

Inspection of Ellacombe Church of England Academy

Ellacombe Church Road, Torquay, Devon TQ1 1TG

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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The headteacher of this school is Alison Helm. The school is part of Learning Academy Partnership 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, Tracey Cleverly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joanne Tisdall.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school welcome everyone with openness and kindness. They are polite and well-mannered. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in school and in the community.

Pupils feel safe. They know that they have trusted adults they can speak to if they have any concerns. Incidents of low-level behaviour and bullying are rare. When they do occur, the school is swift to respond.

Pupils understand how the school values of love, hope, perseverance, trust and stewardship help them in their everyday life. Respect for all is reflected in the way pupils treat each other. Opportunities to vote about school matters help pupils to understand the importance of democracy and British values. Pupils are proud of the leadership roles they hold, such as house captains and as school councillors. They understand that they are role models to the younger pupils.

Pupils develop their interests and skills through a variety of after school clubs such as crochet club and parkour club. The school choir helps develop pupils' self-confidence.

Parents are supportive of the school. They appreciate how the school works closely with families.

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

The new headteacher has reinforced the high levels of ambition that staff have for pupils. Following weak published outcomes for reading and writing in key stage 1, the headteacher and the trust have focused on improving the quality of teaching. The school has achieved this by developing new subject leaders and strengthening the curriculum. Published outcomes do not yet reflect the quality of education that pupils now receive and the progress they make through the improved curriculum.

Reading is a school priority. Teachers identify new vocabulary they want pupils to know and remember. They model reading well to demonstrate fluency. Pupils read aloud, 'using a storyteller voice.' They build confidence through reading carefully chosen books that match their abilities. Books in the library celebrate and reflect the different backgrounds of the school's pupils.

In the early years, children learn their phonics sounds as soon as they start school. Those children who are at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and extra support is put in place. However, some members of staff are still developing their phonics expertise. This means that sometimes the phonics programme is not delivered as effectively as intended.

The school's wider curriculum is well planned. The curriculum begins with small components that build progressively over time from Nursery to Year 6. School

leaders have carefully planned the important knowledge, vocabulary and skills that they want pupils to know and remember over time. As a result, pupils can talk eloquently about what they have previously learned and how this helps them to understand new concepts. However, pupils' understanding of different religions is underdeveloped. This means pupils do not have a secure understanding of the religions and beliefs that exist today in modern Britain.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. They learn the curriculum alongside their peers. When necessary, work is adapted to meet their needs. Staff know the individual needs of pupils with SEND, which means that adults can bring out the best in pupils.

Children in the early years benefit from a curriculum with communication and language at its core. Staff understand the importance of modelling new words to children. This leads to children repeating what they hear and successfully building their own vocabulary. Children learn through purposeful activities that stimulate their interests and improve their emotional resilience.

Improving pupils' attendance is a high priority for the school. Monitoring of attendance is rigorous and as a result, there has been some improvement. For those families with children who do not attend school regularly, the school works closely with them to help them to improve their child's attendance.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development enhances pupils' learning. For example, pupils visit prehistoric caves to give them first-hand experience of what they learn in history about the Stone Age. Pupils learn about relationships differences and respect and understand how to communicate online.

The school's ethos group and advisory committee work closely with trustees to offer a balance of support and challenge. Staff appreciate the focus on their well-being and workload. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The trust has not ensured that all staff have developed their phonics expertise. This means the phonics programme is not always delivered consistently and effectively. The trust must ensure all staff receive specific training to improve phonics subject knowledge so that they provide effective support for pupils who need it.

- Pupils' understanding of different religions and beliefs is underdeveloped. Pupils do not recall important knowledge about religions or beliefs in modern Britain. The trust should ensure that this aspect of the curriculum is implemented effectively so that pupils' knowledge of the religions and beliefs that exist in Britain today is strengthened.

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	138047
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10315616
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	378
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joanne Tisdall
CEO of trust	Tracey Cleverly
Headteacher	Alison Helm
Website	ellacombe-lap.co.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	10 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Learning Academy Partnership multi academy trust.
- The headteacher started in her role in April 2023.
- The school uses one alternative provision.
- The school's last section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of religious character was carried out in June 2019.
- The school has a pre-school for children from two years old.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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.

- 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, history, art and design and science. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with teachers, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors met with leaders from the school and the trust.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and by talking to parents before school. The inspectors also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

James Gentile, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Shirley

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Lovett

Ofsted Inspector

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