

Inspection of Plympton St Mary's CofE Infant School

8 Market Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 1QW

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The Headteacher of this school is Suzie Ottewell. This school is part of St. Christopher's Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jo Evans and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Bailey.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's values of love, friendship, thankfulness, respect, perseverance, forgiveness and trust are shared by everyone. Staff know all pupils well, so relationships are strong. Pupils know they can speak to staff if they have any worries.

The school has high expectations for all. Children in the early years follow routines very well. Pupils know the school rules of 'ready, respectful, safe'. They are kind to each other. Pupils move around the school calmly and socialise happily with each other. In classrooms, pupils understand why it is important to do their best. They enjoy earning rewards for making good choices about their work or behaviour, such as house points. Older pupils enjoy supporting younger children.

Pupils enjoy trips and visits to places of interest, such as to the theatre. They take on responsibilities as house captains. Through roles such as these, they develop confidence and leadership qualities. Pupils participate in a variety of clubs and enrichment activities where they learn new skills. These are carefully planned to develop their talents and interests. Pupils are proud to represent the school in competitions, such as for boccia and cricket.

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

The school has high aspirations for all pupils. The ambitious curriculum clearly identifies the content that pupils need to know and by when. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, which they use to support pupils to learn well. However, in some subjects, the use of assessment is not fully developed. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge of important curriculum content are not identified and remedied.

Staff identify pupils' needs accurately and quickly. Staff receive useful training and additional advice, so they are equipped to make adaptations to the curriculum when needed. Therefore, pupils with SEND are well supported and learn the curriculum successfully.

Children in the early years provision make a strong start in a welcoming environment. The school has developed a carefully constructed curriculum. Staff know children's needs and interests and use this knowledge to support children to learn the curriculum well. Adults model language expertly to support children to improve their language skills and broaden their vocabulary. For example, children retell stories they listen to, practising the use of descriptive language. Children relish learning and talk confidently about what they have learned.

The school places a sharp focus on reading. Children in the Reception Year learn to read as soon as they start school. They build their knowledge of phonics through using what they already know. Staff offer useful advice to parents about how to support their children's reading at home. As they get older, pupils read widely and

regularly, which helps them to become confident and fluent readers. Pupils enjoy visiting the library and listening to high-quality texts, including poetry.

The curriculum supports pupils' broader development. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online and in the wider world. Pupils build resilience and problem-solving skills, particularly through outdoor learning where they learn to work as a team. They know how to look after their physical and mental health. Pupils understand that everyone should be treated fairly. They appreciate how people's backgrounds and experiences can be different from their own. For example, they are knowledgeable about different faiths and religions.

The school places a strong emphasis on developing positive relationships with parents. The school works with families to explain the importance of regular attendance and offers further support when necessary.

Trust leaders and governors understand the school's strengths and areas for development. They support staff and hold school leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive.

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' use of assessment is not as well developed as it is in others. Therefore, gaps in pupils' knowledge of the curriculum are not identified. The school needs to ensure that the use of assessment accurately highlights gaps in pupils' understanding, so that these can be rectified.

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	147277
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10298081
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Bailey
Headteacher	Suzie Ottewell
Website	www.plymptonstmaryinfants.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- There is a before- and after-school club managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of

lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. They spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They took into consideration the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Chris Gould, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Claire Baillie

Ofsted Inspector

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