

Inspection of Upton St James CofE Primary School

St James Road, Upton, Torquay, Devon TQ1 4AZ

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| 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 | Good |

The headteacher of this school is Oliver Jefferies. This school is part of St Christopher's 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, Jo Evans, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Bailey.

What is it like to attend this school?

The new leadership has high aspirations for pupils to succeed academically as well as socially and emotionally. However, the school acknowledges that some pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not learn as effectively as they could. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have many opportunities at break and lunchtime to participate in the many sports organised in the playground. They relish playing in teams with their friends and reading books in the 'book shed'. As a result, pupils' attendance has increased.

Pupils are kind, helpful and friendly towards each other. They have strong, trusting relationships with staff in the school. Pupils are safe and well cared for. They learn how to keep safe when using the internet.

Pupils are knowledgeable about democracy and mutual respect. They value the opportunities to hold important roles within the school such as school councillor, house captain and librarian. Pupils are well informed about citizenship in modern Britain.

Children in Reception class thrive through a well-structured curriculum. Children learn the routines of school well. Pupils behave well both in the classroom and around the school.

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

In 2023 and 2024, outcomes were lower than the national average in some areas, particularly in mathematics. Trust leaders have revised the curriculum and the leadership and staffing structure of the school. The curriculum is clearly designed to build on pupils' prior learning. The school's drive to improve the quality of education for pupils is shared by all staff. However, the curriculum is not yet well established. Leaders and staff do not check what pupils know and do not know with sufficient precision. Consequently, they do not adapt the teaching of the curriculum to ensure that pupils, including pupils with SEND, build securely on their prior knowledge. For example, some pupils have a weak knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division in mathematics. This means that they are not able to learn more complex mathematical concepts such as fractions.

The school has worked hard to encourage pupils to come to school regularly and to provide the pastoral support they need to be able to learn. This has resulted in increased attendance. The school has established effective approaches to the management of pupils' behaviour. Consequently, pupils' behaviour both in lessons and around the school is strong.

The school has prioritised reading. The early reading programme is well designed and ensures that children in Reception Year and pupils in key stage 1 learn to read well. Pupils who struggle with reading are provided with strong support enabling them to become confident, fluent readers. Pupils enjoy listening to stories read by their teachers and talk knowledgeably about them. In Reception, children are enthused by the characters in the

texts they study. The English curriculum provides pupils with a breadth of genres to support their reading development. However, some pupils in key stage 2, are not supported well to develop their writing skills. For instance, some pupils, struggle with sentence structure and punctuation.

Children in Reception Year flourish due to the well-structured curriculum. Children develop a strong curiosity to learn about the world around them. The school has prioritised children's language development. Children practise their speaking, listening, reading and writing knowledge through a range of activities. For example, children talk imaginatively about the nests they made for the owls in their story. Children with English as an additional language learn to communicate their thinking well.

Despite the weaknesses in some areas of the curriculum, pupils are eager to learn. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are enthused by the trips and visitors that enrich their knowledge of the world. The school's focus on strengthening pupils' knowledge of their local area is well developed. Pupils visit the local theatre, Dartmoor and a farm. Through the curriculum, pupils' curiosity about religious beliefs is supported well. Pupils' characters are developed effectively. The school is highly inclusive of pupils with different religious and cultural backgrounds. Pupils are reflective about the impact of the school's behaviour policy and how it helps them to regulate their own behaviour.

Governance is well structured, but trustees recognise that the leadership of the school is not yet having impact in some areas of the curriculum. They provide support and challenge in equal measure. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support provided for their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment is not used with sufficient precision in some subjects. Systems for checking what pupils know and do not know are not routinely applied. This means that the gaps in some pupils' knowledge are not addressed effectively. The trust must ensure that changes to the curriculum are supported by the effective use of assessment so that pupils build effectively on their prior knowledge.
- Some pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not learn the curriculum effectively. Staff do not routinely use what they know about these pupils' learning needs to adapt their teaching of the curriculum. Consequently, some pupils with SEND do not have secure knowledge with which to access more complex learning. The trust must ensure that staff have the expertise to provide suitable support so that pupils with SEND achieve successfully and confidently.

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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| Unique reference number | 142669 |
| Local authority | Torbay |
| Inspection number | 10344709 |
| 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 | 98 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Andrew Bailey |
| CEO of the trust | Jo Evans |
| Headteacher | Oliver Jefferies |
| Website | www.upton-st-james-primary.torbay.sch.uk |
| Date(s) of previous inspection | 15 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of St Christopher's Multi Academy Trust.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2024.
- The special educational needs co-ordinator took up post in September 2024.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school uses a registered provider to provide breakfast and after school clubs.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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 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 held discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held discussions with the chief executive officer of the trust and members of the governing body and board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics and history. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- 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 considered the views of parents and carers who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They evaluated the views of staff and pupils from the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Claire Baillie

Ofsted Inspector

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