

Inspection of a good school: South Tawton Primary School

Tawton Lane, South Zeal, Okehampton, Devon EX20 2LG

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 June 2022

Outcome

South Tawton Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to belong to South Tawton Primary School. They recognise it as a place where they are valued as individuals. Mutual respect is a key feature of the school. Strong relationships exist between staff and pupils. Pupils say that they are treated fairly and feel listened to. Pupils' conduct is of a high standard. They are kind and polite. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Pupils do not worry about bullying. They say it rarely happens.

Pupils are eager to learn. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. Staff have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils show determination in meeting leaders' expectations. Leaders find ways for all pupils to experience success.

Parents appreciate how leaders nurture pupils to 'be the best that they can be'. They speak highly of the many links that leaders create with the local community. 'The school is welcoming and supportive, with a great sense of community', was a comment made by a parent.

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

Leaders ensure that the whole school community understands the importance of reading. The school environment reflects the priority that leaders place on reading. Inviting library areas feature around the school building. Children in the early years get off to a strong start. Early reading starts in Nursery. Leaders check that pupils progress well through the phonics programme. Pupils who need extra help to read, receive it quickly. This helps them to gain confidence and use the phonic code to work out unknown words. Leaders provide regular training and guidance for staff. Staff throughout the school have a secure understanding of the agreed approach to phonics. They model sounds with accuracy. Pupils are clear about how to say each sound. Leaders make sure that pupils read books that match their reading ability. As a result, pupils develop fluency and enjoy reading for

pleasure. Older pupils read from a range of carefully selected books. They read widely and often.

Leaders have carefully considered how key knowledge is sequenced in most subjects. Teachers break learning down into small steps. This helps pupils to build knowledge well. However, in some subjects, leaders have not considered in enough detail the most important knowledge that pupils need to remember. As a result, in these subjects, pupils do not yet remember their learning as well as they could. In mathematics, pupils gain confidence in using basic number skills before applying them to problem solving activities. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They create interesting learning activities. For example, in French, pupils use their new vocabulary to take part in a pet shop role play. Teachers use assessment effectively to understand what pupils already know. They address pupils' misconceptions well.

Pupils with SEND achieve well. They have helpful targets that support their learning well. Leaders review pupils' targets regularly. Teachers make skilful adaptations to enable pupils to know and remember more. They use individual approaches matched to pupils' needs. Parents appreciate the useful regular communication they receive.

Leaders consider how to best prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about equality and diversity. On a recent theatre visit they found out about 'women who changed the world'. Leaders create opportunities for pupils to learn about global issues, such as climate change. Pupils held a climate march around the local area. Pupils take part in many sporting events, including athletics and football.

Leaders share a clear vision for the future of the school. All staff agree that 'pupils come first'. They feel proud to be part of a strong team. Many staff commend leaders because they prioritise actions that will make the biggest difference to pupils. They say that this is not at the expense of their own well-being. Staff at the early stages of their career feel well supported.

Trust leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths. They also know what needs to improve further. Governors ask the right questions to check that the information leaders share with them is accurate. They check safeguarding procedures are effective.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. They say that they can talk to adults in school if they have any worries. Leaders deliver safeguarding training that helps staff to spot possible signs of abuse. Staff record concerns with accuracy. Leaders take fast action to ensure that families receive the support they need.

Pupils know how to keep safe online. They know that people may be impersonating others. Leaders use assemblies to remind pupils about the risks in their local area.

Leaders make the right checks on adults who join the school. They make sure that the single central record is accurate.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not remember their learning in some foundation subjects as well as they could. They find it difficult to talk about their previous learning. Leaders need to ensure that the key knowledge pupils need to know is identified and sequenced so that pupils know more and remember more.

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, South Tawton Primary School, to be good in September 2014.

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	145335
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10227694
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	224
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tania Skeaping
Principal	Sarah Marvin
Website	www.southtawton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- South Tawton Primary School joined Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust in January 2018.
- Leaders make use of one registered alternative provision.
- There is an on-site before-school club.
- There is a pre-school for two- and three-year-olds. This is operated on a separate site.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with the principal, the executive principal, the special educational needs coordinator, members of staff, parents and representatives from the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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 inspector checked the procedures for keeping pupils safe including scrutinising the single central record.

- The inspector checked all survey responses, including 27 from staff and 97 from parents. This included considering the 32 responses to Ofsted’s Parent View free-text service.
- The inspector met with pupils and staff to gather their views and find out what is it like to be part of the school.
- The inspector visited the off-site pre-school located in the nearby village hall.
- The inspector looked at the school’s plans for improvement, minutes of meetings, monitoring documents, safeguarding records and reports from the trust.

Inspection team

Jane Dennis, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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