

Inspection of Totnes St John's Church of England Primary School

Pathfields, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5TZ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a warm and welcoming culture at Totnes St John's Church of England Primary School. Staff know all pupils well and offer them the support that they need. Pupils now learn an ambitious curriculum because of leaders' work to develop this.

Some pupils take on additional roles and responsibilities. For example, older pupils read to younger pupils and run lunchtime clubs. Some pupils grow their own food and sell this in the local market. Examples such as this emphasise the strong sense of involvement with the local community.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know that staff care about them. Pupils know who to go to if they have any worries. Many parents and carers appreciate the open and approachable communication they receive about their children.

Typically, pupils behave well in lessons. Most listen carefully and work hard. They have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils know what bullying means and say that it does not happen. If bullying were to happen, pupils know what to do to receive the support that they need.

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

Leaders have established a creative and ambitious curriculum. They link the subjects pupils learn to a whole-school theme. Leaders have considered carefully the knowledge that they want pupils to know and by when. However, staff do not use assessment well enough to check that pupils have learned the curriculum as intended. This means that some pupils do not build up their understanding securely over time.

Staff identify pupils' needs quickly. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers adapt the curriculum so that pupils with SEND follow the curriculum successfully. However, some parents would appreciate more frequent communication from leaders so that they can better understand how well their children learn.

In the early years, children follow a challenging curriculum. They practise their learning in reading and mathematics through carefully selected activities. Staff use well-considered stories and poems to extend children's vocabulary. Children share and play well with their peers. They start to develop their resilience, so that they are better able to learn independently.

Pupils follow a systematic phonics programme consistently. This supports pupils who are in the early stages of reading to learn new sounds. This begins as soon as children join in the Reception Year. Children quickly recognise new letters and the sounds that they make. Staff make regular checks on what pupils know. Therefore,

pupils get help quickly, if needed. This supports pupils to read widely and with fluency.

Pupils are polite and welcoming. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and respectful. The vast majority of pupils focus on their learning. Leaders provide bespoke support for a minority of pupils who find it challenging to manage their own behaviour.

Leaders ensure there are many opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development. The school's 'character' curriculum supports pupils to become confident and resilient. Pupils understand their school values and vision, and why these are important. They demonstrate these values regularly, including in school worship and during visits to the local area. Pupils are clear on what fundamental British values are and why they are important. For example, the elected school councillors hold class meetings to ensure that everyone has a voice.

Governors work effectively to support leaders and to hold them to account. They understand their statutory responsibilities. Staff have great confidence in school leaders' willingness to help them manage their workload. This is because leaders are mindful of the well-being of all who work in the school. Staff feel that they belong to a team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure there is a clear safeguarding culture across the school. They provide staff with up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff understand how to identify any signs of concern and they report these quickly. Leaders work well with a range of external agencies to ensure that their families receive the help that they need. They make the required safeguarding checks during recruitment.

Pupils feel safe. They understand how to stay safe, including when they are online. For example, pupils understand the importance of not sharing personal details or meeting up with strangers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not use what they learn from assessment well enough. As a result, pupils do not build securely on what they have learned before. Leaders should ensure that teachers' use of assessment supports pupils to know and remember more over time.

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	146534
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10267802
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Roger Willoughby
Headteacher	William Jaworski
Website	www.totnesstjohnsprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Totnes St John’s Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school in December 2018. When its predecessor school, Totnes St. Johns, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school is part of Academies for Character and Excellence Trust.
- Leaders use one unregistered alternative provider.
- There is an on-site before- and after-school provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 met with the headteacher, senior leaders, trustees, the chief executive officer, governors and the SEND coordinator.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and geography. 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' works.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult. The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff and volunteers working in the school. They met with the designated safeguarding lead and examined safeguarding records.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Chris Gould, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Richard Light

Ofsted Inspector

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