

Inspection of a good school: Northlew and Ashbury Parochial Church of England Primary School

Northlew, Okehampton, Devon EX20 3PB

Inspection date:

8 June 2022

Outcome

Northlew and Ashbury Parochial Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like this school and feel safe. Staff model the school's Christian values very well. For example, they demonstrate high levels of compassion and care in their work with vulnerable pupils. The school welcomes and appreciates diversity and difference. Consequently, all pupils, including those with social, emotional and mental health difficulties receive the precise support they need to thrive.

Leaders' high expectations of pupils' behaviour have led to a stimulating, safe environment in which pupils are able to learn. There is very little poor behaviour, including bullying, recorded by the school. Pupils trust the adults to manage any rare incidents of bullying. Pupils use helpful strategies, such as 'reflection', 'apologising' or 'talking together' to resolve minor disagreements. Staff set clear expectations and respond appropriately to the occasional incidents of poor behaviour. However, this view is not shared by some parents and carers.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have established a strong curriculum in a wide range of subjects. They have prioritised the development of a well-organised and ambitious reading curriculum that sits at the heart of every school day. Therefore, most pupils achieve success.

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

Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to the leadership of the school. Trust leaders and school staff understand the school's specific challenges. For example, some pupils' writing has deteriorated due to absences caused by COVID-19. Leaders have adapted the curriculum swiftly to help pupils to sustain high-quality spelling, grammar and punctuation in their longer pieces of writing.

Subject leaders have used the sound advice they receive from trust specialists to improve the curriculum. Teachers link subjects together, when appropriate, to form a coherent curriculum that builds on pupils' prior learning. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from strong sequences of lessons that provide them with the knowledge they need to develop expertise in a wide range of subjects. For example, in religious education (RE), pupils discuss prior learning about food, places of worship and celebrations confidently. They make interesting comparisons between Christianity and other religions, such as Islam.

Children learn to read as soon as they start school. In the early years, staff model language, encouraging and demonstrating this well. This means that children get off to a strong start. Detailed phonics assessments identify pupils who are falling behind accurately. The additional reading support these pupils receive is helping them to catch up quickly. Older pupils are supported to learn to read by knowledgeable staff. Pupils read at home, or to staff, every day and they enjoy hearing their teachers read new books to them. Pupils particularly enjoy taking the reading basket home as a reward for reading regularly. They appreciate the special treat of reading the basket's new books with the cosy blanket, hot chocolate and marshmallows provided.

The mathematics curriculum identifies what pupils should learn each term. This helps staff to plan sequences of lessons in a logical order. Pupils are developing a secure recall of multiplication facts. They use this knowledge to calculate quickly and to solve mathematical challenges and puzzles. Assessment is used well to identify gaps in prior learning. However, staff do not use the assessment information to provide stronger mathematics with sufficient challenge. These pupils do not have a suitably ambitious curriculum. Activities are often too easy and this slows their learning.

Pupils with SEND receive effective support, with suitable adaptations to the curriculum when required. Leaders identify pupils' needs swiftly and are relentless in their drive to get pupils the help they need, sometimes from external agencies. Teaching assistants offer timely support while encouraging and promoting independent thinking. Consequently, pupils with SEND flourish in a supportive environment.

Leaders prioritise developing pupils' understanding of British values, such as tolerance, fairness and the benefits of diversity. They ensure that the curriculum is enriched with opportunities for healthy debate and to discuss important topical issues, such as equality. They help pupils to appreciate different cultures and faiths through the RE and personal, social and health education curriculums. The school curriculum supports pupils to become compassionate young people with enquiring minds. Over time, pupils are learning to become resilient learners and incidents of disruption in lessons are reducing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have received suitable training so they are vigilant for signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. They have a secure understanding of pupils' vulnerabilities. Leaders work in

partnership with a wide range of external agencies. Together, they ensure that pupils and their families receive timely support, when needed.

There were some minor, clerical errors in safeguarding records. However, improvements to these procedures happened during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have put in place effective systems to assess pupils' mathematical ability. However, for stronger mathematicians, teachers do not use this information well enough to identify pupils' starting points. The curriculum for these pupils is not suitably ambitious. Teachers need to ensure that all pupils receive a curriculum that builds from their exact starting points.
- During the inspection, pupils behaved well. However, some parents have concerns about the school's management of pupils' behaviour. It is important that leaders continue to reach out to the parental community to resolve any remaining concerns.

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, Northlew and Ashbury Parochial Church of England Primary School, to be good in May 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 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	145340
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10227680
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	35
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tania Skeaping
Principal	Janine Cook
Website	www.northlew.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust in January 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher joined the school in January 2018.
- The school is a Church of England school. Its previous Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) took place in October 2019. It was graded as '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 in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and RE.
- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector spoke with the headteacher, the lead principal (primary), the trust's chief executive officer and the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, minutes from a local stakeholder board meeting, improvement plans and documentation relating to behaviour.
- Inspectors examined safeguarding records, checked staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils. Inspectors also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors checked survey responses, including those from pupils, staff, parents and carers. This included taking the responses to Ofsted's free-text service into account.

Inspection team

Sue Costello, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Shirley

Ofsted Inspector

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