

Inspection of Blackpool Church of England Primary School

Liverton, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 6JB

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 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	Outstanding

The head of school of this school is Russell Pearson. This school is part of First Federation Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Walker, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alex Walmsley.

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Blackpool Church of England Primary School are polite and welcoming. They, along with staff, are proud members of this school. Pupils value the opportunities and experiences on offer. For example, pupils can take on roles of responsibility, such as school council representatives, eco club, ethos club, play leaders and house captains. They know the expectations of being a part of these groups and the impact that they have on their school community. Pupils enjoy the trips and visits to enrich the curriculum. Consequently, they feel well-prepared for their next stage.

Recent improvements to the curriculum design and implementation are supporting pupils to know more and remember more. Children in Reception get off to a good start and are well prepared for key stage 1.

Pupils get along well. They are inclusive in their respect and tolerance of each other's differences. Most of the time, pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils know that staff have high expectations of them, and they work hard to meet these. They know that some pupils can find this challenging. However, pupils trust in the school's ability to support them because staff know them well. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and attend well.

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

The school has come through a period of significant change. This has required a necessary shift in culture and practice. The school, along with trust support, has identified clear priorities to ensure that the quality of education that pupils receive continues to improve. These are making a real difference across the school. However, the priorities are early in development. Some pupils experience too much variation from staff in response to their learning, social and emotional needs.

The trust has been instrumental in providing support for the school as it strengthens the quality of education. The school has appreciated this, and the balance of support and challenge it offers. However, there is a lack of strategy in some areas of the school's provision. Sometimes the necessary level of information and detail, too much or too little, results in a lack of clarity for those leading in different areas. This means knowledge of the impact of actions and decisions is not accurate or as useful as it could be.

Pupils become increasingly fluent and accurate readers. They share a love of reading because the school ensures they read high quality texts which are rich and varied in content. Children in Reception learn phonics from the moment they start school. Pupils get the help they need if they are not keeping up with the pace of the phonics programme. Older pupils can describe the structure of their daily reading sessions and how this helps them to continue to get better at reading.

The school's curriculum is ambitious and, where it has undergone review, builds and connects pupils' knowledge effectively over time. Curriculum thinking begins in the early years, where children get a strong start to their education. Each area of learning is well thought out. Staff are skilled in supporting and linking children's learning and language, both through play and adult-led activities. Children learn to play and interact successfully with one another. As a result, children are ready for learning in Year 1.

Where the curriculum is most effective, for example in art and design and mathematics, thought has gone into the content and the order in which it is taught. Consideration is given to how it can be adapted to overcome barriers to learning faced by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This ensures that pupils have opportunities to revisit their learning and build on it further. However, there are some subjects where pupils do not learn as well as they could. In these subjects, some teachers do not have the expertise and skills they need. Pupils can lack enthusiasm for their learning. The school recognises the need to strengthen teacher's subject knowledge in some subjects and increase teachers' understanding of how pupils learn to the best of their abilities.

The provision for pupils with SEND is a growing strength of the school. The wide range of needs is well understood by some staff and the school is increasing staff expertise in this area. The Hive provides a focus for this good practice. This expertise is not limited to those working in the Hive. The school has also developed staff's understanding across the school of what pupils need to be ready for learning and to prepare them for their next steps.

Pupils, staff and many parents and carers, recognise the changes that the school has gone through recently. Many acknowledge and praise the pivotal role that the new head of school has had in this and are excited by and have confidence in how the drive for school improvement will continue.

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 in some subjects is newer or not as well developed as it is in others. In these subjects, some teachers do not have the expertise and skills they need to teach pupils so they learn as well as possible. Additionally, this leads to pupils lacking enthusiasm for their learning. The trust must ensure that the school develops the curriculum in all subjects so that teachers have the necessary expertise to ensure pupils are motivated to learn and do so with increasing success.

- The significant changes the school has undergone recently are not fully embedded. The changes are not established widely enough to make the intended impact. As a result, pupils experience too much variation in approaches from some staff to their learning and in meeting their wider development needs. The trust should continue in its support for the school to ensure those identified areas of priority are well embedded so that staff have a greater shared understanding of the changing school culture and can put this into practice.
- There is a lack of clarity and strategy in some aspects of the school's provision. Consequently, in these areas, the school does not have the most accurate and strategic view of the difference actions and decisions are having. The trust needs to ensure that those in roles of responsibility have the skills and expertise that they need so that they can be fully accountable for the development and impact of their role.

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	137665
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10298000
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	278
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alex Walmsley
CEO of the trust	Paul Walker
Headteacher	Russell Pearson
Website	www.blackpool.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 and 22 March 2012

Information about this school

- This school is part of First Federation Trust which has responsibility for 21 primary schools across Devon and Dorset.
- The head of school has been in post since January 2024.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school has its own nurture provision, The Hive, to support the social, emotional and mental health needs of some pupils at the school.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. The school is in the Diocese of Exeter.
- The previous section 48 inspection took place in March 2017. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.

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 head of school, the deputy head of school, the special educational needs co-ordinator, subject leaders and leaders from the trust, including the CEO. In addition, an inspector met with the chair of trustees and hub representatives, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and trust leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, SEND, safeguarding and behaviour.
- An inspector listened to the views of parents at the beginning of the second day of the inspection. Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments.
- Inspectors evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Tustain

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Lovett

Ofsted Inspector

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