

Inspection of a good school: North Molton Primary School

Fore Street, North Molton, South Molton, Devon EX36 3HL

Inspection date:

6 July 2023

Outcome

North Molton Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to North Molton Primary School. They describe the school as a friendly and welcoming place, where new pupils settle quickly. Pupils understand how the school's values help them to be kind, respectful and to give their best. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive. Many comment on the positive start children make and the way in which staff support and care for pupils.

The headteacher and her staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils are polite and courteous. They understand the school rules and follow them well. This starts in the early years, where children listen carefully, play well and respect one another.

Pupils feel safe. Parents agree. Pupils value the positive relationships they have with staff. They trust adults to help them with any worries they have or to resolve any disagreements that may happen, in a kind and sensitive way.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs and visits, such as gardening, yoga, music and watching a symphony orchestra. They value becoming members of the school council and the fundraising work they do for charities. Pupils say that these roles make them feel responsible and allow them to set a positive example to others.

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

Leaders have high expectations for what all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. They have created a curriculum that is designed well. They have carefully considered what pupils need to know and when they need to know it.

Reading is a priority in the school. Pupils read a range of texts with increasing fluency, accuracy and expression. They say that reading a good book often captures their imagination, meaning that they do not want to put it down. Pupils enjoy listening to

adults read stories to them. They understand how this helps them to build their knowledge of concepts, such as equality.

Children begin learning phonics as soon as they start school. They learn and remember new sounds well. Staff benefit from the training they receive to teach phonics effectively. Books that pupils read match the sounds they learn, which helps them to gain confidence. If pupils fall behind, they receive the support they need to help them to catch up quickly.

Leaders have put in place a well-structured mathematics curriculum. This starts in the early years. Teachers use resources effectively to develop children's mathematical understanding. They explain new concepts clearly and model mathematical vocabulary well. As a result, children confidently understand number patterns. As they move through the school, pupils build on this. For example, older pupils use their mathematical knowledge well when creating line graphs.

In some wider curriculum subjects, leaders are developing the systems to check on what pupils know and remember. Teachers do not routinely check on what pupils have remembered over time well enough. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. For example, in geography, while children in the early years confidently use words like 'cliff' and 'cove' to describe their local surroundings, some older pupils struggle to use their geographical knowledge to locate places on a map and to describe their features. This hampers the progress that some pupils make. In addition, some subject leaders do not yet accurately understand how well pupils learn the intended curriculum.

Leaders are ambitious for what pupils with SEND can achieve. Staff know these pupils well and identify their needs accurately. Pupils' plans are precise. Leaders work closely with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the help they need. All pupils with SEND learn a broad and balanced curriculum.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They behave well in lessons and during social times. Children in the early years take turns and are eager to learn. The environment in classrooms and around the school is calm and purposeful.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Leaders provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities, which align to the school's values. Pupils know that people are different and why it is important to treat everyone equally. They talk confidently about fundamental British values, such as democracy. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Trustees and representatives are ambitious for the school. They know the school's strengths and hold leaders to account for their actions. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the way in which leaders support them and consider their workloads.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. They provide staff with up-to-date safeguarding training. Leaders work well with a range of professionals to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the help they need. Leaders make the right safeguarding checks during recruitment.

Pupils know how to stay safe in the real and online world. They understand the importance of not sharing personal information online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment is still being developed in some subjects. It is not yet used well enough to check that pupils have remembered the knowledge they have been taught. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning and do not build their knowledge well over time. Leaders need to ensure that teachers use assessment effectively across all subjects and use this information to inform future learning.
- Subject leadership is not yet fully developed. As a result, some leaders do not have a well-informed view of their subjects or know what impact the intended curriculum is having. Senior leaders must continue to develop subject leaders' expertise to ensure that subject leaders have precise information about how effectively the curriculum is taught and how well pupils learn.

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. 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, North Molton School, to be good in March 2017.

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	148020
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10287472
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	134
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Cockell
Headteacher	Angela Fernyhough
Website	www.north-molton-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- North Molton Primary School opened to become an academy school in July 2020. When its predecessor school, North Molton School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of The Tarka Learning Partnership.
- There have been some changes to the structure of the governing body since the last inspection. A school community board has been in place since September 2022 with local governors being known as representatives.
- There is a before-school club which is managed by the governing body.
- The school has pre-school provision for two-, three- and four-year-olds.
- The school does not use any 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, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, groups of staff and representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following 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, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. An inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ben Jordan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicky McMahon

His Majesty's Inspector

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