teachers and move between activities sensibly. Children in Reception Year are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their classmates and participate fully in all aspects of school life. The curriculum is suitably ambitious for these pupils. However, staff changes have led to some differences in how well the curriculum is adapted to support pupils' needs. This variability is reflected in parents' views. While some are very pleased with the support provided for their children, others express understandable concern. Leaders are determined to ensure consistently high-quality provision for pupils with SEND. They have already begun to secure notable improvements in teaching and learning.

The school's reading curriculum works well. All staff have been trained to teach phonics and do so effectively. This means that most pupils develop secure reading skills. Pupils who have fallen behind in their reading during the pandemic are benefiting from extra help and are beginning to catch up. A well-established approach to teaching phonics in Reception Year ensures that children are well placed for future learning. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they have read and about those that they would like to read in the future. The school's attractive and well-stocked library provides pupils with a generous range of books. However, some say that they would like more.

The school has experienced a challenging period during the pandemic. Staff have pulled together and have supported each other well during this time. They say that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being. Trustees are working constructively with leaders to support developments following the pandemic.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders use a range of activities to update staff in safeguarding matters, including regular input during staff meetings and timely training. As a result, staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding policies and are confident about what to do if they are worried. Leaders act promptly where a concern arises. They take suitable actions to ensure pupils' safety. However, incidents and follow-up actions are not always recorded properly. Leaders complete suitable recruitment checks when appointing staff. These are recorded appropriately in the single central record. The school's secure site ensures that pupils can play and learn safely.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Safeguarding records are not always completed consistently enough. For example, in a few cases, safeguarding incidents and follow-up actions have not been recorded properly. This makes it difficult for leaders to monitor safeguarding incidents reliably. Leaders have rightly identified the need to provide further staff

training in the use of the school's record system. They should make sure that this training takes place.

- Staff changes caused by the impact of the pandemic have led to variations in how well the curriculum is adjusted to support pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils do not always make the progress that they should. Leaders have already begun to make improvements. For example, in recent months, the special educational needs coordinator and the inclusion lead for the trust have reviewed provision. Guidance for staff has begun to take effect in the classrooms. Leaders have rightly identified the need to provide further staff training to ensure that the curriculum is successfully adapted for pupils with SEND. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144867
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10228536
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	128
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Helen Stewart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Godsell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.borden.kent.sch.uk">www.borden.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England school with a Christian ethos. The last statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place in 2018.
- Borden Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school in August 2017. When its predecessor school, Borden Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Almost all members of staff have been appointed since the previous inspection. The headteacher and her deputy were appointed in 2017.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher hold the same positions at another school within Our Community Multi-Academy Trust. Governance is provided by the trust and by a local monitoring council with delegated powers.
- The school does not use alternative provision currently.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this 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, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. They spoke with a range of staff at different times during the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the local monitoring council, including the chair. She also met with the chief executive officer, chair of trustees and four officers from the multi-academy trust. The lead inspector held an online meeting with a representative of the Diocese of Canterbury.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, and talking with leaders, teachers and pupils about how teaching in these subjects builds pupils' knowledge over time. The lead inspector also reviewed a sample of pupils' English books and listened pupils read to a member of staff.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to gather their views of the school. They also spoke with pupils in lessons, during breaktimes, and around the school.
- Inspectors assessed the school's culture of safeguarding throughout the inspection. The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documents and records. She also checked the single central record.
- The views of staff, parents and pupils were gathered through a range of sources, including Ofsted's surveys and discussions with inspectors.

## Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Owen McColgan

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022