

# Musbury Primary School

Church Hill, Musbury, Axminster, Devon EX13 8BB

## Inspection dates

8–9 May 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	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Since his appointment in 2018, the head of school, ably supported by senior leaders in the trust, has worked tirelessly to stabilise staffing and improve pupils' outcomes.
- The governors and the trust are determined to provide pupils with the best possible education. Collectively, they have a clear and detailed understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve further.
- Current pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Skilled teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils in class and through one-to-one support, which is helping pupils overcome any barriers they may have to learning.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Younger pupils use their phonics knowledge well to help them develop early reading and writing skills.
- Parents and carers are wholly supportive of the school and hold the leadership and the trust in high regard.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average.
- Pupils behave well in school. They are polite and respectful of each other and are keen to follow the school values. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour. However, where work is not well matched to pupils' abilities, pupils' focus wanders and this slows their progress.
- Teachers typically plan lessons for mixed-age and key stage classes well. However, teachers do not consistently match reading books well enough to the abilities of lower-attaining pupils. This hampers their progress.
- In mathematics, teachers do not provide the most able pupils with sufficient challenge. Consequently, these pupils do not consistently reach their full potential.
- Subject leaders are new to their roles. They have not developed their skills fully to be able to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility.
- The curriculum motivates pupils. It provides pupils with memorable learning and broadens their horizons. Nevertheless, pupils have limited opportunities to develop mathematics skills beyond calculation and number.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - the mathematics curriculum is planned so that pupils have more opportunities to learn mathematical concepts beyond calculation and number
  - subject leaders' skills are developed further so that they are able to check on and influence improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - mathematics work is well targeted to challenge the most able pupils so that they reach their full potential
  - teachers use what they know about what pupils can already do to match reading texts with greater accuracy so that lower-attaining pupils secure the skills required to read fluently.
- Improve further pupils' personal development and behaviour by ensuring that teachers provide sufficient challenge to maintain pupils' focus.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The recently appointed head of school leads this welcoming school with a determined commitment to continuous improvement. He is ably supported by a capable team of senior leaders and expertise from within the trust. Together, they have steered the school through a turbulent financial and staffing period.
- The school has small pupil numbers from year to year. However, pupil numbers are increasing, and leaders make adequate changes to the class structure so that it best suits pupils at the school. Furthermore, they have managed well the high mobility and additional needs of pupils who join the school mid-year.
- The trust has a strong influence on the work of the school. There is a collegiate and determined approach to improvement. Leaders are ambitious, and they make sure that their decisions ensure the full inclusion of all pupils. Parents who spoke with me and who replied to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, feel that the trust has had a significant impact on raising standards.
- Leaders closely monitor the progress of pupils with SEND. This allows for the special educational needs coordinator to carefully identify any gaps in learning and swiftly put support in place to meet pupils' needs. As a result, most pupils with SEND are making strong progress from their individual starting points.
- The leader responsible for the early years has a good understanding of what constitutes effective provision. She leads a team of highly motivated staff who have high expectations of what children can do. Children in the early years are making strong progress from the time they enter the school.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. This enables the small number of disadvantaged pupils to make good progress and attain as well as their peers. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is checked carefully to ensure that any lull in progress is addressed swiftly.
- The physical education and sport premium funding is used well. The funding is used to provide additional opportunities for pupils, such as CrossFit and fencing. Leaders place equality of opportunity at the heart of the additional funding. This has resulted in a growing number of pupils engaging with sport in and outside of school. Furthermore, funding is used to provide specialist sports coaching for teachers to develop their skills. Teachers are positive about their professional development.
- All parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, are supportive of leaders. One parent, typical of others, commented, 'We feel very lucky to have found such an excellent school.' All parents who met with the inspector indicated that they hold the school in high regard.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and fundamental British values. For example, pupils learn about tolerance in assemblies regarding the recent events in Sri Lanka and how such actions are a result of extremist views. There are many opportunities for older pupils to have positions of responsibility. One house captain told me it was a privilege and an honour

to be the leader of his house.

- The wider curriculum is full of engaging and interesting experiences for pupils. Recently, leaders reviewed their approach to the delivery of the curriculum. Pupils who spoke with me were enthused by the opportunities that it brings. Pupils in key stage 2 were keen to tell me about their recent topic 'raging torrents' and how a visit to Seton Wetlands underpinned their understanding of the features of a river. They were keen to recall how a river shapes the geographical landscape. Furthermore, work in pupils' books shows how pupils have used experiences to deepen their understanding further.
- However, pupils do not study the mathematics curriculum in sufficient depth and this limits pupils' ability to be able to use and apply a range of mathematical concepts beyond calculation and number.
- In this small school, subject leadership responsibility is shared collaboratively between staff. Following a period of staff turbulence, roles and responsibilities have recently been allocated and it is too early to see any discernible impact of middle leaders' work. There is planned training in place to develop the role of subject leaders.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective. Governors play a strategic role in driving improvements in the school. The local governing body is stringently held to account by the board of trustees. A review of governors' minutes indicates the high level of challenge and relentless pursuit of excellence afforded to leaders. Governors review all pupils' outcomes regularly and ask challenging question of leaders.
- Governors do not readily accept the information they are being presented with. Governors regularly commission external verification of the school's work to provide further checks. Their monitoring of the school's work ensures that they have a very good understanding of the school and where further improvement is needed.
- The governing body has a wide range of expertise among its members. Governors make good use of their expertise, particularly when considering the school's finances. As a result, they have successfully steered the school through a challenging financial period.
- Governors execute their safeguarding responsibilities diligently. They regularly check school records and that recruitment processes have been followed appropriately.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that all staff receive regular safeguarding training and that any new requirements are implemented swiftly. During the inspection, staff demonstrated strong knowledge of how to identify pupils who may be vulnerable. All parents who responded to Parent View say their child feels safe at school. This view is also echoed by all pupils who completed the pupil survey.
- While the school has very few safeguarding cases, leaders have robust systems in place should they be required. Staff are not complacent and are vigilant in the effort to keep pupils safe. Leaders have experience of how to raise concerns to the local

authority or seek out additional support if required.

- Leaders regularly commission external safeguarding audits of the school to check that their policy and practice remain up to date and compliant. The outcomes are shared with the trust and any weaknesses are followed up swiftly by trustees.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Over time, there has been significant turbulence in teaching staff. However, leaders have now established good teaching across the school. Teachers plan skilfully for the challenges of mixed-age and mixed key stage classes. This enables pupils to make strong progress across the curriculum, appropriate to their age-related expectations.
- Teachers use questions effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and probe their understanding. The challenge teachers provide ensures that pupils have secured their understanding before developing new knowledge or skills.
- Teaching assistants know pupils well. They are diligent in their approach to questioning and intervene appropriately. They motivate pupils well and instil a thirst for learning. Pupils who work with teaching assistants are focused and proud of their work. As a result, pupils who are supported individually or in small groups make strong progress.
- Work in pupils' books in wider curriculum subjects shows that pupils access a broad curriculum. The design enables pupils to build on what they already know and can do. For example, pupils in key stage 2 use their geographical knowledge of erosion to support their understanding of how rivers are made.
- Over time, phonics teaching has been strong. Teaching is effective and contributes well to younger pupils' progress in reading. Pupils and children in the early years are able to use and apply their phonics knowledge with confidence when reading and writing unfamiliar words.
- The teaching of writing is highly effective. Pupils are taught to write effectively in a range of styles and are provided with plenty of opportunities to develop their skills across the curriculum. More recently, there has been a focus upon improving pupils' vocabulary choices and this is contributing to improving outcomes in writing. Work in pupils' books and writing displayed in classrooms clearly demonstrate how pupils have developed strong writing skills.
- Teaching in the early years is effective. Adults encourage children to participate with different activities to ensure that they cover all aspects of the early years curriculum. Children are motivated and rise to the challenges that adults set for them. For example, despite poor weather conditions, children went outside on a 'bug hunt' to record information and use their early writing and number skills.
- Most pupils learn to read well. Pupils who discussed their reading with the inspector talked about reading widely and often. The library is well resourced and provides pupils with a wide range of different types of text. However, the quality of teaching for low-attaining pupils remains variable. Assessment of pupils' reading abilities is not fully accurate. Too often, pupils are expected to read texts that are too challenging for them. This hinders their fluency development and their development of vocabulary.

- In mathematics, teachers plan activities that meet the needs of most pupils. Current pupils are making strong progress, particularly in calculation and number. However, this is not systematically the case for all strands of mathematics. Furthermore, the most able pupils are not routinely stretched and challenged to enable them to deepen their knowledge and understanding. On occasions, when the work is not challenging, pupils' focus wanders and this slows their progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. During the inspection, every pupil I spoke with was positive about the school. One pupil's comment to me, that encapsulates many, was, 'This is a lovely school, and everybody is so nice to each other.'
- Pupils understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They know the different food groups and what food they should eat to keep healthy. Pupils are also aware of the importance of regular exercise.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. All parents who responded to Parent View say the school deals effectively with bullying. Pupils understand the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and the inappropriate use of mobile telephone technology. They say that anti-bullying week helped them learn about the impact of their actions, why bullying is wrong and how to report any worries they may have.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that leaders respond quickly to any concerns that they may have. They can explain the risks attached to them and know the actions that they can take to minimise the risk. Pupils told me that the recent visit from the police provided useful advice on how to stay safe.
- Pupils have formed close relationships with each other. They work well together to get tasks done and are unafraid to share their misconceptions with the whole class. For example, pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 openly share their sentence structures using fronted adverbials. They were reflective and open to suggestions from other pupils if they made mistakes. They listened carefully to each other's ideas and responded in a mature fashion.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well mannered and caring. At social times, while there are opportunities for pupils to play with their peers, older pupils act as play leaders to facilitate games. Children in Reception understand the routines and behaviour expectations. This is because they learn from the positive role models in the key stage 1 class.
- There are very few recorded incidents of poor behaviour. When they do occur, they are recorded diligently and monitored through the school's online system. Pupils told me that they find the new behaviour reward system effective and are keen to behave well.
- The responses to the parent, staff and pupil surveys also indicate that behaviour is

good around the school and during lesson times.

- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. Leaders have put in place systems to closely monitor pupils' absence. They have ensured that, if attendance falls below the national average, staff meet with parents to discuss the importance of regular attendance.
- During the inspection, it was observed that, where teaching was not well directed, pupils lost focus. Although pupils were not disruptive, they were not reaching their true potential when this was the case.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Due to the very small cohort sizes, it is unreliable to make comparisons between the school's performance information and the national average. However, closer scrutiny of performance information shows that very low progress of some pupils new to the school impacted significantly on the school's overall progress measure.
- The school's own assessment information and work in current pupils' workbooks in key stage 2 show that, in almost all year groups, pupils are making at least the progress the school expects of them in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2018, in key stage 1, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading and writing were in line with the national averages, with mathematics being below. However, as each pupil equated to 13%, it is difficult to draw statistical comparisons with the national average. Nevertheless, work in current pupils' books and the school's own assessment information demonstrate that pupils are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been above the national average. This is because the teaching of phonics is effective.
- Most children enter the early years with skills below what would be expected for their age. However, more children leave the early years well prepared for Year 1, having achieved a good level of development. Since 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has steadily increased and is in line with the national average. Work in current children's workbooks and current performance information indicate that this is set to continue.
- Pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress from their individual starting points. This is because targeted support is effective in helping pupils overcome their individual barriers to learning.
- The school's approach to teaching subjects other than English and mathematics ensures that pupils make positive progress across the wider curriculum. Pupils have retained good knowledge and understanding of the things they have studied in science, geography and history. Pupils can recall key facts they learned much earlier in the year. High-quality work on display shows that pupils develop their art skills well. Work on Georgia O'Keefe shows that pupils are able to replicate the work of famous artists. Additionally, focused opportunities in music allow pupils to develop strong skills in singing. Pupils told me that they are proud to represent the school in a collaborative

choir from across the trust.

## School details

Unique reference number	143182
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10088257

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Alex Walmsley
Head of school	Tim Nield
Telephone number	01297 552 687
Website	<a href="http://www.musbury-primary.devon.sch.uk">www.musbury-primary.devon.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@musbury-primary.devon.sch.uk">admin@musbury-primary.devon.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in two key stage classes.
- Musbury Primary School opened as an academy in September 2017. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement. The school is now part of First Federation Trust.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND or who are supported by an education, health and care plan is above the national average.

- The head of school and the teaching staff started in September 2018.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in both classes. Most observations were undertaken jointly with the head of school. The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at break and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, middle leaders and the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector held a meeting with three trustees, including the chair of the local hub. The lead inspector also held a meeting with the chief executive officer of First Federation Trust.
- The inspector spoke with pupils informally during their breaks and lunchtimes and in class. He also held a more formal discussion and listened to groups of pupils read.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including minutes of meetings of the hub, the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan, external monitoring reports and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- The inspector examined a large sample of pupils' books from across the school and, on most occasions, this was done jointly with the head of school.
- The inspector spoke with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning. He also considered 18 responses to Parent View, 17 responses to the pupil survey and three responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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