

# Redbrook Church of England Primary School

Redbrook, Monmouth, Blaenau Gwent NP25 4LY

## Inspection dates

5–6 June 2019

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b> |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Good</b> |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Good</b> |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Good</b> |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Good</b> |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | <b>Good</b> |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders have worked with determination and dedication to successfully improve the areas for development identified at the previous inspection.
- Governors are committed and supportive of staff. However, they are not rigorous or systematic enough in their challenge to fully understand how well leaders' actions are bringing about improvements.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their areas of responsibility. They have implemented consistent ways of working and are now developing their skills to closely evaluate the impact of their actions.
- Leaders have successfully introduced a coherent approach to teaching and the use of assessment. Pupils respond regularly to teachers' guidance. However, the legacy of weaker teaching is shown, particularly in key stage 2, where pupils are not always accurate in their spelling, punctuation and understanding of phonics.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the new curriculum approach. They relish the opportunity to extend their thinking and make links across different areas of their learning.
- Leaders continue to work with the community to stress the importance of good attendance, particularly for those pupils who miss school regularly.
- Disadvantaged pupils benefit from additional interventions, but leaders do not evaluate these precisely enough to highlight which strategies are working and which are not.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their social, emotional and behavioural needs well supported. However, because interventions are not aligned sharply enough to pupils' academic needs, this group of pupils make variable progress.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged to apply their mathematical reasoning to solve problems.
- Pupils are curious and engaged. Older pupils look after younger pupils which promotes a harmonious and welcoming environment.
- There have been considerable improvements to the early years phase since the last inspection. The quality of provision is good and the small number of children who attend are better prepared for key stage 1.
- Leaders have ensured that the work to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development benefits pupils and prepares them well for the future.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management further, by ensuring that:
  - governors develop their strategic role so that they are sharper in their evaluation of the impact of leaders' actions, including how leaders use additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils
  - leaders continue to embed practice so that teachers adapt their planning to stretch the most able to demonstrate a higher level of skill and provide support for those pupils who need it
  - middle leaders sustain the improvements that have been made and refine their skills to evaluate the impact of strategies more precisely.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further so that pupils achieve the highest standards of which they are capable, by:
  - ensuring that teachers direct pupils more precisely to activities that will remedy their misconceptions, especially in their use of spelling, punctuation and grammar and their understanding of phonics
  - supporting pupils to be able to apply their reasoning confidently to solve mathematical problems.
- Improve pupils' personal development and welfare, by continuing to support pupils who do not attend school regularly.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- School leaders work as a dynamic team with great energy and gusto. They have demonstrated integrity and tenacity to ensure the best standards of education for pupils. They have not sought to make excuses but have been responsive to the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. To this end, they have made changes to their leadership structure and have utilised staffing from their partner school to provide the capacity needed to achieve this. Their vision for pupils of: 'Striving to be the best we can be' is equally relevant to leaders' approach.
- Leaders have been proactive in inviting external scrutiny of the quality of their work. The local authority has provided support, and this has ensured an objective view of what the school is doing well and what needs further refinement. This objectivity has enabled leaders to prioritise their actions sensibly and to work systematically through the issues presented. There is, therefore, clarity and accuracy in leaders' self-evaluation.
- Newly appointed subject leaders have taken a decisive lead in driving improvement in their subject areas. They are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, developing their expertise so that they are well informed about what effective teaching looks like in their subject areas. They have established a consistent approach to teaching and to the use of assessment which is known and understood by both staff and pupils. They understand the pivotal nature of their roles and are developing their skills to precisely evaluate the impact of the many actions they have taken.
- Staff are developing their skills through well-chosen professional development. Staff are reflective and responsive to ideas, actively seeking to develop their practice to meet the needs of mixed-aged classes. This, together with the regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, has established a consistency of approach. Staff discuss the progress that pupils are making with leaders regularly. They are now poised to use assessment information more precisely, either to direct the most able pupils to tasks that will provide greater challenge, or to tackle the gaps in learning that exist for some pupils.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the curriculum and teachers have begun to introduce a new approach, which is welcomed by pupils. Pupils are inquisitive to make links between different aspects of their learning. The 'wonder walls' invite them to pose their own questions about what they would like to find out, which means that they feel involved in the direction their learning will take. As curriculum plans crystallise, leaders are refining them to ensure that the curriculum reflects the distinct character of the school. For example, the 'Foresters Programme', in partnership with English Heritage, has enabled pupils to make use of their local environment to enhance their learning.
- Leaders identify the needs of disadvantaged pupils and provide suitable support, particularly for pupils who join the school mid-year. As a result, pupils are largely making the progress that they should, and more are reaching the standards expected for their ages. However, there is a lack of sharpness in leaders' evaluation of the impact of the individual strategies employed. The agreed success criteria are often too generic and ambiguous or not closely enough aligned to pupils' outcomes. Therefore, it

is difficult for leaders and teachers to know what has worked and what has not to help them plan future expenditure.

- Pupils with SEND are well looked after and cared for. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is knowledgeable about the needs of pupils and ensures that their emotional and social needs are well met within a nurturing environment. However, strategies, and their impact, are not closely enough aligned to pupils' academic development. Consequently, there is variability in the rates of progress that such pupils make from their starting points. Some pupils are not catching up quickly enough and, in some cases, fall further behind their peers.
- Leaders have made substantial changes to the early years provision. Staff have completely reshaped the learning environment to delineate learning spaces for children to develop their skills in all areas of the curriculum. Staff have successfully distinguished this provision from that of key stage 1, while at the same time using the mixed-aged nature of the class to prepare children in Reception to make this transition. The early years leader is knowledgeable about this phase and has a clear understanding of how to use planning and assessment effectively to support children's development.
- Staff organise a range of experiences for pupils to broaden their horizons and to explore their local environment. The physical education (PE) and sport premium has been used effectively and diligently. This has been successful in increasing pupils' enthusiasm to take part in activities, either recreationally in the playground or in competitive situations. Leaders have appointed additional staff who have the skill and the passion to promote this area of pupils' learning. Such expertise is being used to train staff to evaluate the impact of activities on the development of pupils' skills.
- Parents and carers are largely positive and supportive of the school. One comment reflects the sentiment of others: 'The school is a unique place, creating a family feel and sense of belonging which can celebrate the children's achievements and self-confidence.'

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are supportive of school leaders and cognisant of staff well-being. They understand the importance of their role. They are developing their long-term vision to create a framework so that there is clarity about the direction they want the school to take. They have attended relevant training to help them fulfil their role more effectively.
- Governors receive regular updates from school leaders to keep them informed of developments. Governors use these to begin to ask more probing questions about the efficacy of leaders' actions. They have made changes to the content of their agendas so that pertinent issues can be shared more widely across the governing body. However, this is not yet stringent enough. For example, while governors are aware of how additional funding is allocated, their knowledge is patchy about the impact of these actions.
- Governors are beginning to visit the school so that they gain a first-hand account of the quality of standards, but these visits are not yet regular or systematic. Therefore, governors are too reliant on what senior leaders tell them rather than being able to

evaluate this for themselves. The conclusions reached from initial visits are not routinely shared more widely with the full governing body, so that subsequent actions can be agreed.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a vigilance about keeping pupils safe. They have updated systems to record referrals and actions and have reviewed all the necessary policies. They make statutory checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff have received the appropriate training, are provided with risk assessments and are aware of the signs to be watchful for.
- Leaders work with external partners to support pupils who are potentially at risk. This has had a positive impact on such pupils' behaviour and rates of attendance.
- Some of the necessary information on the single central record and incidents of the very rare use of positive handling to protect pupils was not recorded. This was corrected at the time of the inspection and is an administrative oversight rather than a risk to pupils' well-being and safety.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Senior leaders have prioritised the improvement of teaching and learning with success. There is an agreed approach, which is supporting current pupils to make good progress. Teachers have raised expectations of pupils' presentation and teachers model these high expectations. Teaching, typically, reflects that teachers plan activities that are engaging and suited to pupils' age or ability. They use questioning effectively to clarify and reinforce pupils' understanding, encouraging them to deliberate their answers, and share them with others before reaching a conclusion.
- Teachers use assessment well to gauge pupils' level of understanding and what they need to do next. Teachers give specific advice about how pupils can improve their work and, because this is established practice, pupils respond. They refine their work to show that they have understood and can apply this guidance. Pupils understand the importance of this and are keen to share what they have done.
- Leaders track pupils' progress regularly and there is confidence in the accuracy of these judgements, through shared moderation and external validation. At times, teachers do not use this information to adjust their planning to direct pupils to activities that are better suited to their level of ability. This means that the most able pupils do not always have the scope to practise the identified skill within the broader context of becoming a successful writer or mathematical thinker.
- A whole-school approach to mathematics has been instrumental in building pupils' fluency and confidence. Pupils cover content sequentially to build on what they have done before. Pupils are encouraged to draw on their prior knowledge, visually displayed on learning walls, and apply it to the task in hand. Teachers reinforce subject terminology and identify misconceptions in real time. This means that these are remedied quickly, allowing pupils to move on. Some pupils are not moved on when

they have demonstrated their competence, so that they solve more complex problems and practise articulating their reasoning.

- Leaders have prioritised the development of pupils' writing. Pupils' books show that pupils write for a range of audiences and purposes and understand the conventions of different genres. In key stage 2, the most able pupils write sophisticated compositions, vary their sentence construction and use a wide range of vocabulary. In key stage 1, pupils move from tentative mark making, to forming identifiable letters and words, and from there, increasingly sustain their writing.
- Nonetheless, the legacy of weaker teaching prevails, particularly in key stage 2. This means that some pupils' writing is hindered by inaccurate spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Some pupils' phonic understanding is not secure so that their attempts at unfamiliar words are not phonetically plausible. It is not clear how teachers are seeking to bridge these gaps for current pupils. These technical flaws detract from pupils' meaning and the development of their ideas.
- Pupils are encouraged to read for purpose and for enjoyment. Pupils understand the importance of reading regularly and do so with fluency, intonation and expression. Teachers have adopted an agreed approach to developing pupils' comprehension skills which has been successful. The most able pupils are encouraged to infer meaning and support their ideas with evidence from the text.
- Teaching in the early years phase mirrors the same strengths as across the school. Children are keen to take part in activities, either when working with an adult or independently. Teachers use the framework of the key stage 1 curriculum adapted to age-appropriate tasks. For example, staff make use of the outdoor environment to develop children's understanding of letters and sounds, so that they develop early phonic skills in preparation for their writing.
- Teaching assistants are developing their skills to support pupils' learning. In the early years phase, they prompt children to talk about what they are doing and model the structures of conversation. For example, children's understanding of money was reinforced in their role-play activity as they counted out the coins to pay for the items they had bought. The development of children's understanding was reflected in a future activity where children showed that they could do this independently, saying that they would need to 'scan' the items to find out the price.
- Assessment in the early years phase is now much sharper. Teachers have developed systems that track children's achievements, using visual evidence to record formal assessments but also capturing incidental observations. Together, this information gives an accurate indication of children's skills. Teachers use this information to adapt planning. At times, children need more guidance to take part in activities that will develop the skills they need for key stage 1.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Staff and pupils develop positive working relationships. This creates a convivial environment where pupils can learn effectively. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well considered. While pupils do not fully recognise the British values, they understand the school's Christian values which are central to its ethos. For example, key stage 2 pupils had used the four school values to construct the school's prayer, which they were going to teach to younger pupils. They are encouraged to reflect on different faiths and are interested in other cultures. They say it is important that they do so.
- Pupils demonstrate the ethos of the school through their outlook and their interactions with each other. Pupils say that bullying is rare and can distinguish between this and pupils 'falling out'. Pupils say that they have confidence that staff will resolve any issues that do occur.
- Older pupils recognise their responsibility to model good manners and cooperation, so that younger pupils understand and develop these skills. Often, during the inspection, key stage 2 pupils were observed helping key stage 1 pupils with their games and activities during social time.
- Teachers follow a structured programme to develop pupils' personal, social and health awareness which takes into account pupils' views. Pupils understand how to eat healthily and participate in the 'daily mile' which stresses the importance of physical activity. Staff reinforce mental well-being through focused days that centre on this issue.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They talk about visits from the local police officer and understand how to recognise and manage risk in their daily lives. They are unaware, however, about how to protect themselves from those who might try to influence them with extreme views.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils display well-developed social skills, and many feel confident to initiate conversations with adults. Pupils are engaging and display positive attitudes to their learning and during social times. Key stage 2 pupils were well considered in their responses to the questions posed by the inspector, often displaying an ability to consider different viewpoints during the conversation.
- Instances of poor behaviour are rare. Staff are aware of pupils who find certain situations difficult to manage and skilfully support them to express their feelings and access the support they need. The success of this approach is reflected in the very small number of exclusions that have taken place over the last three years. The majority of parents, staff and pupils agree that behaviour at the school is good.
- Leaders promote the importance of regular attendance to parents and pupils. Rates of overall absence have declined over recent years as a result. The majority of pupils attend school regularly. Where pupils have higher rates of absence, the school works closely with families to offer support.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- As cohort sizes are small, there have been fluctuations in outcomes over the last three years. The inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning in the past has contributed to these variations in all key stages. While pupils make progress in line with national figures in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6, too few pupils achieve the expected standard in combined reading, writing and mathematics. No pupils have achieved the higher standard in the last three years.
- The work scrutinised shows that current pupils are making more sustained and secure progress due to the improvements in the quality of education they receive. This is not always reflected in published outcomes as many pupils join the school at points other than in Reception. Such pupils make progress during their time at the school, but they do not always reach age-related expectations because of gaps in their knowledge.
- The most able pupils do not reach the highest standards of which they are capable. In key stage 1 and in early key stage 2, there is an improving picture but, because of weaker teaching in the past, this is still not secure by the end of Years 5 and 6. Pupils are not always directed to tasks that will allow them to develop higher level skills.
- As this is a smaller than average-sized school, the number of pupils with additional needs or those pupils entitled to pupil premium funding can represent a very small cohort. Because of this, it is difficult to identify trends for particular groups of pupils. Scrutiny of current pupils' work shows that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are making better progress. However, some pupils in the latter group do not catch up quickly enough, because the gaps in their knowledge and skills are not rectified quickly. Leaders have identified pupils who would benefit from further support to remedy this.
- The same fluctuations in standards are evident in the early years provision, in terms of the proportion of children who reach the expected standards for their age. However, from their starting points, children are increasingly making better progress because of the improvements made to this phase.
- The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 supports pupils to develop their skills, but not all pupils achieve the standard expected in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1. Current pupils in Year 2 are on track to achieve this benchmark. Current pupils in key stage 2 have deficits in their understanding of phonics, which affects the accuracy of their spelling. This weakness, along with deficiencies in punctuation and grammar, are reflected in pupils' independent work and in the formal assessment at the end of Year 6.



## School details

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique reference number | 115639          |
| Local authority         | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number       | 10086896        |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Type of school                      | Primary  |
| School category                     | Voluntary controlled   |
| Age range of pupils                 | 4 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 32   |
| Appropriate authority               | The governing body   |
| Chair                               | Philip Hall  |
| Executive Headteacher               | Sarah Helm   |
| Telephone number                    | 01600 713501   |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.redbrookprimaryschool.co.uk">www.redbrookprimaryschool.co.uk</a> |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:admin@redbrook.gloucs.sch.uk">admin@redbrook.gloucs.sch.uk</a>       |
| Date of previous inspection         | 16 October 2018  |

## Information about this school

- The school received a short inspection in October 2018. Although the school was judged still to be good, the inspector identified some priorities for improvement.
- Redbrook Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in two classes. The proportion of pupils who join the school either mid-year or at points other than in Reception is higher than is typical nationally.
- The school is part of the Wye Valley Federation, consisting of two primary schools.
- The executive headteacher was appointed in September 2017. Since this time, there have been considerable changes in staffing and leadership roles.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background. The school has four of the 17 ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

- The number of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The number of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is lower than the national average.
- Governors are awaiting the outcome of the recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools, to assess the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school. The previous inspection in 2015 deemed the school to be 'satisfactory'.
- There are three children who attend the early years provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning across a range of subjects and age groups, and scrutinised pupils' written work. Observations were conducted jointly with members of the leadership team.
- The inspector met with members of the leadership team and representatives from the governing body. In addition, inspectors met with curriculum and pastoral leaders. The inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector met with pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their experience of school.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation, including the evaluation of the school's effectiveness and priorities for future improvement. The inspector reviewed progress, behaviour and attendance information relating to current pupils, and governors' records.
- School policies relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour, the use of additional funding (including the pupil premium and the PE and sport premium), and the curriculum were also scrutinised.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour before school, in lessons, at lunchtime and breaktimes, as well as around the school site.
- The inspector listened to a selection of pupils read.
- The inspectors spoke with several parents to seek their views about the school. She considered 13 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, together with five free-text responses, seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 13 responses to the pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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