

Inspection of St Leonard's (CofE) Primary School (VC)

St Leonard's Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 4NQ

Inspection dates:	14 and 15 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Emma Slaven. This school is part of St Christopher's CofE 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 (CEO), Jo Evans and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Bailey.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Leonard's (CofE) Primary School (VC) under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Leonard's (CofE) Primary School (VC) to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as an academy. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are encouraged to be the 'best you can be' both academically and pastorally in this ambitious place to learn. Pupils have a palpable excitement for school and all it has to offer. Their high attendance reflects this.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Most rise to these. There are some pupils whose academic attainment falls short. However, the school is doing all it can to help them catch up quickly. Pupils know the school rules. They display kindness in their interactions. Younger children settle quickly into school life because staff forge strong relationships with them. Pupils feel comfortable to share any concerns with staff.

Pupils benefit from an excellent programme to develop their character beyond the academic. The school has created a culture of inclusivity. Pupils have equitable access to the extensive clubs and activities on offer to develop their interests, such as cookery and Spanish club. Since COVID-19, the school has proactively aimed to reduce pupils' insecurities by introducing residential trips in younger years. There is now exceptional uptake of these. Because of this, pupils quickly develop independence and confidence. Far more pupils now get to experience exciting activities such as water sports, climbing and rowing.

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

Following a period of instability, leaders have driven school improvement with determination. They are uncompromising in their drive to give pupils the very best education. They are supported by a dedicated staff team, governors and trust who are unrelenting in their pursuit of excellence. They know the school well, particularly the areas that they continue to refine.

The school has made substantial improvements to the curriculum. Leadership at all levels is remarkably strong. The school has given ownership to these expert staff to develop the curriculum to be broad and ambitious. The school has carefully selected and logically sequenced the most important knowledge pupils need to learn at each stage from the early years to Year 6. Staff ensure pupils remember their learning. For example, they use picture prompts to recall prior knowledge. As a result, pupils build their understanding well by making links across subjects, such as geography and history. Pupils can explain what key concepts such as climate and sustainability mean. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff quickly identify the needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils benefit from adaptations to learning that help them learn the curriculum well.

Pupils' achievements have improved impressively over a short period of time. However, in some areas, gaps in knowledge persist. The school is addressing this through careful curriculum consideration. Consequently, pupils' knowledge, particularly of how to reason in mathematics, is improving rapidly. By the end of Year 6, most pupils now read, write and learn mathematics well. However, some disadvantaged pupils still do not achieve as

well as others. This is because, on occasion, staff do not correct misconceptions quickly enough and so pupils make repeated errors. The school is supporting staff strongly. Staff are rapidly developing their expertise, but the full impact of this is yet to be seen in pupils' knowledge.

Well-trained staff teach pupils to read. Pupils practise reading books that match the sounds they are confident with. Pupils who struggle benefit from additional support. This helps them to gain fluency and confidence to read.

Pupils strive to demonstrate the school's values. Children in early years take turns and share willingly. Older pupils engage well with learning. Attendance has a high profile. Leaders' thorough analysis and support means that absence has reduced.

The school's personal development programme is exceptionally well designed to strengthen pupils' knowledge and appreciation for diversity. As a result, they celebrate the rich array of religions and cultures within the school community, such as at the food festival. Pupils know they have rights, for example through voting, and that these rights come with responsibility. They develop compassion by creating Christmas cards for the Salvation Army to distribute. Staff teach pupils to safely prepare food so they have the life skills they need to be able to cook healthy meals. Pupils are empowered to select the books the school purchases from the local book shop. They become mature, well-rounded and community-minded individuals ready for their next stage.

Staff are highly complimentary of the expertise from school and trust leaders to develop their knowledge of the curriculum. There is a strong sense of shared purpose. Parents appreciate the dedication to each child shown by the staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, some staff do not ensure that misconceptions are addressed leading to gaps in pupils' understanding. This means some pupils do not have a secure foundation of important knowledge. The trust should continue to develop staff expertise to identify and correct errors in pupils' work so that they achieve well through 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	142596
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10371333
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	618
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Bailey
CEO of the trust	Jo Evans
Headteacher	Emma Slaven
Website	www.stleonards.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- There have been several changes in leadership since the predecessor school's previous inspection. The current headteacher took up post in September 2020.
- The school joined St Christopher's CofE Multi Academy Trust in September 2018.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. The school is part of the Diocese of Exeter. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school was carried out in October 2019. The school should receive its next section 48 inspection within five school years.
- There is a before- and after-school club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not currently 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, school staff, parents, pupils, representatives from the trust including the chief executive officer, trustees and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, geography and art. 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 also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime and breaktimes. In addition, the inspectors met with pupils formally and informally to hear their views.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They also looked at responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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