

Inspection of St David's CofE Primary School

Dinham Road, Exeter, Devon EX4 4EE

Inspection dates:	26 and 27 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Kelli Reynolds. This school is part of the Ventrus 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, Gary Chown, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Edwards.

What is it like to attend this school?

St. David's is a friendly school with a warm welcome. The school wants every pupil to do as well as they can. The school has gone through a period of change. This has now settled. The school has strengthened the curriculum leading to improved achievement for pupils in Years 1 to 6. However, there is more work to do to ensure that children in the early years benefit from a consistently good-quality education.

Staff work hard to provide the safe, happy and inspiring environment the school aims to offer. The school celebrates the cultural diversity in the community. Staff and pupils are rightly proud to be part of this close-knit community in the heart of the city.

Parents and carers value the friendly atmosphere and say that their children enjoy attending the school. One parent said, 'This is a small school with a big heart.' Parents know that the school takes good care of their children and sorts out any bullying or friendship issues that may arise.

Pupils are enthusiastic ambassadors for the school and talk fondly of the staff. Behaviour is mostly very positive. Pupils know that they can rely on staff to listen to them and help with any problems.

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

The school has successfully improved the way that pupils' learning is organised and delivered. This is making it easier for pupils to grasp new information and add to what they already know. The effectiveness of this work is particularly clear in reading, history and mathematics and is developing in other areas. As a result, most pupils are learning the curriculum well and increasing what they know and can do. However, this is not the case in the early years. Here, the curriculum does not match the needs of the children. While expectations are clear in mathematics and phonics, too little attention is given to developing children's language and supporting their learning behaviour. Consequently, children currently in the Reception Year do not secure the important knowledge they will need later on.

The teaching of early reading is strong. The trust has successfully worked with the school to improve the way that phonics is taught. The school has made good use of this support. Staff demonstrate very secure subject knowledge and use this well to address pupils' misunderstandings. Most pupils are enthusiastic and join in well. The school has also introduced a range of successful approaches to develop pupils' wider reading and fluency.

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum for writing. This sets out what pupils will learn in the technical and creative aspects of writing as they progress through the school. This is leading to higher expectations of what pupils know and can do. For example, pupils are learning to write letters accurately in the Reception Year and begin to join letters together in Years 1 and 2. While this effectively supports pupils' technical skills, some creative writing activities can be too difficult for some pupils. For example, some pupils are expected to write in full sentences before they can speak in full

sentences. These pupils are not given enough time to practise their speaking and listening skills.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The school identifies pupils needs accurately and provides them with the support they need to thrive. Most pupils with SEND are fully included in lessons and learn the intended curriculum. This is most effective when teachers know precisely what it is that children need to know.

Pupils behave well in and around the school and this is recognised and celebrated in a variety of ways. Most pupils enjoy their time at school and pay close attention in lessons. Occasionally, some pupils struggle to listen and follow instructions.

Pupils' personal development is well considered. The school's values surround the pupils and underpin much of its work. This helps pupils to link values to real life situations. For example, when talking about the importance of democracy and relating this to their school council. In this way, pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is particularly well supported.

Working with the trust, the school are successfully improving many aspects of their work. St. David's works well with other schools in the trust to share knowledge and expertise, leading to more effective support for pupils. The school carefully considers staff workload when planning for improvements. As a result, staff feel valued and supported.

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 for the youngest pupils does not give sufficient emphasis to the prime areas of learning. Consequently, not all children are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The trust should identify and sequence this knowledge so that children know more, remember more and can do more over time.
- The school does not give enough attention to developing younger pupils' communication and language. This hinders pupils' spoken language and means that some do not have the prerequisite knowledge they need for early writing. The trust should ensure that all pupils have the practise and support they need to become fluent speakers and attentive listeners.

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	142559
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10344704
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	David Edwards
CEO of the trust	Gary Chown
Headteacher	Kelli Reynolds
Website	www.stdavidsprimary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Significant changes in senior leadership have taken place since the last inspection. The current headteacher has been in post since April 2024.
- 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.
- 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 headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, and representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in following subjects: early reading, mathematics, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, considered curriculum information, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to a member of staff.
- 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.

Inspection team

Phil Minns, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Steve Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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