

# Wilcombe Primary School

Lazenby Road, Tiverton EX16 4AL

## Inspection dates

24–25 May 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The head of school is well respected and leads with clarity. She has galvanised a staff team who go the 'extra mile' to meet pupils' needs. This has led to ongoing and sustained improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection.
- The strong partnership with the executive headteacher and the academy trust has provided effective challenge and support for leaders and teachers to improve.
- The head of school has established a culture which ensures that all pupils believe in themselves. Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to try their best.
- Effective teaching in mathematics is leading to pupils at all levels making better than expected progress.
- Particularly effective phonics support in the teaching of early reading skills is helping younger children to get off to a very good start.
- Good use is made of the additional government funding. Pupils eligible for pupil premium are catching up quickly.
- Pupils' safety, personal development and well-being are managed well. This contributes to a harmonious environment. Pupils are enthused and supported to achieve their goals.
- Staff build effective relationships with parents to enable them to support their children in becoming successful learners. Parents are very positive about the school's work.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Action plans do not include measurable objectives to enable leaders to precisely check the impact of the actions taken to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Attendance, while improving, is still too low.
- Teachers do not insist on the highest standards of presentation and handwriting.
- Middle leaders are not fully involved in driving improvements in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

## Full report

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

- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - middle leaders have greater involvement in driving improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school
  - plans for improvement include short-term targets, so that leaders and members of the academy trust can drive improvement more rapidly.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
  - have the highest expectations for standards of presentation and handwriting.
- Strengthen the rigour with which you improve attendance by:
  - building relationships with parents to improve attendance for those younger pupils who also have special educational needs or disability
  - reviewing strategies that are already in place so that they continue to have a good impact.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The head of school, with strong support from the executive headteacher and the Primary Academies Trust, is driving the continual improvement of the school. Areas for improvement in the previous inspection have been successfully tackled and previous strengths have developed further.
- The head of school is well respected by staff, governors, parents and pupils. Pupils and staff feel valued, they share a pride in the school and work hard to be successful.
- Senior leaders have driven improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and assessment across the school. Collaboration is at the heart of their work. Close work with other schools in the trust has supported improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, teachers across the trust check the accuracy of their assessments together. Teachers are reflective and share their good practice with each other. For example, the significant improvement in the teaching of phonics is the result of close work with another school. Similarly, teachers at Wilcombe have been able to share their successful approach to the teaching of mathematics. This work has led to ongoing improvements in pupils' attainment and progress.
- The trust's strong performance management processes ensure that all staff are held to account. Staff are set challenging targets which directly link to the impact of their teaching on pupils' outcomes. The impact of this approach is seen in the improving standards across the school.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. In particular, they have focused on equality and improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Pupil premium funding has been used effectively. As a result of carefully planned support, these pupils are now making accelerated progress.
- Leaders ensure that teachers plan activities and make links across subjects that are relevant and interesting to pupils. Through an exciting curriculum, teachers ensure a rigorous focus on key literacy skills. For example, recent work on Rio is enabling pupils to gain a greater understanding of the country and its people in the lead up to the Olympic Games. Pupils read and apply their writing skills to produce information texts about the country.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The school's 'golden values' are understood by all. Pupils told the inspector 'our values are like Jenga blocks, when we work together we can be strong and support each other'. Residential visits with pupils from other schools help pupils to appreciate the similarities and differences between themselves and others. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school uses sports premium funding effectively to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in physical education. As a result, teachers have developed their expertise and more pupils are enjoying physical education and are participating in sports clubs. This is supporting them in leading a healthy lifestyle.
- The head of school has ensured that pupils with additional needs receive high-quality support to enable them to make good progress from their starting points. Experienced leaders work with teachers to plan and implement personalised support for pupils who need it. As a result, most pupils make exceptional progress. However, there are a small group of younger pupils with special educational needs or disability with poor attendance. The progress of these pupils is not as rapid as for others with good attendance.
- Middle leaders are playing an increasingly significant role in the school. Their work so far has been effective in checking pupils' learning and progress. They identify gaps in pupils' learning and help teachers to put the right measures in place to ensure that these gaps are filled. Currently, middle leaders' work is limited to reacting to information and is less proactive in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. Middle leaders are well placed to lead improvements because of their close network with other schools.
- Leaders accurately identify the school's areas for improvement. However, objectives in action plans lack short-term targets. This limits the precision with which governors and senior leaders can challenge improvement to ensure rapid progress for all groups of pupils across all subjects.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The academy trust and the local board govern the school effectively. The local governing body is well supported by the systems and protocols of the trust board. This ensures that local governors are skilled in asking challenging questions of leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve. They have an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve and hold the head of

school to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

- Local governors make sure that the spending of additional funds, including sport and pupil premium, impacts positively on pupils' experience and their learning.
- The trust board oversees the school's work in aspects such as finance, staff and health and safety. The trust's capacity to draw upon the skills of a wide range of professionals' support has enabled the school to resolve areas for improvement identified at the last inspection as well as developing its strengths.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have established a strong culture of keeping children safe. The head of school has ensured that all staff are up to date with current legislation. This includes training for staff to empower children to not be influenced by the extreme views or opinions of others. The trust has established external verification procedures to ensure that the school is a safe and secure place for pupils. Checks made on teachers before taking up their appointments are thorough. All staff are trained to recognise and act on signs of harm or risk. Records demonstrate that leaders are vigilant and leave nothing to chance.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection and is now typically good. Teachers use what they know about the pupils to plan work that is fun, interesting and challenging. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils were learning about the circulatory system. They were assigned roles of blood cells, the heart, lungs etc. Pupils taking the role of blood cells moved around the body parts to be oxygenised. Pupils were engrossed in the activity, used appropriate scientific vocabulary and were able to explain their clear understanding of the circulatory system.
- Teachers benefit from sharing good practice with other teachers in the academy trust. Their work to develop assessments, to introduce new ideas from training events and to check the standard of pupils' work is effective. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving and is leading to improved rates of progress for pupils in the school.
- Teachers use skilful questioning to check pupils' understanding and to deepen pupils' thinking. Opportunities for work with other teachers and leaders in the trust enable teachers to develop and refine their practice. For example, work in mathematics books shows an increasing focus on the teaching of reasoning and problem-solving. This has resulted in high standards in mathematics because pupils develop fluent recall of facts and efficient strategies in mathematics.
- Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons. They are highly valued, are well directed by teachers and receive regular training. Consequently, the pupils that they support make good progress and develop positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Teachers check pupils' learning frequently. They identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills and adapt their plans to tackle these gaps. This has led to accelerated progress for pupils.
- Teachers adhere very closely to the school's marking policy. They consistently use the school's approaches to give pupils feedback on their learning. In addition, teachers give pupils opportunities to reflect on their own learning and assess their peers' work. Consequently, pupils gain a strong understanding of what to aim for and how to improve.
- Relationships between staff and pupils strongly contribute to the progress pupils make. Teachers nurture effective learning behaviours in their pupils and encourage pupils to think for themselves. A consistent application of the school's behaviour policy ensures that pupils respond to teachers' instructions. Pupils settle quickly, take responsibility for their learning and strive to do their best.
- The teaching of reading is good. Children in the Reception class make rapid progress in their knowledge of phonics. Early reading skills are taught effectively. High expectations for reading regularly, and a well-stocked library, ensure that pupils develop a love of reading which stays with them as they move through the school.
- Teachers set most-able pupils appropriately challenging activities for them to deepen their thinking and extend their learning. A group of pupils told the inspector: 'We have no boundaries in our learning. Every day we learn something new.'
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress as a result of targeted learning. The gap between these pupils and their classmates is closing rapidly in mathematics and has been eradicated in reading and writing.
- Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs or disability are given the resources and the support they need to make good progress from their starting points.

- The homework set by teachers is used effectively to consolidate the learning that takes place in school.
- The teaching of writing has led to much-improved outcomes in both key stages 1 and 2. Teachers' strong subject knowledge has resulted in pupils producing pieces of writing which are well organised and show a good use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations for pupils' handwriting and presentation. This hinders the progress that pupils make in writing and prevents them from achieving higher levels in statutory tests.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Robust safeguarding arrangements and the proactive approach of leaders to work with other agencies supports the safety and well-being of pupils. Leaders of safeguarding keep meticulous records and are tenacious in seeking support for pupils and their families. This helps the school to fully address the learning and welfare needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- Leaders are uncompromising in their work to ensure pupils' emotional well-being. They make sure that the school is a safe and harmonious place. Pupils develop an acute awareness of their own identity and respect the similarities and differences in others. Pupils' writing about their visit to the British Legion demonstrated great respect for those who died in the war. Their recent project on the 'Invictus Games' showed pupils' admiration for the athletes. Pupils were able to link this to their own lives. Their work and conversations show an understanding of the importance of developing resilience and not letting problems 'get in the way' of learning.
- The school's 'nurture' facility provides effective support for pupils who are emotionally vulnerable. Children articulate how this provision helps them to understand their feelings. There has been a reduction in the number of behaviour incidents as a result of effective support in helping pupils to 'get back on track'.
- Pupils feel valued and respected at Wilcombe. A group of pupils accompanied an inspector on a tour of the school. They spoke about their school with pride and described how adults help them to learn and 'be good citizens'.
- Pupils enjoy their healthy lunches at school. They know the importance of healthy eating. Pupils participate enthusiastically in permaculture and play activities where they grow their own produce and prepare their own lunch. They display high levels of social skills as they prepare and serve the food, clear away and wash dishes. This work contributes to the strong community ethos within the school.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They play happily together at play and lunchtimes.
- Pupils understand what constitutes bullying and say that it rarely happens. They have confidence in the staff and trust them to sort out issues on the rare occasions where there are problems.
- 'Golden values' are embedded in the school's work and impact on a daily basis as pupils take responsibility for their learning and try hard in lessons. They show great respect for others' ideas and views. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils listened intently to each other's ideas and eagerly took part in 'extending' one another's contributions.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong awareness of how their actions affect and influence others. For example, in their fund-raising for their most recent charity, Dementia Awareness, pupils learned about the challenges people with dementia face and were proud that funds went to help sufferers to receive the support they need.
- Attendance is improving steadily but remains below the national average. Leaders have developed effective strategies to tackle absences and staff work hard to engage the support of other professionals where necessary. While actions have increased the level of attendance overall, leaders need to tackle the issue with greater urgency for the small group of younger pupils with special educational needs or disability.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' progress over time has improved. In 2015, pupils made better progress than most pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. A higher than average proportion of pupils made rapid progress in reading and mathematics to achieve the higher standards.
- Achievement and progress in reading are strong in all year groups. Younger pupils quickly develop reading skills. There has been a trend in the last three years of rising standards in reading in key stage 1 as a result of improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Historically, boys did not achieve as well as girls in reading and writing. As a result of targeted support, boys are now achieving at a faster rate and have 'caught up' with the girls. Similarly, boys outperformed girls in mathematics. The additional support the school has provided for girls in mathematics has resulted in girls achieving similar levels to the boys.
- An increasing proportion of pupils are set to reach the expected standards in Year 1 phonics. Pupils are confident in sounding out unfamiliar words. The few pupils who do not achieve the expected standard in Year 1 are supported well so they catch up by Year 2.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has been good for the last three years. In 2015, pupils achieved above the national average. Work in books across the school shows that pupils are increasingly able to apply their understanding of number to problem-solve. Pupils enjoy the challenges teachers set and carry out complex mathematical problems successfully.
- Standards that pupils reach at the end of key stage 1 have improved steadily since the previous inspection. Work in books now shows that more pupils are achieving at the higher levels than previously. Attainment in mathematics is particularly strong, with the proportion achieving the highest level 3 broadly in line with the national average. Although historically the largest gap to the national average has been in writing, the increased effectiveness of phonics teaching is rapidly closing this gap.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress for this group of pupils is particularly strong in writing, where they arrive with lower starting points than other pupils. Teachers' carefully targeted support for pupils has 'filled the gaps' in their learning and enabled them to catch up quickly.
- Most-able pupils make good progress. Teachers plan interesting and challenging activities that extend their learning. These pupils also benefit from additional clubs and activities where they work with pupils in schools across the trust to develop team-working skills and solve challenges.
- The majority of pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good or better progress in their personal development and achieve well from their starting points. This is because well-qualified staff help them to make good progress. A small proportion of these pupils have poor attendance and make slower progress than other pupils. Leaders have identified this issue but work with parents and external agencies is slow to impact on improving the attendance and progress for this group of pupils.
- The content of pupils' writing is improving rapidly. Teachers plan lots of opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills in subjects other than English, such as history and science. Writing in books demonstrates sophisticated vocabulary choices and a good understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Poor handwriting skills detract from the quality of the content and are hampering the progress that pupils make in writing.

## Early years provision

is good

- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has improved year on year since the last inspection and is now above the national average.
- Pupils enter the nursery with less well developed skills in managing feelings and behaviour compared to other aspects of their development. Adults model and place great emphasis on developing sharing and turn-taking skills. Consequently, pupils quickly learn the importance of cooperating and being respectful to one another. This contributes to a happy atmosphere where children behave well and feel safe to learn together.
- Regular staff training ensures that all staff are vigilant in carrying out their duties to provide good care for children to keep them safe from harm.
- Indoor and outdoor areas are well maintained, carefully thought out and contribute well to children's enjoyment of learning. Areas are exciting and enticing. Children enjoyed 'making potions for bad guys' in the mud kitchen and making rockets in the construction area. The wide range of high-quality resources

available to children engages children's interests and supports them in sustaining high levels of concentration.

- Teachers engage and motivate children and promote a commitment to learning. For example, in the class 'café' the teaching assistant's clear modelling of language supported children in using effective dialogue while carrying out their 'waiter' and 'customer' roles. The waiter laid the table correctly, selecting colours of cutlery and the appropriate numbers of items needed for his customers.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Most children now read and write simple sentences and apply their phonics knowledge well. Occasionally, teachers' expectations could be even higher to ensure that the most able children make rapid progress with their writing, for example ensuring that pupils hold their pencils properly and encouraging a consistently fluent style of writing and the use of capital letters and full stops.
- Parents are fully involved in their child's education. Teachers carry out home visits before children join the school and build on these links throughout the year. Parent workshops on reading and phonics, for example, support parents in helping their children. Parents typically commented, 'This is a cracking school. I can't recommend it highly enough', 'Staff are so approachable'.
- Teachers make effective use of information from their observations and assessments to plan for individual children's next steps. This contributes to the good progress children make. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs or disability make good progress from their starting points. Highly targeted support ensures that 'gaps in learning' are closed quickly.
- The early years leader provides high-quality leadership. Her tenacious approach and well-honed analytical skills ensure that children leave the Reception class as confident and 'well rounded' learners. Consequently, children are well prepared for Year 1.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137659
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012371

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	184
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The trust governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Phil Chambers
<b>Executive headteacher</b>	Ashley Leeson
<b>Head of school</b>	Louise Oxenham
<b>Telephone number</b>	01884 253 052
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wilcombe-pri.devon.sch.uk">www.wilcombe-pri.devon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:wilcombe@thepat.org.uk">wilcombe@thepat.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12–13 May 2014

## Information about this school

- Wilcombe Primary School is a smaller than average-sized school.
- The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is above average. This is the additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The school is part of the Primary Academies Trust. This is a group of 11 schools that work in a collaborative way. There is an executive headteacher who oversees the school's work along with that of three other schools in the trust. The head of school at Wilcombe has responsibility for the daily running of the school.
- The school runs an integrated Nursery and Reception class. Children attend the nursery from the age of three on a part-time basis. Reception-aged children attend the class full time.
- There is a children's centre and a privately run nursery that share the same site as the school. These were not part of the inspection of this school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 12 lessons or parts of lessons, eight of which were observed jointly with the senior leaders.
- Discussions took place with the head of school, executive headteacher, chief executive officer and with the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors met twice with middle leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including minutes from governors' meetings, school improvement plans and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspection team scrutinised the quality of pupils' work over time and listened to what pupils had to say about their learning.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes. An inspector listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes, breaktimes and around the school.
- An inspector conducted a walk around the school with pupils to look at curriculum displays, the promotion of British values and to find out how they feel about their learning.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of parents and considered 11 responses to the online survey, Parent View. Questionnaire responses from 20 members of staff were also analysed.

## Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector

Lizzie Meadows

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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