

Inspection of St Andrew's CofE Primary Academy

Chardstock, Axminster, Devon EX13 7BJ

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of education pupils receive is not as good as it should be. There has been significant turbulence in teaching staff. This has contributed to a weak curriculum that is not ambitious enough. This means that, when pupils leave the school, they are not ready for the next stage of their education. All current teaching staff are new to the school.

Behaviour in lessons and at social times is good. Pupils say that bullying does not happen. They told us that pupils do fall out from time to time. Pupils say that this is often mistaken for bullying. They say that staff keep them safe from any harm. Pupils told us they feel safe.

Pupils enjoy learning. They told us that their opportunities are increasing. Pupils in Year 3 were keen to share how their visit to the Jurassic Coast supported their work on fossils. They enjoy the wide range of before- and after-school clubs. A particular favourite is the 'First Aid' club. Many pupils attend breakfast club. Pupils enjoy meeting up with their friends before school. They were keen to share with us the healthy 'all you can eat breakfast buffet'.

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

The headteacher, with support from the multi-academy trust, has steered the school through a difficult period. Since the last inspection, leaders recognised that the quality of education was not good enough. This has led to many changes in staff. The school is now moving in the right direction. Nevertheless, there is still much work to do. These changes have created concerns for some parents and carers.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not good enough. There has been instability in leadership. This means that some pupils do not reach their full potential. The headteacher is working closely with experts from the trust to improve provision. However, instability still remains.

Leaders have successfully stemmed the decline in standards of writing. The impact of staff training is clear to see. Children in the early years are now achieving well. The teaching of phonics in Reception is effective. This has a positive effect on children's early writing. During the inspection, some children were able to write plausible sentences to describe the moon. They were able to describe links between history and religion.

The early years leader is new to the school. However, as a result of effective support from the trust, high expectations permeate the early years. The provision is vibrant and an exciting place to learn. Children respond well to the challenges that adults set. Children in Nursery quickly learn different sounds and nursery rhymes. They are curious and work well together to solve problems. Adults use precise questioning to deepen children's understanding further.

Beyond the early years, too many pupils are not where they should be. Pupils have not experienced a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders are in the process of bringing about change. Nevertheless, too many pupils are leaving the school without the knowledge and skills they need to be successful.

Many curriculum leaders are new to their roles. They are passionate about improving their areas of responsibility. However, some curriculum leaders have not had appropriate time or guidance to help them to check standards in their subject.

Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in reading. Older pupils have not developed a love of reading. Leaders have introduced a more coherent structured approach to reading. This is having a more positive impact on pupils in key stage 1. Younger pupils do have a love reading. However, pupils who find reading challenging do not always have books that precisely match the sounds that they already know. This hampers their ability to read well.

British values are well planned and supported by educational visits to different places of worship and visiting speakers from other cultures. Pupils support many local, national and international charities. This helps pupils understand life beyond Chardstock.

A small number of parents have concerns about communication, particularly relating to pupils with SEND. Leaders, governors and parents need to work more closely and improve communication between home and school.

Governors have focused on bringing about stability. They have not checked closely enough that the information they have is a true reflection of the school. This has led to governors not having a precise understanding of the school's performance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of staff. All staff are well trained. They know how to identify a pupil who may be at risk of harm and what action to take. Training is refreshed weekly through different safeguarding scenarios. This helps staff to stay alert to local and national concerns.

Pupils know how to stay safe. They told us how lessons have helped them to understand the risks associated with social media and the internet. Pupils say visits from the fire brigade and police have improved their knowledge of keeping safe outside of school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders need to continue to bring about stability. All teaching staff are new to the school and their roles. This has impacted upon the ability to deliver a well-organised curriculum. Senior leaders need to ensure that teaching staff continue to be supported to improve the quality of education.
- Curriculum plans in some foundation subjects are not being realised. Therefore, by the time pupils leave the school, they are not ready for the next stage of their education. Senior leaders need to ensure that the curriculum ambition is being realised for all subjects.
- Some pupils in key stage 1 who find reading challenging have reading books that are too difficult. Leaders need to ensure that words in reading books match more closely the sounds that pupils already know. This will help pupils to achieve success when reading.
- There has been insufficient training for some curriculum leaders. This has hampered their ability to develop teachers' subject knowledge and ability to deliver a broad curriculum. Senior leaders need to ensure that all curriculum leaders have the capacity to improve the quality of education in the subjects they lead.
- The uncertainty of the leadership for SEND has impacted negatively on the quality of education for pupils with SEND. Too many pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that every pupil receives high-quality teaching and provision.
- Leaders, including governors, need to improve communication with parents. A united front will contribute to improving the school.
- Governors need to ensure that they have the appropriate skills and procedures in place. This will enable them to be more effective in their roles to challenge leaders to improve the school further.

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 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

Unique reference number	141527
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10122346
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Brian Impey
Headteacher	Tracey Leganski
Website	www.acornacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	28–29 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has had a significant period of staff turnover. All teaching staff are new to the school.
- St Andrew's is part of Acorn Multi-academy Trust, a partnership of six primary schools. The work of the school is overseen by the board of trustees.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received its section 48 inspection in March 2017, when this aspect of the school's work was graded as outstanding.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the headteacher, curriculum leaders, the trust leader with oversight for pupils with SEND, the early years leader, the leader responsible for early years provision across the trust and a sample of staff. There were no responses to the staff survey.

- I met with five governors from the local governing body, including the chair. I also held a meeting with the chair of trustees.
- We examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance.
- A significant proportion of the inspection focused on ensuring that pupils are safe. We scrutinised records, tested staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils. I met with the designated safeguarding leader and a member of the inclusion team.
- We considered the 49 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I met with a sample of parents at the start of the second day. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, modern languages, history and writing. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, meeting with senior and subject leaders, and having discussions with teachers and pupils. On day two of the inspection, I looked further into the quality of education in music and computing.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Lees

Ofsted Inspector

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