

# Inspection of a good school: Alphington Primary School

Wheatsheaf Way, Alphington, Exeter, Devon EX2 8RQ

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Inspection dates:

7–8 November 2019

## Outcome

Alphington Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school and are proud of it. Teachers create activity-filled 'hook' days to introduce new topics which make learning exciting and relevant. Pupils look forward to these days and enjoy their learning. Staff have high expectations of pupils, encouraging them to do their best. Pupils say that teachers help and challenge them and, as a result, they work hard.

Teachers help pupils to respect others and behave well in the 'Alphington Way'. In lessons and at breaktimes, pupils behave well. Poor behaviour or bullying is rare but, if it happens, pupils are confident that teachers will deal with it. Leaders understand the importance of this for pupils. They work hard to make sure that behaviour is good and pupils are happy.

Leaders work well with staff and governors to make the school a safe and welcoming community. There are a range of clubs that help pupils to be healthy and happy. Pupils' experience of the world is enhanced by the interesting trips and assemblies that teachers organise.

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

The new headteacher has established a strong leadership team. They work together well to improve the school. These leaders are passionate about ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get the best possible education. They provide regular training for staff and ensure that teachers are not overwhelmed by their work. Teachers commented that leaders 'Always check how we are and encourage us to go home on time.'

Over the past year, leaders have revised the curriculum. It now shows clearly what knowledge and skills pupils should know at each point in the year. But it does not always make it clear when and how teachers should revisit topics to ensure that pupils have fully learned the content.

Teachers check what pupils know and understand at the beginning and end of a topic so that they can plan their teaching well. Sometimes, this is not done effectively enough. As a result, teaching is not as well planned, and pupils may not have learned what they need to. This makes it harder for them to build on their learning in the following years and can lower their achievement.

Children get a solid start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes. Teachers and other staff in the early years foundation stage make sure that children develop their early reading skills well. In the past, this start was not always built on as well as it could be. As a result, some older pupils are not able to make the connection between letters and the sounds that they make quickly enough. This has slowed the development of their reading and spelling. Leaders have raised the expectations of teachers and improved the quality of their teaching. Leaders have made changes to the way in which reading is taught throughout the school. They have checked whether pupils have any gaps in their learning and have changed what happens to help pupils to catch up. Leaders have worked with teachers to improve the way that these pupils, including those with SEND, are helped. These changes are starting to improve learning.

The school organises trips which extend pupils' learning experiences. For example, a trip to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum for Year 3 pupils made them more excited about their topic on the ancient Egyptians. Pupils had first-hand experience of what it was like to be an ancient Egyptian and they remember this well. They produced high-quality writing and understood complicated words, such as 'artefacts' and 'mummification'.

Pupils like the clubs and sports teams that are available to them. They contribute well in assemblies and class. They value these opportunities and would like more of them. Leaders have organised breaktimes so that all pupils can join in a range of games. This has reduced conflicts at lunchtime. Pupils report that behaviour is good and that they feel happy at school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping pupils safe is the highest priority for the school. Staff are well trained to identify if there are any concerns and they know how to report these. Leaders consider these concerns and make appropriate referrals when they are needed. They are tenacious in following these up. The arrangements to recruit new staff are safe and secure. Pupils feel safe and they are safe.

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

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

- Leaders and teachers have mapped out the key skills and knowledge that pupils will learn in every subject in each year within the topic-based curriculum. In some subjects, appropriate opportunities for pupils to recall and practise key knowledge are provided so that pupils can really embed knowledge in their long-term memory. However, this is

not the case in other subjects and school leaders should continue and complete this work to cover all areas of the curriculum.

- Teachers use a range of methods to check what pupils know and can do so that they can plan lessons effectively for all pupils. In some cases, this assessment does not carefully check the component knowledge that pupils will need in order to learn the topic. Some final assessment is carried out too close to the teaching sequence and so teachers cannot be confident that the knowledge and skills are embedded in pupils' long-term memories. Leaders should continue to improve assessment so that it supports learning effectively in all subjects and year groups.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Alphington Primary School, to be good in March 2013.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 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>	143188
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111590
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	464
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mr Brian Cook
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Sharon Tarr
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.alphington.devon.sch.uk/">www.alphington.devon.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- On 1 January 2017, Alphington Primary School converted to become an academy and joined the Exeter Learning Academy Trust. When its predecessor school, Alphington Primary School, was inspected, it was judged to be good.
- The headteacher took up her role in the school on 1 September 2018.

## Information about this inspection

- I had meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. I also met with curriculum leaders and teachers. I met with several governors, including the chair of governors, a trustee and the chief executive of the Exeter Learning Academy Trust, and the school improvement officer of the trust.
- I met with staff to discuss workload and professional development.
- I checked that staff were following the school's safeguarding policy and that the arrangements to recruit staff safely were implemented carefully. I met with the designated leader for safeguarding. During the inspection, I talked to pupils, staff, parents and carers to check that arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective.
- I gathered parents' views at the end of the day, met with pupils and took account of

the views of pupils, staff and parents expressed through questionnaires, including the 69 responses to Parent View.

- I agreed with the headteacher to look at some areas of the school's work in more detail. Together with senior and curriculum leaders, I carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics and history. Deep dives include a series of connected activities, such as discussions with leaders, visits to lessons, work scrutiny and discussions with pupils and teachers.

### **Inspection team**

Tom Morrison, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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