

Inspection of a good school: St Marychurch Church of England Primary and Nursery School

Hartop Road, St Marychurch, Torquay, Devon TQ1 4QH

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The inspector is recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's values of love, joy, peace and kindness are well known by all pupils. This extends to nursery, where children sing the school values song as part of their daily routines.

Staff know pupils well. They build positive relationships. This helps the majority of pupils to feel safe. Leaders expect pupils to behave well. However, not all pupils manage this. Pupils say that, on occasion, learning in the upper part of the school is disrupted by the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils. This makes some pupils feel unsafe. Bullying can happen, but pupils say that adults sort it out quickly.

Leaders have ambition for all pupils. They have made improvements to the early reading and history curriculums. Leaders have set out precise plans so that curriculum delivery is effective in these subjects, but the key stage 2 reading curriculum is not as well thought through.

Pupils enjoy a broad range of wider opportunities, including dance, gardening and football club. They take pride in roles such as school parliament members and sports captains. Pupils hear from a range of visitors in assemblies, including local councillors. This helps them to develop an understanding of their local area.

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

School and trust leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They recognise that behaviour in key stage 2 continues to be an area that requires development. Many pupils and parents report that the behaviour of some pupils

disrupts the learning of others. They also say that some pupils behave poorly at social times. Leaders have put a new behaviour policy in place, but not all staff consistently apply this at all times of the school day.

Children in the early years and pupils in the lower part of the school co-operate well and respect one another. They thoroughly enjoy breaktimes and feel well cared for. Children get off to a flying start developing high levels of independence, for example, peeling fruit themselves at snack time. They are enthusiastic about school.

Leaders have given high priority to the teaching of early reading. Pupils begin to read as soon as they start school. Staff are well trained to teach pupils the letters that represent each sound. Staff review pupils' learning regularly so that they spot any pupils who are falling behind. They swiftly support pupils needing extra help so they catch up quickly. Leaders place importance on matching the sounds that pupils know to the books they take home. This helps pupils to build confidence in reading. In nursery, communication and language are a priority. This is demonstrated through rich conversation between staff and children. Pupils across the school talk eagerly about the books they read and develop a love of reading.

Despite the strengths in early reading, there is more to do to develop the key stage 2 reading curriculum. Leaders have not clearly set out what needs to be taught and when to develop pupils' reading comprehension in key stage 2. Consequently, some pupils do not learn reading comprehension skills as well as they could.

Leaders have carefully planned the curriculum in many subjects. For example, in history, they provide staff with useful background knowledge to support their teaching. Teachers deliver the curriculum effectively with pupils knowing more over time. Leaders have thought about the vocabulary they want pupils to know. This begins in the early years. Children learn words such as 'monarch' and 'king'. They use these words accurately. In mathematics, pupils review their prior learning. They say this helps them to remember concepts. Older pupils can successfully use previous knowledge of position and direction and apply to learning about coordinates.

Leaders provide staff with training so that they know how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders put in place specific learning plans to ensure that provision meets the needs of all. This helps pupils with SEND to learn well.

Leaders carefully consider pupils' wider development. They actively broaden pupils' experiences through trips to national parks, author visits and theatre performances. Pupils enjoy residential trips to spend time away with friends. This helps to give them confidence before moving on to secondary school.

Staff appreciate the support offered to them by leaders and the way in which they are listened to. They speak highly of the training they receive.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that the key stage 2 reading curriculum and the behaviour of pupils may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders check that adults are suitable to work with children. They train staff regularly, including through weekly updates, so that they know the indicators of harm. Leaders check that staff follow the agreed processes for recording and reporting any concerns about a child. Safeguarding records are detailed. Leaders respond quickly to support pupils and families in need of help.

Leaders have planned a curriculum that supports pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe. This includes online safety and the importance of healthy lifestyle choices. Pupils know they can speak to trusted adults about any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The behaviour of some key stage 2 pupils does not meet the high expectations set out by leaders. A minority of pupils do not behave well and disrupt learning for others. Leaders have recently introduced a new policy to improve behaviour. They must ensure that all staff consistently follow the agreed approaches to manage behaviour.
- Leaders have not put in place an effective reading comprehension programme in key stage 2. As a result, pupils do not develop their understanding of what they read as deeply as they could. Leaders should support staff in planning and delivering an effective reading curriculum so that pupils develop their comprehension skills throughout key stage 2.

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 predecessor school, St Marychurch Church of England Primary and Nursery School, to be good in December 2010.

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	140644
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10212392
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	302
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Bailey
Headteacher	Phillip Lee
Website	www.st-marychurch-primary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the St Christopher's Multi-Academy Trust.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. The school is in the Diocese of Exeter. At the most recent section 48 inspection of the school, carried out in March 2016, the school was judged to be good.

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 have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with school leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with governors, a representative from the diocese and trust leaders including the chief executive officer and the chair of trustees.

- 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 listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- The inspector evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. She looked at the school's single central record and records of concerns and at how staff work to keep pupils safe. She talked to pupils, staff, governors and trust leaders about safeguarding practices.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunch and break times. In addition, she met with pupils formally and informally to hear their views.
- The inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. She looked at responses to the pupil survey and responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Lakmini Harkus, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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