

Inspection of Great Torrington Bluecoat Church of England Primary School

Borough Road, Torrington, Devon EX38 7NU

Inspection dates:	12 and 13 November 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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is an inclusive school that welcomes all pupils. Staff share a strong commitment to supporting pupils' emotional needs. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and encouraging. All pupils are valued and feel part of the school community. They love coming to school and attend well.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' achievement. However, pupils underachieve because there is weakness in the quality of education. This is because pupils have not benefited from a curriculum that builds knowledge securely over time.

Pupils appreciate the focus placed on their mental health. The culture of respect means that pupils know they can talk to a trusted adult if they have any concerns. As a result, they feel safe.

Pupils behave well in the classroom and at social times. During breaktimes, pupils from different age groups play together cooperatively. They construct dens, climb trees and participate in sports. Pupils value the enrichment activities they have. Clubs like yoga, darts and running develop pupils' interests and build character. Trips and visits enhance the curriculum. Pupils build knowledge of other cultures, for example, through an exchange trip to Berlin.

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

The school has not secured a high-quality curriculum for pupils. In some subjects, it has not sequenced the knowledge it expects pupils to know and remember. This makes it difficult for staff to identify and check what pupils have learned. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

Where the school has reviewed the design of some subjects, the curriculum is stronger. In these subjects, the school has identified and sequenced the important knowledge pupils need to learn over time. For example, in mathematics, children in the Reception Year learn mathematical terms, such as subitise and can use them with confidence. Older pupils build on this and use technical language to solve problems involving fractions. However, some subject curriculums are still developing. The school has not checked the impact of the curriculum in some subjects with enough rigour. Consequently, some staff do not cover content in sufficient depth.

Children in the early years get off to a positive start. They show high levels of interest and motivation in their learning. The provision for two- and three-year-olds focuses on developing children's communication skills. Consequently, children use this new language enthusiastically in their play.

In the Reception Year, children start to learn phonics. They use letters and sounds to help them read and write. Pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds that they know. This helps them to build fluency and confidence. Staff make regular checks to find out what pupils remember well. They intervene quickly to help pupils keep up. This is

reflected in the high proportion of pupils in Year 1 who succeed in the phonics screening check. Most older pupils enjoy reading. Pupils read from a wide range of genres on a regular basis.

The school's approach to behaviour centres around strong relationships with pupils. When pupils struggle to regulate their behaviour, skilled staff support them well. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. They provide effective emotional support for pupils and their families so that pupils with SEND, including those who attend the 'Bluecoat' resource base, are involved in the life of the school. Pupils with SEND learn from the same curriculum as their peers.

The school has taken resolute action to improve pupils' attendance. The school offers support to families in removing barriers that might be stopping pupils from coming to school.

When the subject curriculum is followed as the school intends, activities are often adapted well to pupils' needs and they make progress through the curriculum. However, the lack of clarity about what all pupils should learn in some subjects hinders pupils' ability to know more and remember more. In some cases, the activities that teachers design do not deepen pupils' knowledge or enable them to connect their learning.

The personal social and health education curriculum develops pupils' understanding of online safety, healthy relationships and how their bodies change as they get older. Pupils are tolerant and understand the importance of equality. Older pupils have several leadership opportunities, such as mental health ambassadors, school councillors or peer mediators. These roles help pupils feel valued and make a difference to the school.

Governors carry out their statutory duties well. However, they do not hold the school to account with rigour, including over the quality of education. Staff appreciate the support and consideration for their well-being.

Parents and carers are pleased with how well the school cares for their children. Typically, parents recommend 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)

- In subjects where the curriculum is new or recently refined, pupils, including those with SEND, have gaps in their knowledge. This makes it hard for pupils to build their knowledge over time. The school should ensure that the curriculum sequencing in all

subjects provides pupils with the best chance of building their knowledge securely over time.

- The school has not checked the impact of the curriculum in some subjects with enough rigour. Consequently, some staff do not cover content in sufficient depth. This limits the breadth of knowledge pupils acquire. The school should ensure that the school strengthens its checks and evaluation of the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning.
- In some subjects, teachers do not provide pupils with work that matches the intent of the curriculum. This means that pupils are not supported to reach the aims of the curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers have the knowledge that they need to design activities that connect learning and help pupils to build up a deep body of knowledge.
- Governors do not have a secure insight into the quality of the school's curriculum. This means that they are not well placed to hold leaders to account for the impact of their actions and are not sufficiently informed about how well curriculum changes are being implemented. Governors should review how they oversee the work of the school so that they can be assured that pupils are able to achieve well throughout the curriculum.

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	113377
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10344479
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	458
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jackie Furseman (joint chair of governors) Louise Hunter (joint chair of governors)
Headteacher	Angela Fleming
Website	www.bluecoat-learn.org
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 September 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has provision for two- and three-year-olds.
- The school offers wraparound provision, with a breakfast club and after-school club.
- The school uses one registered and two unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with cognitive, social emotional and mental health, autistic spectrum disorder and speech, language and communication needs from Reception Year to Year 6. At the time of the inspection, 26 pupils were on roll in this provision.
- The school is a Church of England school, within the Diocese of Exeter. Its last inspection under section 48 took place in September 2023. The next section 48 inspection will take place up to five years after this time.

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 met with the headteacher, the deputy head teacher, school staff, parents, and pupils. The lead inspector met with the joint chairs and other members of the governing board. The lead inspector had a telephone call with the local authority and a representative from the local diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and history. For each deep dive, the 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 also met with curriculum leaders and looked more widely at pupils' work other subjects.
- 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, including at lunchtime. In addition, inspectors met with pupils formally and informally to hear their views.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Shirley

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Barton

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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