

Inspection of a good school: Bickleigh on Exe Church of England Primary School

Bell Meadow, Bickleigh, Tiverton, Devon EX16 8RE

Inspection dates:

3 March 2022

Outcome

Bickleigh on Exe Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Bickleigh on Exe enjoy school. They are polite and courteous to each other and adults. Relationships are strong. Pupils feel safe in school and know who they can talk to if they have any concerns.

Pupils have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the school's values. They can explain and show how these influence their everyday actions and relationships with others. Adults and pupils talk about the kindness of everyone in the school community. The school values also drive leaders and teachers to improve the quality of education.

Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They take great pride in their work. This is because teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils behave well. Teachers and other pupils are supportive of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is. They report that there is no bullying in school. Pupils know what they would do if it occurred. They have faith in adults to manage this well.

Parents appreciate the support and care their children receive from adults in school. One comment from a parent exemplifies this: 'A caring and kind school with very high expectations.'

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

Leaders, staff and governors have high aspirations for every pupil. Leaders ensure that teachers know how to get the best out of pupils. As a result, pupils are engaged in their learning, and are doing well.

Leaders have set out a coherent curriculum. Teachers plan well-sequenced lessons and break learning down into manageable tasks. They typically choose activities to help pupils learn and remember important knowledge. However, this is not always the case in all

classes. Some pupils lose concentration when tasks are too easy or too difficult. This results in a minority of pupils not learning as well as they could.

Teachers use assessment well to check what pupils know and can do. They make sure that pupils revisit and build on their prior learning. This helps pupils to remember important knowledge, particularly in mathematics. Pupils gain a firm foundation of knowledge in mathematics. In the older classes, pupils use their knowledge and skills to solve open-ended mathematical investigations.

Pupils enjoy their learning in the wider curriculum subjects. In geography, they can recall facts and precise technical vocabulary linked to their learning. Leaders have shared the school's curriculum overview with all teachers. However, not all teachers know what to teach and when. As a result, certain concepts that pupils should know and remember are not taught in sufficient depth.

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils enjoy reading and have a passion for exploring a range of diverse texts. Leaders ensure that the teaching of phonics and reading is consistent across the school. This starts in pre-school, with children learning how to listen to sounds and rhymes. Teachers provide extra help for those pupils who struggle to secure their phonics knowledge. Staff are well trained to support pupils in developing their reading fluency. However, some pupils struggle to apply their phonics knowledge to spell accurately. This means that they do not make as much progress in their writing.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have brought the pre-school within the school's leadership. Leaders are aware of how vital the curriculum is for the youngest children. For example, they ensure that the children have a firm understanding of numbers and develop their listening skills before learning sounds. These skills stand children in good stead before they move into the Reception class.

Staff know how to support and plan for pupils with SEND. Teachers set pupils clear and achievable targets to help them improve their work. Staff are well trained to provide the help and support these pupils need. Pupils with SEND experience success.

Pupils experience a range of activities to promote their personal development and well-being. These include educational trips and visits. Pupils learn the importance of being kind and helpful, such as holding doors open for adults and each other. Leaders take account of pupils' well-being. Pupils enjoy being part of the 'ethos group' that takes the lead in preparing assemblies. Older pupils are excited to take part in the 'Exmoor Challenge'. They are well prepared by the school's walking club.

Leaders consider the staff's well-being. They value the way everyone works as a team. Leaders and staff make effective use of the training and support developed by the trust to enhance their subject knowledge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of vigilance. They ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff undertake regular safeguarding training. They know pupils well, and are confident about spotting any signs of concern. Staff pass on any concerns to leaders promptly.

Leaders work well with outside agencies to identify families in need of extra help. This ensures that pupils and parents have the support they need to keep safe.

Pupils feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not consistently apply their phonic knowledge when writing. As a result, pupils' spelling is not as accurate as it should be. Leaders need to ensure that pupils improve their spelling accuracy from the early years into Year 1 and beyond.
- Some pupils become distracted when the work that has been set is not matched to their needs. This prevents these pupils from learning as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that work is well matched to pupils' needs, so they focus and concentrate in lessons.
- Leaders' curriculum thinking is underdeveloped in a few subjects. As a result, pupils do not gain sufficient depth of knowledge in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that curriculum information sets out the knowledge and skills they want pupils to know and remember in all subjects.

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, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2016.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	137776
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10206969
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	147
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Hugh Whittaker
Headteacher	Stephen Bosley
Website	www.bickleighschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Ventrus multi-academy trust.
- The school has provision for pre-school children from the age of two.
- The school runs wraparound care provision at the start and end of the school day, for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Bickleigh on Exe is a church school. The school's previous section 48 inspection took place in October 2015. The school was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, a group of staff, representatives of the multi-academy trust and members of the local governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. Inspectors met with subject leaders; visited lessons across the school, including the pre-school class; spoke to teachers; spoke to some pupils about their learning; and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, school self-evaluation and curriculum documentation.
- The lead inspector reviewed the 44 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses, and reviewed 20 responses to the staff survey and 39 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Paul Smith, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Steve Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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