

Inspection of a good school: Drake's Church of England Primary School

Middle Street, East Budleigh, Budleigh Salterton, Devon EX9 7DQ

Inspection date:

25 May 2023

Outcome

Drake's Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils take the lead on many aspects of school life. They live by the school's values, which are rooted in Christian tradition. Pupils celebrate one another for showing kindness, respect, courage and compassion. Through the school's 'ethos group', pupils raise money to support better health around the world. For example, they have raised money to pay for mosquito nets which will reduce the risk of malaria in vulnerable countries.

The school encourages pupils to be fit and active. At breaktime and lunchtime, pupils join in organised games. There are opportunities through the multi-academy trust for pupils to link up with their peers in other schools. Pupils attend sports and cultural events in the local community. They develop a spirit of adventure through other trips and visits which they thoroughly enjoy, such as the annual residential trip held on Dartmoor.

Whether pupils join the school mid-year or as Reception-age children in the 'Otters' class, they quickly learn what is expected of them. They focus on their learning and join in keenly. As pupils grow older, they develop the confidence to resolve any conflict within friendship groups for themselves. They know that there are trusted staff who will provide support where needed.

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

The reading curriculum is expertly led. Children in the Reception Year start to learn phonics straightaway. Before long, they read words confidently. Leaders establish helpful learning routines and make sure that everyone participates fully. Pupils who speak English as an additional language thrive in the inclusive environment that leaders create. They quickly pick up the sounds and expressions of the English language.

Leaders are absolutely determined that every pupil will read well. They identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge of phonics quickly. Where pupils find reading difficult due to their special educational needs and/or disabilities, staff redouble their efforts. They adapt the curriculum creatively to make it work for these pupils. Some older pupils lost some of their phonic knowledge due to the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions. Staff were proactive in helping these pupils to get back on track. Staff continue to celebrate pupils' reading achievements until the moment they leave. Pupils, of all ages, find this highly motivating.

Leaders have worked alongside the local mathematics hub, to strengthen the teaching of mathematics in the school. As a result, pupils benefit from effective and consistent teaching. The curriculum is designed so that pupils keep coming back to the big ideas. Daily practice helps pupils to build up their fluency. If more practice with a new concept is required, teachers adapt their planning to provide this. The teaching of early mathematics is highly effective. This prepares pupils well for later challenges.

Over recent years, leaders have reviewed the curriculum systematically. The multi-academy trust has provided effective subject-specific support to the school during this time. Leaders emphasise vocabulary learning and oracy. As a result, pupils are knowledgeable and confident speakers. Leaders are relentlessly ambitious for pupils and continue to strengthen the curriculum further.

Leaders pay close attention to pupils' speech, language and communication skills. They make sure that pupils receive support with their language development, and identify pupils' needs quickly. The 'Inclusion Hub' provides outreach support for pupils with particular needs. Sometimes, pupils visit the hub to receive specialist support. Back at school, staff have a strong understanding of pupils' needs. Pupils learn successfully thanks to the support they receive.

Pupils learn to take care of the environment and each other while at the school. Often, the school gardens provide the setting for learning. Pupils grow vegetables and use flowers and plants as the basis for arts and crafts. Leaders encourage pupils to look beyond the local area. Through video links, pupils gain an insight into the lives of children in other places around the world. Older pupils train to be mental health ambassadors. All of this supports pupils' spiritual, cultural and social development.

Leaders, including those from the multi-academy trust, work in partnership with staff. They provide valuable support. Staff are energised by the professional learning they undertake. Many have become well-respected leaders in their own right as a result. Staff are unanimous in their view that their well-being is looked after at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular, useful training. This helps to ensure that everyone is vigilant for any signs of harm, or risk of harm. There is a clear system for recording concerns. Leaders consider any reports carefully.

Leaders take a proactive approach to reducing online risks. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online through the curriculum. Leaders also support parents to manage pupils' use of the internet, applications and games at home.

When staff are recruited into the school, this is done thoroughly. Leaders routinely work with the local authority to review and tighten the school's safeguarding practices.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils learn enthusiastically and gain detailed knowledge across the curriculum. Nevertheless, leaders believe that, in a few subjects, there is yet more that pupils could learn and do. Leaders should build on their successes so far, further strengthening the quality of education that pupils receive.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Drake's Church of England Primary School, to be good in March 2011.

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	147495
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10287467
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Cheryl Mathieson
Headteacher	Peter Halford
Website	http://www.drakes.thelink.academy/website
Date of previous inspection	19 January 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher joined the school in January 2019 as part of a supportive partnership arrangement with the Link Academy Trust. In February 2020, the school joined the trust, which comprises of 16 primary schools.
- The trust provides support for pupils with particular needs through an 'Inclusion Hub'.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- There is provision for childcare before and after school.

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 held discussions with the headteacher, senior teachers, the chief executive officer and director of school improvement of the multi-academy trust and the chair of the local governing body.
- 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 some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school and met with the headteacher, who is also the school's designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors held discussions with pupils and staff to consider the wider culture of safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Lovett

Ofsted Inspector

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