

Inspection of a good school: Rockbeare Church of England Primary School and Pre-School

Rockbeare, Exeter, Devon EX5 2EQ

Inspection date:

27 April 2022

Outcome

Rockbeare Church of England Primary School and Pre-School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Rockbeare is a welcoming school. Staff value each pupil for their individual qualities. This rubs off onto the pupils, who respect and look after one another. Older pupils take care of younger pupils in the playground. They share their love of reading by putting on performances of books they remember enjoying when they were in the Reception class.

Christian values permeate school life. Pupils benefit from strong community links, built up by leaders over time. Local people visit the school to put on performances of stories from the Bible. Recently, parents enjoyed an Easter parade. Parents are regularly invited into school for events and celebrations such as this.

Bullying is very rare because relationships between pupils are strong. Pupils told inspectors they would be very concerned about any bullying and report that straightaway. Leaders have a new approach to managing behaviour. Pupils say this is working well and understand what is expected of them.

Leaders make sure there is a club or activity to interest each pupil. Many pupils, including the most disadvantaged, get involved. For example, there is a popular film club, where pupils plan, produce and show their work to an audience of parents and staff.

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

Leaders recognise the fundamental importance of early reading and prioritise this. Staff, including those working with children in the pre-school, are well trained. They have a good understanding of the phonics curriculum and use effective teaching approaches. Pupils practise reading the sounds they learn in class, using books carefully matched to recent learning. As a result, most pupils become accurate readers quickly.

Some pupils find it more difficult to remember the links between letters and sounds. Other pupils join the school part-way through the phonics programme. Leaders provide support for these pupils. This helps them to secure their knowledge of phonics. However, some pupils in this situation need to spend more time reading texts closely matched to their capabilities if they are to become confident, fluent readers.

Children attending the pre-school get off to a flying start. Staff support children to gain the language they need to describe the things they see and experience. Children have plenty of opportunities to develop their knowledge of number. Leaders are in the process of improving the curriculum for early mathematics further, to better prepare children for key stage 1.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Staff, in both the school and pre-school, work together and with parents to identify pupils' needs. Consequently, there is a strong shared understanding about what helps each pupil to learn. Leaders regularly review the support pupils receive to make sure it is effective. Professionals from the multi-academy trust work alongside school staff, providing additional expertise and leadership capacity.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved the curriculum in several respects. Curriculum leaders have set out a renewed sense of purpose for each subject. In many subjects, leaders have given careful thought to what they want pupils to learn. They use the curriculum to motivate and inspire pupils. Leaders have made sound decisions about how they can make best use of assessment. In some subjects, such as mathematics, there is a fresh approach which needs time to embed. Leaders recognise the need to check that any changes to the curriculum are helping pupils to learn and remember what they intend.

In the pre-school, children get along well together. They are confident in interacting with adults. In the Reception class, pupils are keen to learn. They follow the routines willingly and meet the high expectations of staff. Pupils take these good habits with them into the rest of the school. When individual pupils find it difficult to concentrate staff find out why, and address this quickly. As a result, the atmosphere in classrooms is conducive to learning.

Leaders provide a well-organised curriculum for personal, social and health education. This includes elements of relationships and sex education. Pupils learn and revisit important messages each year, for example about bullying and personal boundaries. This helps them to develop healthy, age-appropriate relationships and recognise harmful behaviour.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders have managed some difficult periods of staff and pupil absence. At all times, they have acted in the best interests of pupils and staff, drawing upon the support of the multi-academy trust. The new headteacher encourages staff to make the most of professional development opportunities in the trust and beyond. As a result of her ambitious, yet flexible and considerate approach, staff are well motivated and enjoy their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place a high priority on training for staff. Staff understand that 'it could happen here'. They take close account of local risks and are vigilant. There are robust systems in place to keep pupils safe. These are well understood by staff. Leaders strive for continual improvement. As a result, safeguarding processes continue to strengthen over time.

Leaders recognise that some families may have missed out on some types of support during the pandemic. They are working to signpost and engage early help services for vulnerable families. Leaders work in partnership with other professionals at the local authority and within the multi-academy trust to meet pupils' needs.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although children in Reception and pupils in key stage 1 gain the knowledge of phonics they need to become accurate readers, some do not become fluent readers as quickly as they could. For these pupils, this makes reading to learn more difficult for longer. Leaders should ensure that all pupils practise reading motivating texts that are well matched to their capabilities.
- In some subjects, there have been recent changes to the curriculum. This means that new approaches are not yet embedded. Leaders should monitor the impact of any changes to the curriculum to assure themselves that pupils are learning more as a result.

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 predecessor school, of the same name, to be good in July 2017.

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	145252
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10227713
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alex Walmsley
Headteacher	Sally Davies
Website	www.rockbeare-ce-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- This is a Church of England school. The school's provision for religious education and collective worship was last inspected under section 48 of the 2005 Education Act in June 2017.
- The school has recently opened provision for childcare after school.
- Rockbeare Church of England Primary and Pre-School converted to become an academy school in July 2017. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the First Federation Trust.

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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and representatives from the multi-academy trust, including the chair and vice chair of the trust and the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To consider the school's work to safeguard pupils, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school, met with the designated safeguarding leader and held discussions with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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