

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Musbury Primary School

Church Hill, Musbury, Axminster, Devon EX13 8BB

Inspection date:

25 March 2025

Outcome

Musbury Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Clair Murrell. 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?

Musbury Primary School is at the heart of its local community. Pupils are welcoming and kind. They are courteous to visitors. Positive, trusting relationships permeate the school. Staff know pupils well in this small school. Pupils are considerate of each other. They are curious to learn more about the lives of others.

Parents and carers value the school's nurturing and inclusive atmosphere. The school's vision of 'dream big and aim high' applies to each and every pupil. The school has clear ambition and high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils readily rise to meet these.

Pupils are proud of their school and behave well. They are happy and safe. Pupils know that there are trusted adults to help them if they have any worries. The youngest children settle quickly into school. They enjoy spending time with their older peers during social times. Strong friendships form.

Pupils listen to each other's ideas with consideration. Pupils learn that their opinions matter and they respect differing views. The school prepares pupils to become responsible and active citizens. For example, pupils in the ethos team help to plan community celebrations.

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

The school, with support from the trust, has designed a coherent curriculum that sets out the specific knowledge that pupils will learn. This thoughtfully takes account of the school's mixed-aged classes. The school has established efficient systems to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. Staff consider the unique needs of pupils with SEND carefully and adapt learning to meet them. Pupils with SEND are supported to learn the same rich curriculum as their peers

In the early years, the curriculum considers children's individual starting points meticulously. Staff focus on getting the most out of each interaction. They build children's knowledge of new vocabulary. As a result, children gain confidence using new words and phrases. Children engage deeply with skilfully crafted learning activities. These help to develop children's independence effectively.

Staff know what to teach and when to teach it. They make regular checks on what pupils know and address any misconceptions that they might have. In the main, this helps pupils build on their prior knowledge. For example, in geography, pupils use their knowledge of the equator and polar regions to locate hot and cold areas of the world. However, at times, teaching activities do not support pupils' learning as well as they could. This is because expertise in a few subjects is spread unevenly across the staff. Consequently, some pupils do not learn as well as they should.

There is a sharp focus on reading. Pupils begin learning to read as soon as they start school. They read books that are well matched to the sounds they know. Any pupils who fall behind with their reading are given prompt support. This help focuses closely on the specific gaps in pupils' reading knowledge. Consequently, pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers. The school has developed a new curriculum for writing. This is having a strong impact on how pupils apply their phonics and spelling knowledge when writing.

Staff set clear behaviour expectations in lessons and around the school. Pupils understand the school rules and conduct themselves well. Consequently, the school environment is calm and orderly. Pupils learn without interruption. The school has a renewed focus on attendance. There are effective systems in place to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. If pupils are persistently absent, the school works collaboratively with parents and external agencies to improve this. This work is typically successful.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. This is a strength of the school. Pupils know how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy. They understand the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils benefit from rich developmental experiences such as residential trips. Through these, pupils learn about themselves and develop leadership and teamwork skills.

Pupils make visits to places of interest which broaden their understanding of the world. These include a variety of places of worship. Such opportunities develop pupils'

understanding of the different faiths and cultures that make up modern Britain. Pupils know the importance of the fundamental British values such as individual liberty. They know that everyone should be treated fairly.

Staff are proud to work at this inclusive school. They recognise how the school supports their workload and help them to develop their professional practice. The trust understands the challenges that small schools face. It uses this understanding to provide the school with highly effective support. Trustees plan strategically for the school's long-term future.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teaching expertise is unevenly developed across subjects. This means that the strengths of the school's teaching in some subjects is not replicated in others. Consequently, some pupils do not learn securely across the curriculum. The school and the trust should continue to strengthen staff's expertise to deliver subject curriculums consistently well.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

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	143182
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10344751
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	34
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alex Walmsley
CEO of the trust	Paul Walker
Headteacher	Clair Murrell
Website	www.musbury-primary.devon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 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 does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 and other staff. They also met with the CEO of the trust and the trust director of inclusion, the chair of the board of trustees, other trustees and members of the local academy council.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, 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 Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Liz Geller, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Katharine Anstey

Ofsted Inspector

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