

# Inspection of a good school: Membury Primary Academy

Membury, Axminster, Devon EX13 7AF

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Inspection dates:

21 May 2024

## 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.

The headteacher of this school is Heidi Wickens. The school is part of Acorn 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, Andrea Rice, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Brian Impey.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto of 'small school, one big family,' is reflected in the warm support of families and the caring relationships that pupils have with staff. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They learn about fundamental British values such as democracy and tolerance. They reflect these values in how they behave. Pupils are respectful towards one another and take turns. As a result, the school is calm.

School leaders are ambitious for all pupils. However, at times, the implementation of the planned curriculum does not always match the ambitious vision of school leaders. This means that pupils do not do as well as they could.

The school develops pupils' interests and skills through extra-curricular clubs such as forest school club and physical education club. Pupils enjoy participating in sports tournaments with other local schools. 'Stop the clock days,' help to deepen pupils' understanding of cultural celebrations, such as Diwali. All pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument.

Older pupils understand they are role models to younger pupils. They do their best to behave well in order to set an example. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online.

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

The trust, school leaders and governors are committed to the school and they have a

shared vision. Across the school, they have developed a positive and supportive culture. However, numerous staff changes have had an impact on the quality of education provided and this has hindered the schools drive to improve.

The school has prioritised reading. Pupils learn phonics as soon as they start school. The trust ensures staff have the relevant training to deliver phonics systematically. Extra support is provided for pupils who find it difficult to read. However, staff do not always ensure that pupils routinely practise and embed effective reading techniques sufficiently well. This limits pupils' fluency and accuracy.

In most subjects, the curriculum is well planned. For example, in mathematics, the curriculum builds progressively from the Reception Year to Year 6. Older pupils are able to explain how they use what they have learned previously and how this helps them to understand new concepts. However, the curriculum is not always adapted to the needs of the pupils. This means that some pupils complete activities without the necessary knowledge, while others complete work that lacks ambition and is not demanding enough for them.

In the wider curriculum, school leaders have identified the important knowledge and skills they want pupils to know and remember. The curriculum is also tailored to draw on the rich local history. However, assessment in these subjects is not always used consistently well. This means teachers do not always know what pupils have learned. As a result, pupils develop gaps in their knowledge.

The needs of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified. The school works with outside agencies to advise on the most appropriate support for pupils with SEND. However, expectations of pupils with SEND are sometimes too low. This means they do not achieve as well as they could.

The school has developed robust systems to improve pupils' attendance. When attendance is low, the school works closely with families to support pupils to come to school regularly. As a result, rates of attendance have improved. Across the school, pupils behave well.

Pupils at the school develop strong links with the local community. At the community café, pupils enjoy performing songs to local residents. This helps pupils to develop confidence. The school seeks to provide experiences that broaden pupils' views of the world. For example, pupils had the opportunity to speak to an astronaut on the international space station to learn about science and life in space.

Staff in the school say their workload and well-being is considered by school leaders. As a result, 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 curriculum is not suitably adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. It does not match what pupils know and can do. This means that some pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not achieve as well as they should. The school must ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively and adapted across all subjects and in all classes. It must ensure that all pupils achieve the ambitious outcomes of which they are capable.
- Assessment is not used effectively across the curriculum. It is not used well to inform teaching or to adapt the curriculum accordingly. As a result, pupils do not remember as much as they could. The school needs to ensure that assessment is used effectively to understand what pupils know and remember over time.

## 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 Membury Primary 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 142250   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Devon  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10313299   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 5 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 10   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Brian Impey  |
| <b>CEO of trust</b>                        | Andrea Rice  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Heidi Wickens  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://membury.acornacademy.org">membury.acornacademy.org</a> |
| <b>Date(s) of previous inspection</b>      | 15 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005               |

## Information about this school

- This school is part of Acorn multi academy trust.
- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The 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 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 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

Matthew Shirley

Ofsted Inspector

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