

Inspection of a good school: Great Torrington Bluecoat Church of England Primary School

Borough Road, Torrington, Devon EX38 7NU

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 September 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 school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is an inclusive and caring school at the heart of the community. Pupils feel safe and know they can speak to any adult if they have a concern. However, pupils do not currently achieve as well as they could.

The school recognises the contribution of each pupil through its ethos of promoting the 'fruit of the spirit'. The school has a strong focus on building pupils' personal development. Pupils celebrate their individual skills through events such as 'Empowerment Day'.

Pupils in the school are polite and well mannered. Staff and pupils treat each other with respect. The school focuses on building strong relationships as the key to helping pupils to improve their behaviour. However, the approach to managing behaviour is not always consistent across the school.

Pupils learn about the world beyond their community. They enjoy writing to their pen pals in Germany. In addition, pupils have the opportunity to participate in exchange visits.

Teachers use forest school well to help pupils develop skills beyond the academic. Pupils learn about nature and den building. They learn about risk and keeping themselves safe. This helps pupils understand the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle.

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

The school has made recent changes to the curriculum. However, its impact on pupils' learning, including the quality of writing, does not always match the school's ambition.

The school is aware of this. It is taking steps to improve the implementation of the new curriculum so that it has the intended impact on pupils' learning.

The school has high expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have detailed knowledge of pupils with SEND and adapt teaching appropriately for pupils with additional needs. Specialist SEND provision in 'Bluecoat' and 'Nest' is particularly effective. Pupils with SEND develop important skills for learning and social interactions.

Pupils enjoy reading and they read from a wide range of authors. The books pupils read are well matched to their phonic knowledge. Teachers provide effective support for those pupils who fall behind when learning phonics. For younger children, teaching does not routinely develop children's communication and language. As a result, some children do not build their knowledge effectively.

The mathematics curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Leaders have identified the key concepts they want pupils to know and remember. However, teachers do not always check pupils' understanding. Misconceptions in pupils' work are not always identified. As a result, teachers do not adapt learning to meet the needs of all pupils. This means pupils do not have a secure understanding of key concepts on which to build future learning.

In some classes, when learning is not matched well to pupils' needs, some pupils lose focus and become distracted. This sometimes leads to low-level disruption, which disrupts the learning of other pupils.

The wider curriculum is early in its development. The school has linked aspects of the curriculum to the local area and community, drawing on its rich history. This means there are opportunities to link learning to local celebrations such as 'May Fair' day. However, the school has not identified the important knowledge that it wants pupils to remember. As a result, pupils are not always able to recall what they have previously learned.

Pupils have some understanding of fundamental British values. In weekly assemblies, pupils learn what tolerance means. They are respectful of those with different beliefs and cultures. However, pupils' understanding of different religions is not as well developed.

Pupils have the opportunity to become pupil councillors, peer mediators or collective worship ambassadors. Pupils appreciate the responsibility associated with these roles. The roles also build pupils' confidence. At lunchtimes, older pupils act as role models and they confidently support young pupils in their play.

Staff build close relationships with parents that help children settle quickly in the early years. Activities are well planned to develop children's interests and learning. Staff ensure children's understanding of numeracy is secure. Teachers regularly read stories and nursery rhymes to children to develop their love of reading.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel supported by school leaders and governors. There is a shared ambitious vision for pupils. While the recent introduction of a

new curriculum has led to an increase in workload, staff appreciate that the school is working to improve this. They know that leaders consider their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not assess or use assessment information to adapt the learning sufficiently well. This means pupils cannot build on prior learning. The school needs to support teachers to use assessment information to adapt the curriculum effectively to ensure pupils know and remember essential knowledge.
- In some subjects, teachers are not always clear about the most important knowledge that pupils need to remember. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and find it hard to remember their learning. The school needs to ensure that the key knowledge pupils need to remember is identified clearly in all subjects.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour are not always high enough. As a result, some pupils do not behave well and disrupt learning. The school should ensure that staff have equally high expectations for the behaviour of all pupils.

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 April 2015.

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	113377
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10297905
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	464
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jacqui Furseman and Louise Hunter (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Angela Fleming
Website	www.bluecoat-learn.org
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a nursery for two-, three- and four-year-old children.
- The school is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- This is a Church of England (voluntary controlled) primary school.

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.
- 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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinators.
- 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 in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and by talking to parents before school. The inspector also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

James Gentile, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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