

Inspection of a good school: Ilsington Church of England Primary School

Ilsington, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ13 9RE

Inspection date:

26 April 2023

Outcome

Ilsington Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Ilsington Church of England Primary School, pupils develop 'big hearts and big ideas'. They enjoy learning at this small school, where staff carefully consider the curriculum to meet the needs of learners. Consequently, they achieve well.

Pupils are well known and understood by adults and encouraged to do their best. They know what is expected of them. The focus on developing learning behaviours is helping pupils to participate more readily and actively in lessons.

Relationships between adults and pupils are nurturing and positive. Everyone is accepted at this school. As a result, pupils learn to value others who may be different to themselves. They treat each other with kindness and dignity.

Leaders teach pupils to 'speak up and speak out'. They value pupils' views and opinions and encourage them to take part in votes that shape decision-making in the school. Pupils take on roles such as school councillors, sports leaders and house captains. They appreciate the opportunity to attend the residential trip. However, too few pupils attend the clubs and activities on offer.

Parents are unanimous in their view that the school keeps pupils safe. Pupils say that bullying is exceptionally rare. They are clear that should it occur, leaders are quick to address it.

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

The school provides a curriculum that is broad and ambitious for all pupils. Leaders have structured learning to make sure that pupils in mixed-age classes achieve well. This applies to learning within lessons and units of work, as well as across year groups.

Teachers have strong subject and curriculum knowledge. They give pupils tasks that help them consolidate what they have been taught. Teachers give time and clear explanations

to make sure pupils understand key concepts. This helps them deepen their learning across all subjects.

In lessons, teachers ask questions to find out what pupils know and understand. They quickly correct pupils' misunderstandings and address gaps in their knowledge. This includes weaknesses that have arisen because of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in mathematics, leaders have prioritised fluency and developed pupils' attitudes towards problem-solving. This has enabled pupils to complete more difficult tasks with increased confidence.

As soon as they start school, children in the early years learn a range of nursery rhymes and stories. This develops their love of reading and extends their vocabulary. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about a wide range of stories. They take home books to share with their parents, who regularly listen to them read. Staff are well trained in the school's approach to phonics. They teach phonics effectively so that pupils, including those who are at the early stages of learning to read, learn their sounds quickly. As a result, pupils make good progress to become confident and accurate readers.

The school is proudly inclusive. Leaders have the highest expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff know the needs of pupils with SEND well. They adapt their teaching to enable these pupils to access the full curriculum. Because of this support, pupils with SEND make demonstrable progress from their starting points.

The school environment is calm and orderly. Pupils are polite and well-mannered and generally follow the instructions that adults give them. Nonetheless, there has, historically, been a culture where pupils have been too passive in their approach to learning. This has meant that, sometimes, pupils do not deepen their understanding as fully as they could. However, leaders continue to work to change this culture to ensure that all pupils participate more actively in lessons.

The curriculum for personal development supports pupils to keep themselves healthy. They learn about relationships and know that families can exist in different forms. There are opportunities for pupils to learn about different religions. They explore spirituality through the ethos council, which leads assemblies.

'Virtual visits' help develop pupils' knowledge about different world cultures. However, the curriculum is less well established for teaching pupils about cultural diversity in the UK. As a result, pupils lack knowledge of the experiences of others across modern Britain.

Staff are proud to work at Ilsington. They describe a sense of community where there are 'mutual relationships' with leaders and parents. Staff feel protected from bullying and harassment. They say that leaders, including those at Link Academy Trust, are supportive and have taken action to ensure that their workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. They think creatively to ensure pupils and families are given the support they need.

Staff use robust procedures for identifying, recording and reporting safeguarding concerns. The motto of 'speak up and speak out' helps pupils tell trusted adults about situations that make them feel uncomfortable.

The curriculum supports pupils to keep themselves safe, including online. The school helps parents and carers to understand local risks, including radicalisation and extremism.

Trustees ensure that staff and visitors are safe to work with children. They provide effective checks and balances of the school's safeguarding work.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too few pupils benefit from opportunities to develop beyond the academic. Consequently, they do not all develop a range of talents and interests. Leaders must develop a wider range of opportunities for pupils to nurture and develop a breadth of interests and ensure that as many pupils as possible participate in these.
- The curriculum has not sufficiently developed pupils' understanding of all aspects of cultural diversity in the UK. As a result, some pupils lack knowledge of the experiences of others across modern Britain. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their knowledge of people from a range of cultural backgrounds across the UK so that they are fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

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 June 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	136919
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10211088
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	79
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Cheryl Mathieson
Headteacher	Samantha McCarthy-Patmore
Website	www.ilsington.thelink.academy/website
Date of previous inspection	13 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the Link Academy Trust in 2020 after being rebrokered from another multi-academy trust. The trust is made up of 16 small rural primary schools in the South Devon area.
- There have been several changes in staffing since the previous inspection, including the headteacher, who joined the school at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This is a church school in the Diocese of Exeter. The school received its section 48 inspection under the Education Act 2005 for schools of a religious character in May 2018, when this aspect of the school's work was graded outstanding.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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 met with the headteacher, groups of staff, representatives from the multi-academy trust and members of the local trustee board.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about, and reviewed samples of work in, other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the documentation around safeguarding, including the safeguarding checks made on staff. They talked to governors, staff and pupils about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to an adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to see how leaders support their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, responses to the staff survey and responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steph Matthews, lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Matthew Shirley

Ofsted Inspector

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