

Inspection of a good school: Ilsham Church of England Academy

Ilsham Road, Torquay, Devon TQ1 2JQ

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 September 2023

Outcome

Ilsham Church of England Academy continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Jake Grinsill. This school is part of the Learning Academy Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Tracey Cleverly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joanne Tisdall.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's vision and values are central to the education that pupils receive. Pupils appreciate the opportunities and experiences that they have, which enrich and extend their learning. Links with the local community help pupils to develop in and beyond their academic success, for example offering workplace visits and meaningful rewards for pupils. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They recall their learning across a range of subjects with enthusiasm.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Expectations are modelled clearly. Pupils know they have important roles to play when some of their peers find this more challenging. Pupils are proud to hold roles such as peer mediators and mental health champions. They feel they make a difference, along with the impact made by the school council. Pupils agree that one of the most notable things about the school is the support they get from the school and their friends.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the support provided to pupils. Pupils and their needs are known well. Many parents describe the school as a place their child thoroughly enjoys attending.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. This begins in the early years, where children get off to a strong start. As soon as they join in Reception, children learn routines and the expectations of what is required of them. Rigorous systems are in place to quickly identify children's needs and interests. The indoor and outdoor learning spaces are

engaging and purposeful. Staff use interactions with children to encourage them to think independently and be curious about the world around them.

The core subjects of mathematics and reading are well established. Staff have a secure understanding of the approach in these areas. Consequently, pupils progress well through the curriculum. Despite this, the school has prioritised further developments to sustain pupils' achievements. In mathematics, pupils are increasing in fluency to strengthen their reasoning and problem-solving. In reading, the school ensures that pupils are reading experts and have a love of reading for pleasure. Pupils recall regular encounters with authors which inspire them to read more. Staff read to pupils often. This extends pupils' awareness of authors and genres. Pupils know why reading is important and how it helps them in their learning in the wider curriculum.

There is a well-considered programme of training for staff. The school ensures this is an effective part of their curriculum improvement. There is an established model for many subjects in the wider curriculum, for example history and geography. Other subjects are not as well established. The school is clear on what is needed in these areas to align them with the rest of the curriculum offer. Where subjects are well established, teachers have secure subject knowledge and present learning clearly. Teachers ensure pupils are secure in their prior learning. They break new learning down into small steps to help deepen pupils' understanding.

The school has worked to establish a fully inclusive school culture. Staff want the best for pupils and want to make sure they are prepared to be active participants in today's modern world. However, this is not yet fully embedded. At times, pupils lack awareness of differences and how these impact individuals. Examples of this include how others learn, behave and look. This can impact on their view of the world around them. The school is beginning to capitalise on opportunities to model, explain and address this in a more precise and targeted way, for example early identification of pupils' needs and ensuring all pupils can fully access enrichment opportunities. This development continues through the curriculum and through everyone's understanding of shared expectations for pupils' social, emotional and academic development.

The curriculum helps pupils to learn about keeping healthy, physically and mentally. Pupils know how to stay safe, including online. They have a wealth of opportunities to develop and extend their talents and interests, for example through performing in the theatre, working with local artists and attending a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. Links with the local community help pupils to build their aspirations for the future through visits to and visits from local businesses and employers.

The school has strengthened its provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) recently. Actions include appointing key leaders to oversee this aspect of the school's work. In addition, the school has strengthened staff's awareness of identifying needs and overcoming barriers to learning. This enables all pupils to learn the same ambitious curriculum.

Those responsible for governance understand their roles well. They check that the school's actions have the biggest impact on pupils. Despite a period of new staff joining

the school, they are unequivocal in their appreciation of the support that comes from the school team and the wider trust. They agree that this has developed their knowledge and expertise and made a positive impact on pupils' education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not understand how individuals may require different approaches to meet their social, emotional and academic needs. The school does not always maximise on opportunities to address this. This can result in some pupils having a lack of understanding of the diverse world around them. The trust must continue to embed a culture which supports pupils to develop a secure awareness of all differences, including social, emotional and academic differences. This will help pupils to be well-informed, active members of their communities now and in the future.

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 July 2014.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137304
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10297994
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joanne Tisdall
CEO of trust	Tracey Cleverly
Headteacher	Jake Grinsill
Website	www.ilsham-lap.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Torquay Hub within the Learning Academy Partnership.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is a voluntary-controlled Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in February 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders from the school and trust, the school's special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) and a trust SENDCo. In addition, the inspector met with

members of the local committee, including the chair, representatives from the trust and the trust's chief executive officer.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement. The inspector scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, SEND, safeguarding and behaviour.
- The inspector listened to the views of parents at the start of the second day of the inspection. The inspector considered responses to the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments. The inspector evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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