

Inspection of Culmstock Primary School

Culmstock, Cullompton, Devon EX15 3JP

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They are keen to follow the 'Culmstock Way', which sets out the school's values of, for example, showing care and compassion. Pupils know that everyone is treated equally. They feel safe and know there is an adult to speak to if they have any concerns. Pupils behave well and, as a result, the school is calm.

Parents speak positively about the recent changes to the school's leadership. The school is keen to build strong links with families. Parents appreciate the way staff welcome children to school in the morning. Parents comment that the school wants the best for their children. Pupils attend well and are punctual.

Pupils appreciate the range of clubs on offer to them, such as computing club and eco-club. They participate in birdwatching to help engage with the local environment. Pupils are also encouraged to set up their own clubs, such as chess club. These activities help to build pupils' confidence and independence.

The school goes above and beyond to engage with the local community. The school's weekly park run, which takes pupils, parents and staff out beyond the school gates and into the local area, is always well attended.

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

Leaders are ambitious for the school and the local community. This has led to all staff having high expectations for all pupils. Throughout the school, pupils form positive relationships with staff. As a result, pupils engage well in lessons and are motivated to learn. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum as their peers. There are well-established systems that identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils with SEND are well supported.

The school has prioritised reading and developing pupils' use of language and understanding of vocabulary. As a result, the school now has a strong reading culture. Children in Reception learn phonics from day one. Teachers are skilled in checking pupils' understanding of phonics before introducing new letters and sounds. When necessary, children receive extra support to ensure they catch up quickly. As children progress, they use their phonics knowledge to decode words with confidence. The books pupils read are well matched to their reading ability. This means pupils develop a love of reading and read widely and often.

The school has carried out a review of the curriculum. Staff training has been prioritised. As a result, in most subjects, the school has set out the key knowledge and skills it wants pupils to learn and remember. Some subjects are more developed than others. For example, in mathematics, teachers are confident in what they want pupils to know and remember. They check pupils' understanding effectively and adjust the learning swiftly. As a result, pupils talk positively and confidently about

the mathematics they learn. However, in other subjects, assessment is not used as effectively. This leads to pupils developing gaps in their knowledge.

Children in the Reception class get off to a flying start. Knowledgeable staff identify the interests and needs of children early on. Staff design activities that are stimulating and meet children's needs. For example, children use arm movements to successfully represent and remember the 'equals' sign in mathematics. Children in Reception class are kind and considerate to each other. They are keen to share their learning with adults. They listen well and respond politely.

Pupils appreciate the opportunity to take on roles of responsibility. Older pupils understand what it means to be a good role model and, as a result, they take their roles seriously. Pupils who are play leaders help younger children at lunchtimes. Pupils on the school council help to organise local fundraising events, such as the reindeer run. Pupils also benefit from trips to museums to learn about Romans and Egyptians. However, other aspects of pupils' personal development are at an early stage. As a result, pupils have a limited understanding of fundamental British values, other faiths and cultures, as well as people's differences.

Staff at the school feel valued. They know that their workload and well-being are considered by school leaders. Governors know the strengths and areas for development of the school. They are supportive of school leaders and hold them to account through a balance of support and challenge. Governors bring a rich range of skills that enhance the strength of school leadership further. They work closely with parents to ensure the school remains at the heart of the community.

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, assessment is not always used effectively to check pupils' understanding or to address misconceptions. As a result, pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. The school needs to ensure there is a consistent and effective approach to assessment in all subjects. This will enable teachers to adapt learning successfully when needed.
- Some aspects of the personal development curriculum are at an early stage of implementation. This means pupils do not learn effectively about fundamental British values, different faiths and cultures and protected characteristics. The school should review the essential knowledge it wants pupils to know and remember to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to learn about citizenship, faiths and other cultures.

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	113071
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10288127
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Greenwood
Executive Headteacher	Martin O'Mahony
Website	www.culmstock-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 July 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The head of school is Clare Nevinson.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There is an on-site breakfast and after-school club run 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with teachers, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, including those responsible for governance.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and by talking to parents before and after school. The inspectors also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

James Gentile, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Demelza Bolton

Ofsted Inspector

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