

# Mrs Ethelston's CofE Primary Academy

Pound Lane, Uplyme, Lyme Regis, Devon DT7 3TT

## Inspection dates

17–18 July 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Senior and middle leaders are driving forward improvements. Through accurate monitoring, they are well informed to build on strengths and tackle weaknesses across the school.
- Pupils conduct themselves well across the school. They are polite, well-mannered and act as fantastic ambassadors for the school.
- Leaders have tackled areas of underperformance to improve the school. They are adamant that they will not compromise on the quality of pupils' education.
- Governors and trustees have an accurate view of the school's performance. Access to the full range of information equips them to carry out their roles effectively.
- In the Reception Year, pupils make strong progress. However, boys make less progress than girls, with fewer achieving the expectations for their age. In addition, the challenge for the most able children is not high enough.
- Middle-attaining pupils make weaker progress than their peers, particularly in key stage 1. Pupils' progress from their starting points is not consistently strong.
- Pupils' writing is strong, but weakened at times by poor spelling. Leaders acknowledge the negative impact this has on pupils' progress.
- Leaders' work to develop pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils have access to a rich and varied curriculum which is deeply rooted in the school's distinctive Christian character.
- Pupils benefit from high-quality computing teaching. Pupils use the latest equipment to apply their learning. They develop a strong understanding of the computing curriculum.
- Pupils develop mathematical knowledge and understanding effectively. They successfully apply what they have learned to topics such as 'Plastics in the ocean'.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards reading. They read regularly, both in school and at home. Pupils are proud of their reading records, where they capture their reading experiences.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to the curriculum which links subjects together in a coherent way. This work is in its infancy and yet to be established across the school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is generally strong. Where there are inconsistencies, leaders are taking effective action to address them.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes so that:
  - pupils apply effective spelling strategies to their writing with increasing accuracy
  - across the curriculum, a greater proportion of middle-attaining pupils achieve the expectations for their age by the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Improve the quality of the early years by ensuring that:
  - boys make better progress across the Reception Year, so a greater proportion achieve a good level of development
  - staff challenge higher-attaining children sufficiently, so a greater proportion exceed the early learning goals, particularly in reading and writing.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders consolidate improvements in teaching, learning and assessment, to achieve greater consistency in quality across the school which results in improved outcomes for pupils
  - leaders embed the new approach to providing a rich, varied curriculum across the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders ensure that good-quality teaching, learning and assessment lead to strong outcomes for pupils. They will not compromise in their pursuit of a high standard of education for pupils. Leaders have successfully tackled underperformance as they aim to provide every pupil with consistently strong teaching. Leaders acknowledge that there is still more to do if the school is to aspire to the outstanding judgement given at the previous inspection.
- Leaders support staff well. Leaders have skilfully navigated the school through a period of high staff turnover. They have acted shrewdly to avoid unnecessary disruption to pupils' education. Leaders have pupils' best interests at the heart of all they do and, despite some staff recruitment obstacles, have held firm. Leaders provide effective professional development for all staff to support them in their roles. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- Middle leaders are highly effective. They carry out their roles and responsibilities well. Through accurate monitoring, they know what the schools' strengths and weaknesses are. They act effectively on school performance information and take actions which bring about improvements. Leaders are passionate about ensuring the highest standards for pupils and can demonstrate how, through their actions, standards have improved.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. Support staff play a pivotal role in helping pupils and demonstrate a strong understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely and evaluate the support well, according to pupils' emerging needs.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding well. The number of disadvantaged pupils in the school is small, which allows leaders to use the funding to support each pupil based on their individual needs. Leaders analyse pupils' progress regularly through discussions with class teachers, parents and carers. Furthermore, termly meetings about pupils' progress help to evaluate achievement and redirect support where necessary.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used to good effect. Leaders use funding to train staff, so they are confident in teaching specific aspects of the PE curriculum, for example gymnastics. There are close links between the PE and personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculums. Pupils are aware of the benefit of sports and leading a healthy lifestyle.
- Leaders provide valuable support for newly qualified and recently qualified teachers. These teachers meet regularly with a member of the leadership team to evaluate their progress. Teachers also benefit from attending termly meetings with other newly qualified teachers from across the trust. They access training, such as 'how to get promoted' and 'teaching for progression', which is provided by the Jurassic Coast Teaching Alliance. Teachers value the support that leaders provide and feel well prepared for the next stage of their teaching career.
- Leaders are acting to ensure high-quality teaching in every classroom. On occasions,

when teaching falls short of leaders' high expectations, pupils' progress is weaker. Leaders are aware of this and have appropriate plans to iron out inconsistencies and variances in the quality of teaching.

- Leaders are trialling a new approach to the design of the school's curriculum. They recognise that this work was necessary because, in some cases, pupils were not developing their knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects. The new approach is proving highly effective where it is established. It builds on pupils' prior knowledge and captures their imagination. Leaders have plans to implement this new approach across the school to ensure that all pupils benefit from a rich, varied curriculum.

### **Governance of the school**

- The trust and the governing body work well with one another. The trust has acted to focus governors' attention solely on teaching, learning and assessment and its impact on pupils' outcomes. The trust has achieved this by taking over responsibility for matters such as finance and premises. Governors are positive about the impact this has had on improving their understanding of the school's performance.
- The governing body has an astute awareness of the schools' performance. Governors have access to a wealth of information, ranging from teachers' assessments of pupils' progress through to reports from leaders monitoring of standards across the school. Governors use this information wisely and offer challenge to leaders if the school's performance falls short of expectations.
- Governors pay close attention to the school's development plan, closely monitoring the progress made from its inception through to its implementation. Thorough analysis strengthens governors' understanding of school leaders' priorities and the impact of the actions they take.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Recruitment procedures are thorough. Leaders complete all the necessary checks to ensure that they only employ adults who are suitable to work with children.
- Safeguarding training is regular and ensures that staff are kept up to date with current national safeguarding concerns. This means that they are well equipped to carry out their roles in keeping children safe. Leaders also make it their business to consider serious case reviews to sharpen their awareness of how vital it is to be vigilant where safeguarding is concerned.
- Leaders act to ensure that pupils are safe. Although concerns about pupils are few, leaders make certain that safeguarding remains at the forefront of people's minds. Leaders act proportionately to concerns by making sure that, where appropriate, they involve external agencies.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Expectations of pupils are high in most classes. Teachers clearly set out expectations for lessons so that pupils know what they are aiming for. Teachers skilfully help pupils through precise support and promoting a 'can do' attitude. Teachers use phrases such as 'you've got this' to promote pupils' self-confidence and self-belief. Consequently, pupils tackle their work armed with the appropriate knowledge and with the belief they will succeed.
- Teachers deploy support staff effectively. Support staff work with pupils well and promote their progress well. This is particularly strong where support staff work with pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Teachers successfully promote pupils' progress in writing. Teachers make their expectations clear and challenge pupils to apply more advanced techniques to their writing. Teachers are highly skilled in building on pupils' prior learning. They make the purpose of writing clear so that pupils see why they are writing and closely consider their audience. While teachers regularly test pupils' spelling strategies, pupils do not apply these strategies well in their writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective. Teachers challenge pupils sufficiently through well-designed activities which closely match the pupils' needs. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to move pupils' learning on. Work in mathematics is engaging and captures pupils' interests. Teachers make mathematical links with other areas of the curriculum, thus helping to promote pupils' application of mathematical concepts.
- Teachers promote a love of reading. Teachers carefully guide pupils on which books will help them develop further and do not put a ceiling on this. In some cases, pupils read books that are years in advance of their actual age yet match their reading ability. Expectations are high. In lessons, teachers select texts to engage pupils and use questioning to move forward pupils' understanding of what they have read. Pupils are confident to tackle questions and do so with increasing accuracy.
- Teachers' knowledge of how well pupils are doing is secure. They regularly monitor pupils' progress and adjust teaching after considering their findings. Teaching meets the emerging needs of pupils. Teachers make use of assessment information to ensure that pupils have sufficient guidance or challenge.
- Teachers insist on pupils presenting their work with pride. Pupils' workbooks reflect this. Pupils present their work well and with a high level of care.
- In many classes, teaching is of a high standard. However, minor inconsistencies detract from the high quality of teaching seen across the school. Here, teaching lacks focus, and expectations of pupils fall short of leaders' expectations.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils value the school's Christian distinctiveness. They welcome contrasting beliefs and opinions to their own, stating that such differences help to 'promote their understanding'. Pupils benefit from worship at the neighbouring church four times

weekly. Pupils value worship and contribute enthusiastically.

- Regular PSHE lessons recorded in PSHE journals in each class show the wide range of activities, such as rights and responsibilities. Furthermore, pupils are involved in voting for peers to receive certificates based on them demonstrating the school's values.
- Pupils have access to a range of clubs, including craft, gardening, origami, mindfulness and athletics. These clubs strengthen pupils' understanding and promote well-being. In addition, pupils maintain responsibility for a section of the school's garden.
- Pupils play an active role in raising money for charities. They have carried out fundraising for charities who provide for bereaved families, homeless people, water projects in Zambia, lifeboats and the air ambulance. Pupils show an increasing understanding of these charities and the work they do.
- Pupils benefit from a range of visits to the school. Some of these visits supplement what pupils have been learning in the classroom, while others are beneficial in broadening pupils' understanding. Visitors include a talk on the importance of fire safety, a Jewish visitor to inform pupils about Judaism and a visit to heighten pupils' understanding of autism spectrum disorder.
- Pupils have an astute awareness of British values. They understand what it means to live in a democratic country and, through the school's own activities, carry out elections in a similar way. Pupils are open-minded and welcome difference. Pupils develop understanding of different cultures and beliefs.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well across the school, they are well-mannered and polite. Pupils speak highly about the school and the opportunities it offers them. They value their education and have positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average, although this has declined slightly from the last academic year.
- The proportion of pupils who regularly miss school is lower than the national average. Leaders closely monitor those who are persistently absent, or at risk of being so, to ensure that persistent absence is low and remains low.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Current pupils' attainment is above the national average across the school. By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is above the national average. Children are well prepared for life in Year 1. Furthermore, by the end of key stages 1 and 2, the proportion of pupils working at expectations for their age is above the national average.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards reading. They read widely and often, both in school and at home. Pupils are eager to capture their reading experiences in their reading records, which document progression in books they are reading and a range of authors. In class, shrewd curriculum links with reading foster pupils' interests. For

example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 applied their understanding of what they had read when answering questions about the impact of plastics in the ocean in their theme of 'What lies beneath?'

- Pupils' writing is well-developed. As pupils move through the school, they develop their own authorial style which is peppered with accurate use of ambitious vocabulary. Pupils write appropriately, depending on the context and audience. As a result, they are confident when applying genre-specific features, such as formal language or text organisation. While such progress in writing across the school is apparent, pupils do not use spelling strategies consistently.
- The proportions of pupils attaining the required standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check in both 2016 and 2017 were above national averages. Pupils have the necessary knowledge to decode words of ranging difficulty. This prepares them well for their future reading development.
- Pupils make strong progress across the school in mathematics. Pupils effectively develop their reasoning and problem-solving knowledge. Pupils have access to a broad mathematics curriculum which provides them with opportunities to work at the higher standard.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities achieve well. Activities meet their needs and are bespoke for each individual pupil. Though few, disadvantaged pupils have appropriate support to help them succeed. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have targets that are both attainable and challenging. Activities effectively promote progress. Consequently, rates of progress are strong.
- Pupils are savvy with technology. Through high-quality computing sessions, pupils learn and apply what they have learned. They grow increasingly confident about what they have learned and are eager to share their learning. Pupils make strong progress in computing.
- Pupils have benefited from the introduction of a new curriculum design to develop their knowledge across a range of subjects. Pupils make obvious links and through well-designed lessons, and pupils apply their knowledge in a range of ways. An example of this occurred where pupils learned about the impact of plastics in the ocean while developing their knowledge in geography, art and mathematics and benefited from visits to Lyme Regis and a visit from a deep-sea diver. However, such links are not yet established across the whole school. Where not in place, pupils have small gaps in their knowledge.
- On rare occasions, pupils make less progress than in other classrooms. Expectations are lower, and inconsistencies are evident. In these cases, the proportions of pupils working at expectations for their age are lower than those seen in other classes and pupils will need to catch up, so they make strong progress based on their starting points.
- Across the school, the progress of a proportion of middle-attaining pupils falls short in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, a proportion of pupils do not reach expectations for their age.

## Early years provision

**Good**



- Children's outcomes by the end of the Reception Year are good. Apart from the 2017 cohort, the proportions of children who achieve a good level of development have been above national averages for a few years. The proportion of current pupils achieving a good level of development has once more returned to above the national average. From children's starting points, progress is particularly strong in mathematics.
- Children benefit from rich, real-life experiences. Through a strong curriculum, children learn about a range of topics, such as the recent 'See how they grow' unit. In this instance, children made flowers and sunflower collages as well as using plastic minibeasts to support their mathematical understanding. Through these experiences, children develop a rich vocabulary which often shows itself in their writing. Pupils are confident to use words such as 'chrysalis' and 'lavender', due to their deep understanding of each word's meaning.
- Leaders have acted to improve adults' observations of children's learning. Earlier in the academic year, it became clear to leaders that observations of what children could achieve were too vague and not unique to the individual child, blunting the precision of adults' assessment information. Quickly, the quality of observations improved and more accurately reflected children's progress. As a result, assessments are wholly accurate, and activities closely match children's emerging needs.
- The classroom environment is organised in a way that promotes children's independence. Children use resources they know will help them in their learning. For example, a child found a number line to help her count on when solving an addition number sentence.
- Children are confident and self-assured. They work well with one another and happily discuss their learning. Children remain focused on activities and see them through to their conclusion. In some cases, children use what they already know to further extend their learning.
- Children are safe in the Reception class. Adults supervise children well. Adults assess risk well and maintain a safe, child-friendly environment.
- Boys make less progress than girls across the Reception Year. Although boys generally begin the Reception Year working at levels below those of girls, they make less progress. As a result, the gap between boys and girls continues to grow so that fewer boys than girls are ready for Year 1. In some cases, boys opt not to participate in specific activities, which limits their progress. Leaders acknowledge that more must be done to engage boys in the Reception class.
- The most able children are not consistently challenged. Across the Reception class, there are several children who are demonstrably working at the higher standard. However, activities do not sufficiently move these children on. The proportion of current children who exceed the early learning goals is lower than the national average.



## School details

Unique reference number	141525
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10025599

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	184
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Corinne Hales
Headteacher	Andrea Rice (executive headteacher) Michaela Kite (head of school)
Telephone number	01297 442210
Website	<a href="http://www.acornacademy.org">www.acornacademy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:uplymeoffice@acornacademy.org">uplymeoffice@acornacademy.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	1 July 2008

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Acorn Multi-Academy Trust.
- The head of school leads the school. She is supported in her role by the executive headteacher who is also the chief executive officer of the Acorn Multi-Academy Trust.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils identified as requiring special educational needs support is in line with the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body and the director of trustees from the Acorn Multi-Academy Trust.
- Inspectors met with the head of school and the head of academy improvement to scrutinise assessment information and the progress of current pupils.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class. Inspectors also scrutinised a range of pupils' workbooks from Years 1 to 6. Inspectors visited the Reception class and took account of children's learning journeys.
- Inspectors met with pupils from key stages 1 and 2 to gain their views of the school's work, and they also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 65 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also met with parents to gather their views about the school.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation and the school's single central register. Furthermore, inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding policies, procedures and culture to ascertain whether safeguarding is effective.
- Inspectors met with middle leaders, including those responsible for leading literacy and mathematics. Inspectors also met with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the sport and pupil premium leader, and the early years leader.

## Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Lee

Her Majesty's Inspector

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