

Inspection of a good school: St Dominic C of E Primary School

St Dominic, St Dominick, Saltash Cornwall PL12 6SU

Inspection date:

18 July 2023

Outcome

St Dominic C of E 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?

The 'bring it' vision permeates all areas of St Dominic's C of E Primary School. Pupils and staff know how to 'bring' courage, friendship, wonder, creativity, adventure and energy to all they do. Consequently, the school is a hive of activity where all have a shared sense of purpose.

Pupils are respectful of staff and of their peers. Strong routines and high expectations create a calm and purposeful atmosphere. The very youngest children are courteous to one another and know how to manage their feelings. Pupils of all ages work and play together harmoniously. They are kind to each other.

Experiences such as outdoor education, tending the school allotment and caring for the school pony enrich pupils' lives. Opportunities for pupils to develop their interests, talents and character abound. For instance, pupils enjoy honing their sporting and creative skills through clubs and the curriculum.

Parents are exceptionally positive about the school. They appreciate the support provided to them, as well as for pupils. Their children love coming to school, feel safe and thrive.

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

The curriculum is highly ambitious. It is sequenced so that pupils build on the strong knowledge they have gained in previous years. All aspects of the curriculum develop pupils' vocabulary. The very youngest children use sophisticated vocabulary when talking and writing. Personal development is integrated into all aspects of the curriculum. For example, whole-class reading books promote positive attributes. The reading curriculum

exposes pupils to the experiences of people whose lives and beliefs are different from their own.

All staff have the subject knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum well. Teachers and teaching assistants explain new learning clearly. They answer pupils' questions accurately and thoroughly. Staff check pupils' understanding before introducing more complex learning. In early years, children develop their language and social skills as they complete the myriad of activities available to them. Pupils of all ages have many opportunities to share their ideas and discuss learning. They value the opinions of their peers, even when they disagree with them.

Pupils, including the very youngest, listen attentively to staff and to each other. They behave consistently well. Consequently, learning is not interrupted or delayed.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. They produce work that is of consistently high quality. Pupils are proud of what they achieve and are eager to make their work even better.

Children begin to learn letter sounds as soon as they start at the school. Staff are experts at teaching the phonics scheme that the school uses. Pupils' reading books are well matched to the sounds they know. Those at the early stages of reading also have books that build their love of reading and match their interests. Very few pupils fall behind with reading because they get prompt help to catch up rapidly. Most older pupils are keen readers and talk about the books they read with enthusiasm. Pupils understand how reading helps them with their writing. From Reception Year onwards, children's writing includes complex sentences and rich vocabulary.

Pupils learn about those from different backgrounds, including from other faiths. They know that some groups in society face particular challenges, for instance because of their gender or disability. Pupils say that it is important to treat everyone fairly and to value them. They know that this underpins what it means to be a good citizen in modern Britain. Pupils vote on many aspects of school life and their views are valued. As a result, they have a strong understanding of democracy and the rule of law.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND quickly. Teachers adapt the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND learn well alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND participate in all aspects of school life.

Staff are very proud of the school. Leaders from the multi-academy trust have a highly positive impact on the school. The curriculum guidance they provide and the support from phase leaders has been invaluable through a period of rapid growth.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and leaders' priorities for development. They have the expertise they need to fulfil their roles. Consequently, they support and challenge leaders effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders, governors and staff all understand their responsibility for keeping children safe. They are alert to signs that a child might be at risk because they have relevant safeguarding training and reminders. They report any concerns they have to leaders.

Leaders are tenacious in their work with other agencies. Consequently, pupils and families get the support they need.

Pupils know how to stay safe. For example, they know the dangers of sharing personal information or images online.

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, St Dominic C of E VA School, to be good in November 2016.

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	148695
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10287473
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	65
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sue Morrish
Headteacher	Jon-Joe Wilson
Website	www.st-dominic.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- St Dominic's is a Church of England school within the Plymouth Diocese.
- It is due to have a Section 48 inspection by September 2024.

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, governors, the chair of trustees and representatives of the multi-academy trust.
- 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' work.

- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leaders, examined school records and discussed safeguarding cases.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and the views of staff and pupils in Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors spoke to parents as they collected their children from school.

Inspection team

Sarah Favager-Dalton, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Laura Horne

Ofsted Inspector

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