

Inspection of Sidmouth Church of England (VA) Primary School

55 Woolbrook Road, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 9XB

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Alex Spraggon. 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 (CEO), Paul Walker, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alex Walmsley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this friendly and inclusive school. Staff know each pupil well. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Pupils are happy and safe. They know they can speak to an adult to share concerns. Pupils trust staff to act on any problems quickly and effectively, and they do.

The school has placed the values of aspire, flourish and achieve at the centre of learning. Staff have high expectations for all pupils' achievement and behaviour. Pupils respond to these. They are keen to learn, and most achieve well. Pupils value the rewards they receive for making positive choices about their learning and behaviour.

Learning extends beyond the academic. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to take on leadership roles, for example as eco-leaders and school councillors. Older pupils support younger children through their role as prefects. This helps them to learn about responsibility.

Pupils develop a sense of citizenship through their involvement in civic events such as singing at a regional festival. They experience a variety of educational visits. These develop their interests and their wider personal qualities. Pupils challenge themselves and manage risk during outdoor adventure activities. These experiences give them a feeling of pride in their achievements.

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

The school has a broad and ambitious curriculum that helps pupils build knowledge and skills from Nursery to Year 6. In many subjects, the way that the curriculum is taught helps pupils to know and remember more. For example, in mathematics, pupils use what they have learned about place value to order decimal numbers. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is not taught in a way that supports pupils to develop their subject knowledge incrementally. Consequently, some pupils do not build on prior knowledge as they should.

In many subjects, staff continuously assess each pupil and identify the next steps they need to take. However, in some subjects, the checks made on pupils' learning do not identify the extent of pupils' knowledge. Therefore, some pupils move through some curriculum subjects with ongoing gaps.

The school has placed communication and language development at the heart of the curriculum. This enhances pupils' ability to speak clearly and to build a rich vocabulary. In the early years, staff encourage children to use the correct vocabulary to express themselves. Children in the Nursery enjoy listening to stories and joining in with well-known rhymes. This prepares them for learning to read when they start school.

The school prioritises reading. Books match the phonic sounds that pupils know. Pupils quickly learn the knowledge they need to blend sounds together to read simple words. There is precise support in place for pupils who fall behind. This allows pupils who require

extra support to catch up rapidly with their peers. As pupils get older, they read books from a range of authors and genres and develop an understanding of the lives of others.

Staff swiftly identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' individual plans match their specific needs. The school also works with external agencies to provide well-planned support for pupils. Consequently, pupils with SEND progress through the curriculum successfully and participate fully in school life.

The school has a well-structured personal development programme. Pupils know their moral responsibility to accept and embrace people's differences. By voting for the school council, pupils learn about democracy. Pupils learn how to look after their health and mental well-being. They understand what makes a healthy relationship. From the early years onwards, children learn how to work with others collaboratively, reinforcing the community feel of the school.

The school meticulously analyses the patterns and trends of pupils' attendance. It scrutinises the attendance of each pupil to find out what support it can offer to ensure that absence rates remain low.

The school has effective systems in place to deal with inappropriate behaviour. If a pupil's attention lapses, staff quickly get them back on track. The 'cocoon' offers bespoke support for pupils who may encounter difficulties. They receive a range of strategies depending on what nurture they require. This develops pupils' resilience and independence and boosts their self-esteem.

The trust and the hub boards have an accurate picture of the school through robust systems for quality assurance. They check that the school's actions are having a positive impact on all pupils. Staff are positive about the guidance they receive to hone their practice. They appreciate how leaders are mindful of the impact on workload.

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, assessment does not identify whether pupils have secured the skills and knowledge needed. Therefore, some pupils develop gaps in learning. The trust should ensure that teachers know how to use assessment to inform adaptations to teaching and consolidate pupils' understanding over time.
- In some subjects, the way the curriculum is implemented does not routinely help pupils build on their existing knowledge. Consequently, pupils do not learn as well as they should. The trust should ensure that all staff have the teaching knowledge they need to implement the curriculum as intended.

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	143183
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10344752
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	497
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alex Walmsley
CEO of the trust	Paul Walker
Headteacher	Alex Spraggon
Website	www.sidmouth-primary.devon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school is part of The First Federation Trust
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- There is a school-run breakfast and after-school club.
- This is a Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection took place in April 2023.

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.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, subject leaders, members of the hub board, trustees, the trust’s director of school improvement, the CEO and the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- 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 inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

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