

Inspection of a good school: Hemyock Primary School

Parklands, Hemyock, Cullompton, Devon EX15 3RY

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 July 2021

Outcome

Hemyock Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders provide a nurturing environment for pupils to thrive and succeed. Classrooms are calm spaces for pupils to learn. Pupils focus and behave exceptionally well. They are proud of their learning and are eager to share their achievements. The school's values, which underpin leaders' high expectations for behaviour, run through everything the school does.

Pupils love playing outside. A wide range of activities are available: football, the outside gym or the running track. Pupils get on well together and treat each other with respect. Bullying is extremely rare.

Staff have high expectations for pupils. They make them feel valued and an important part of the school community. Staff take a genuine interest in pupils' lives and their learning. Pupils attend well and enjoy school. Staff look after pupils and keep them safe.

The curriculum provides pupils with a broad understanding of the world they live in. Pupils learn about how to lead healthy lives. They also develop a knowledge of different faiths and cultures. Pupils increasingly understand the world beyond their doorstep.

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

The school has thrived under strong leadership, tackling priorities identified at the previous inspection successfully. Leaders have kept staff workload and the well-being of all school community members at the heart of their actions.

Leaders at all levels have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve. The headteacher and her staff have benefited from expert support and guidance from the multi-academy trust. Trust leaders, including the local governing body, check that school leaders' actions are making a positive difference to the quality of education pupils receive.

Phonics is a strength of the school. Children learn to read as soon as they start in Reception. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are fluent readers. Leaders ensure that pupils who need extra support get it. This is helping pupils to catch up well. Pupils read books that contain the sounds they know, allowing them to read with greater accuracy. Some pupils struggle to blend sounds together when reading unfamiliar words, but expert adults are on hand to guide and support them well.

Pupils learn the full breadth of the science curriculum. Aside from learning important knowledge, pupils have many high-quality opportunities to apply what they know when carrying out investigations. The method and frequency that teachers check on pupils' progress and prior knowledge vary across the school. On occasion, pupils demonstrate strong existing knowledge of what they are about to be taught. However, it is not always clear how teachers are using this information to adapt future lessons. The highly knowledgeable curriculum leader recognises this and has been taking steps to bring about a consistent approach to how teachers assess pupils' knowledge in science.

Leaders are reviewing and refining the school's history curriculum. Current curriculum plans help teachers to know what historical periods to teach pupils and when. Teachers choose the specific knowledge they want pupils to learn. Where stronger, teachers sequence lessons carefully so that pupils can use what they already know to help them attempt new learning. As a result, pupils have a deep knowledge of what they have learned, and they remember the order of key historical events. Where it is weaker, sequences of lessons are disjointed and there are inconsistencies in what pupils learn. Leaders are working to bring about greater clarity to the history curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early and receive the support they need. Plans for pupils with SEND contain ambitious targets that are closely matched to their needs. Staff review these regularly. In class, staff use pupils' targets to inform activities and the support they provide for pupils.

The school supports pupils' personal development and behaviour well. Pupils have rich opportunities to learn about life in modern Britain. The school's curriculum, off-site visits and residential bring this to life. Pupils learn how to play a key role in the community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' robust recruitment procedures help ensure that they only appoint adults suitable to work with children. Centrally appointed trust representatives oversee recruitment and training closely. Staff receive regular training so that they can fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. Staff know their safeguarding responsibilities well. They know how to record and pass on concerns they have about pupils' welfare. Leaders keep a watchful eye on concerns to see if they form part of a wider pattern or trend. This helps them to identify pupils at risk. Leaders challenge external agencies with dogged determination to ensure that pupils get the help they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's history curriculum is under review. Teachers know which historical periods they must teach and when. However, they choose the knowledge they wish to include. This is problematic in two ways. First, leaders are not wholly sure what pupils know at key milestones. Second, pupils miss out on key knowledge at the expense of less useful knowledge. Leaders need to agree the curriculum content for history, so that pupils know more and remember more over time.
- The methods teachers use to assess pupils' knowledge in science are inconsistent and vary in quality. Some pupils learn curriculum content they already know. Leaders need to develop consistent assessment strategies in science which help teachers to adapt curriculum plans based on what pupils know and understand.

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 or outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Hemyock Primary School, to be good in February 2011.

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 [here](#).

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	137654
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10201802
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Hugh Whittaker
Headteacher	Catherine Willcocks
Website	www.hemyock-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The academy is part of Ventrus multi-academy trust.
- The academy does not use any alternative providers.
- The academy has an on-site nursery provision for two and three-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, science and history. He met with senior leaders, curriculum leaders, carried out visits to lessons, met with staff, listened to pupils read to an adult and scrutinised pupils' workbooks. However, due to the confirmation of a pupil testing positive for COVID-19 on the second day of the inspection, a bubble was closed. School leaders and the lead inspector agreed that it would be best not to meet other pupils to avoid unnecessary close contact. As a result, the lead inspector widened the sample of pupils' workbooks to scrutinise.

- The lead inspector met with leaders to discuss how they keep pupils safe. As part of this meeting, the lead inspector considered the school's safeguarding audit, record-keeping of concerns and training records. The lead inspector checked the school's single central record. He also spoke to several staff to determine how well they know their safeguarding responsibilities.
- The lead inspector also met with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND. Together, they discussed plans and targets for pupils.
- The lead inspector considered 70 responses to the pupil survey and 25 responses to the staff survey. The lead inspector also considered 62 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 61 free-text responses.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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