

Inspection of a good school: The Topsham School

Orchard Way, Topsham, Exeter, Devon EX3 0DN

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2022

Outcome

The Topsham School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at The Topsham School love to learn. Leaders have supported staff to strengthen the curriculum recently. They are ambitious for what all pupils should learn and have high aspirations for all pupils. At the heart of this, pupils talk about learning behaviours that motivate them to be successful learners. They enjoy receiving rewards, such as house tokens, which directly link to these behaviours.

Pupils are happy and say that they feel safe. They know that adults will help them if they have any worries. Most pupils agree that bullying does not happen. They get on well with their peers, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils have confidence that staff would sort out any conflicts or problems swiftly.

Pupils attend a range of extra-curricular clubs. They enjoy sporting clubs, including 'sporty stars' and running, as well as musical and creative clubs. Staff carefully plan opportunities and visits to enrich the curriculum. For example, some pupils recently enjoyed a visit to Kents Cavern and could link this to their learning in history.

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

Leaders, including governors, rigorously check the quality of their work. They use what they know to improve the school further. They are very considerate of staff's workload and well-being. Leaders work with external providers to deliver the right professional development for staff. They have placed ambitious vocabulary at the core of the curriculum in all subjects. These words are purposefully planned to build in complexity. Staff preteach this vocabulary to some pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This enables pupils with SEND to use words such as 'monarchy' and 'chronology' accurately in their history learning.

Pupils learn a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff revisit prior learning to find out what pupils remember. However, in some subjects, key knowledge is not always identified precisely or taught consistently well. Leaders have robust plans in place to address this.

Children in the early years get off to a successful start. They love to learn, and do so effectively. Staff work alongside children skilfully to develop their knowledge and vocabulary. Leaders plan a curriculum that supports children to practise what they have learned. For example, children explained that subitising was knowing an amount without having to count, and then used this in their play with cars.

Children learn to read as soon as they start school. Staff teach a carefully sequenced phonics curriculum. Pupils build on the sounds they already know. Alongside teachers, teaching assistants support pupils to 'tap out sounds', so that they can read unknown words. Teachers regularly assess how well pupils can read. This means that they get timely support to catch up. Therefore, pupils become confident and fluent readers. They enjoy listening to their class reads, which are carefully selected to include a range of different cultures and historical contexts. However, beyond phonics, the reading curriculum does not consider fully how pupils can be supported to develop their reading skills further.

Staff identify the needs of pupils with SEND carefully. These pupils develop strong relationships with the adults who help them because of the nurture they receive. For many pupils with SEND, the provision they receive supports them to learn the curriculum successfully. Yet, for a small number of pupils, this is not yet fully effective. This means some pupils do not learn as well as they could in some subjects.

Pupils are kind, caring and considerate of others. They understand the school rules and follow them. Pupils remind each other of expectations when walking through corridors or in lessons. They happily play and learn alongside their peers.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They demonstrate the 'Topsham Values' and wider British values successfully in school. Leaders have developed strong personal, social and health education and religious education curriculums. Pupils understand and talk with confidence about different religious beliefs and cultures. They respect the differences of others. Pupils learn about the importance of physical and mental health, for example through yoga. Leaders invite visitors into school to teach pupils about life beyond their local area.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding team ensures that safeguarding is 'everyone's responsibility'. Staff receive regular training. They are vigilant in reporting any concerns. Leaders work with families and external agencies to ensure pupils get the help that they need as soon as they need it. This supports pupils to feel safe. Leaders make robust checks when new staff join the school.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They use trusted adults in school to help them with their concerns. Pupils also know how to get support from relevant charities. They learn how to be safe and responsible when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, including reading, the curriculum needs further strengthening. Sometimes, the expectations for what pupils should learn are not planned for explicitly or taught well enough. Leaders need to ensure that what pupils should know is clearly identified and consistently taught well, so that pupils learn successfully.
- Staff identify the needs of pupils with SEND well. However, sometimes, provision and targets are not precise enough to support pupils. Leaders should check the effectiveness of the support provided for pupils with SEND, so that all pupils follow the curriculum successfully.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2012.

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.

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	131108
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10227946
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-chairs of governing body	Adrian Blight Leanne Smith
Headteacher	Emma Pipe
Website	www.topsham.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has chosen to work in a management partnership with United Schools Federation.
- The school has a nursery provision for children aged three and above.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector also met with the co-chairs of the governing body, one additional governor and a local authority representative.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector spoke with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe. She considered the school's recruitment procedures, staff induction and training, records of concern and engagement with external agencies. The inspector spoke with staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. She also took into consideration responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Donna Briggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022