

Inspection of Mary Dean's C of E Primary School and Nursery

Mary Dean Avenue, Tamerton Foliot, Plymouth, Devon PL5 4LS

Inspection dates:	22 and 23 October 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Donna Wilson. This school is part of The 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. The school provides many experiences to develop pupils' character. The range of clubs and activities help pupils to develop confidence. Pupils have a voice in the clubs on offer. This helps the offer to be broad and interesting for them. Pupils are proud of their sporting achievements in the locality.

The school is ambitious for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to learn alongside one another. However, the school has not fully implemented the curriculum as intended. Pupils do not learn the curriculum well or achieve as well as they should. The school's expectations of pupils are not high enough. This is not the case in the early years, where children receive a strong start to their learning and development.

Recent changes to the behaviour policy are having a positive impact. Pupils know the rules. They show respect towards adults and one another. They learn and play together well. The school is developing effective support for those pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour.

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

The trust has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It has acted swiftly to prioritise appropriate areas for development. The trust has been instrumental in supporting the school to design and implement a sequenced curriculum. The impact of the trust and the school's work is beginning to be seen in a number of areas.

There are pockets of ambition and high expectations for pupils. However, these are limited to some areas of the school's work. Pupils with SEND have their needs accurately identified. Individual learning plans are now better tailored to help close gaps for those pupils. The curriculum design and implementation in the early years are of high quality. This provides a strong model for the whole school curriculum. Children in the nursery and Reception Year flourish. They know the routines and learn how to share and take turns. Adults provide children with experiences that build their knowledge over time. The environments are set up to be exciting places of awe and wonder. Children sustain interest in the opportunities to consolidate learning and be curious. They are well prepared for entry into Year 1.

Staff implement the phonics curriculum well. They follow an agreed and consistent approach to teaching phonics. This benefits all pupils, but particularly those who struggle to keep up. These pupils receive effective support to catch up. Books match the sounds pupils know. Adults focus on fluency as the goal beyond segmenting words and blending sounds. The impact of the developments in phonics has resulted in more pupils, including pupils with SEND, being able to read with confidence and fluency.

In many curriculum subjects, including mathematics, programmes are new or in their infancy. As a result, the curriculum is not securely implemented. Curriculum content is

taught in a logical order. However, in many subjects, including English, this knowledge is not clearly identified. The work given to pupils does not match the aims and ambition of the curriculum. Consequently, teaching does not help pupils to build on what they know.

The school has invested in significant training and development for staff. However, it does not check the impact of staff training on pupils' knowledge and understanding. The school does not know when the curriculum is implemented as it intends. In a number of subjects, the training that staff receive is not having the impact the school intends. Where this occurs, pupils struggle to recall knowledge they have learned in the curriculum. While some remember more recent learning, most cannot remember previous years' learning.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships. They understand some of the ways people can be different. This includes knowing about protected characteristics. Pupils show respect for these differences. They understand and celebrate different cultures and faiths. Pupils know that tolerance and fairness are important values in modern Britain.

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, the school has not identified the important content it wants pupils to learn. As a result, pupils do not build secure knowledge over time. The school and trust need to make sure that the content of the curriculum is clear so that pupils learn more and remember more.
- Staff do not have the subject and pedagogical knowledge they need in some subjects. This means they lack the expertise needed to teach the curriculum consistently well and support pupils sufficiently. The trust must ensure that professional development has the impact needed so that all pupils follow an ambitious and clearly sequenced curriculum.
- The school does not hold staff to account effectively to ensure that the curriculum is implemented as intended. This means that pupils' experience of the curriculum is too varied across subjects, year groups and within teams. The school and trust must ensure that they check with greater rigour how well the curriculum is implemented so that pupils experience the curriculum as the school intends.

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	150116
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10344868
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	290
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alex Walmsley
CEO of the trust	Paul Walker
Headteacher	Donna Wilson
Website	www.marydeansprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Mary Dean’s C of E Primary School and Nursery converted to become an academy in October 2023. When its predecessor school, Mary Dean’s C of E Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school joined The First Federation Trust in October 2023.
- The school is a smaller-than-average Church of England primary school in the Diocese of Exeter.
- The school’s most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, teaching and support staff. The lead inspector met with members of the local hub council and trustees, including the chair of the trust.
- 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 lead inspector listened to some pupils read to an adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. In addition, they met with pupils informally and formally to hear their views.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. Inspectors also took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents provided by the school, including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation form.

Inspection team

Angela Folland, lead inspector

Nicola Bray

Demelza Bolton

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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