

Inspection of Mrs Ethelston's C of E Primary Academy

Pound Lane, Uplyme, Lyme Regis, Devon DT7 3TT

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Katy Lyons. This school is part of the Acorn 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, Andrea Rice, who is also the executive headteacher. The school is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Brian Impey.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and have put an ambitious curriculum in place. Pupils attend school regularly because they enjoy what they learn and do every day.

The school's ethos and values of 'deep Christian roots, nurturing strong growth, flourishing children' are at the heart of everything that happens. Pupils develop a strong understanding of community by attending worship at the local church. Those who are part of the ethos committee take pride in organising assemblies. Every pupil in Year 6 holds a purposeful position of responsibility. They are, for example, librarians, eco committee members and mentors for younger pupils. These experiences ensure that pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils understand, from an early age, the importance of working together. They respond well to the school's reward systems. For example, when pupils receive a thousand points, they choose a reward that everyone will like. Recently, it was playing music at breaktimes. This helps pupils to develop a sense of collective responsibility. Pupils feel safe and understand the importance of behaving appropriately, both in and outside the classroom.

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

The school has designed the curriculum carefully in every subject. The trust's subject leaders add an extra layer of support and expertise, which teachers value highly. The school has considered what pupils need to know from Reception onwards. For example, in geography, children in Reception learn rich language about settlements that enhances their vocabulary. Pupils' knowledge across many subjects deepens well over time.

Reading is a priority. Reception children listen regularly to stories and poems that engage them. They say them out loud as they securely learn new vocabulary and expressions. There is a sharp focus on making sure that pupils quickly become fluent readers. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The trust has supported staff to ensure that they have the expertise to teach phonics effectively. Staff ensure that those pupils who have fallen behind catch up quickly. As a result, even the weaker readers become fluent more rapidly. Pupils read books regularly and the school checks that books are suitably challenging.

The school has taken prompt action to address weaknesses evident in its most recent published outcomes. The school identified areas of the curriculum that need strengthening. These improvements are beginning to have an impact. For example, in some areas of the curriculum assessment has not been used effectively, to identify where pupils' knowledge is less secure. This means pupils do not move on to more complex work successfully, such as problem-solving in mathematics. The

school has taken action to address this. This work is beginning to have an impact. Pupils from an earlier age apply their mathematical knowledge confidently.

In addition, the school has raised its expectations for the quality of pupils' written work. This is beginning to have an impact. The new phonics curriculum enables pupils to develop better writing habits sooner while learning the sounds letters make. However, sometimes written work includes too many inaccuracies due to errors in punctuation and spelling. This means pupils do not communicate their knowledge clearly.

Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. The school acts quickly and robustly to check and to understand the causes for any absence. The diligence of staff ensures that pupils attend regularly. Attendance has improved significantly because of this.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of well-planned enrichment opportunities. They value staging productions, acting, singing, playing music and baking. This makes them self-assured and deepens their understanding of different cultures. Pupils develop their character by taking part in trials such as swimming the length of the English Channel in a local pool, litter picking or raising money for a local foodbank. Extra-curricular clubs and trips are fully inclusive so that all pupils are able to attend.

The school teaches relationships and health education sensitively to pupils. Pupils talk knowledgeably about healthy relationships and show a mature understanding of protected characteristics. They are well prepared for life as they move to secondary school.

Governors and trustees understand their roles and carry them out effectively. Staff appreciate the support they receive from the trust.

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 areas of the curriculum, assessment is not used effectively in order to identify where pupils are less secure in their learning. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge effectively. This hinders their progression to more complex work. The trust must ensure that it strengthens assessment to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge so that pupils move on to more demanding work.
- The quality of written work does not always reflect the school's raised expectations. Some written work includes too many inaccuracies, such as errors in punctuation and spelling. The trust must ensure that the quality of written

work continues to improve so that pupils communicate their knowledge and understanding more successfully.

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 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	141525
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10315621
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	191
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Brian Impey
CEO of the trust	Andrea Rice
Headteacher	Katy Lyons
Website	mrsethelstons.acornacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	17 to 18 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2019.
- The school is part of the Acorn Multi Academy Trust.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school in the Diocese of Exeter. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2018, where the school was judged to be outstanding.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- Published outcomes for the 2023 key stage 2 writing assessments reflect an error in the submission of writing assessment data rather than the standard pupils achieved.

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 chief executive officer, the special educational needs and the early years leads for the trust, representatives from the governing board, the headteacher, staff and pupils.
- ☒ Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, geography and science. 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.
- ☒ The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- ☒ 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 around the school site. Additionally, inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- ☒ Inspectors took account of the Ofsted survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and pupils and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Shirley	Ofsted Inspector

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