

Inspection of Dolton Church of England Primary School

The Square, Dolton, Winkleigh, Devon EX19 8QF

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Samantha Drew. This school is part of Alumnis 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, Neil Moir, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gill Marlow.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this small village school. Warm, supportive relationships with staff enable pupils to flourish. Pupils are enthusiastic about what each day at school has in store for them.

Pupils treat one another with compassion. Developing pupils' characters is at the heart of everything the school does. Pupils value the virtues that the school wants them to acquire. They understand the relevance of these to their everyday lives, both now and for their futures.

The school is ambitious for all pupils and aims to give them strong foundations to build on. Pupils are well-prepared to continue their learning when they move on to secondary school.

All pupils take part in trips which broaden their experiences of the wider world. For example, pupils visit Bristol and stay overnight in the city. They also develop their talents and interest whether sporting, musical or artistic. Leaders make sure that every pupil, including those with a special educational need and/or disability (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, has a rich set of experiences from nursery onwards.

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

Pupils, including those with SEND or who are disadvantaged, achieve well. The work that pupils complete is of a high quality. Pupils remember what they have learned and understand how it is relevant to their daily lives and to what they are learning next. In the early years, activities help pupils to practise new knowledge and skills repeatedly in a way that they find enjoyable. For instance, they use golden coins that they have read about to practise counting and experience 'shopping'.

There is a new curriculum in place at the school. It is ambitious and broad, reflecting the high aspirations that the headteacher and staff have for all pupils. Learning is well sequenced and makes useful links between topics. This helps pupils to develop deep knowledge across the curriculum. However, the new curriculum does not take account of the gaps in knowledge that some pupils have from the previous curriculum. The early years curriculum excites children and prepares them very well for key stage 1.

Staff manage mixed age classes very skilfully, ensuring that pupils learn the right things at the right time. They check that all pupils have fully understood new learning before moving on.

Pupils with SEND are identified at an early stage. Leaders ensure that the right support is in place from the early years onwards. Staff adapt the curriculum appropriately so that pupils with SEND can learn the same curriculum as their peers.

Reading has been prioritised by leaders. Children in the early years rapidly learn to read with fluency and confidence. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and being read to. Pupils who do not read well enough get the help they need to catch up.

The schools' approach to developing pupils' character contributes strongly to the co-operative and exuberant atmosphere. Pupils, including the very youngest, concentrate well. They persist when they find learning challenging. Pupils of all ages socialise and work together harmoniously.

Pupils learn how to stay safe, including online. They enthusiastically participate in daily physical activities which are designed to promote physical health. They learn about other cultures and faiths. Pupils know what unites people from different backgrounds. For instance, speaking to a Ugandan pupil who they sponsor has challenged stereotypes about life in Africa.

Pupils develop their sense of responsibility and contribute to the wider life of the school. For example, older pupils listen to younger pupils read. Frequent enrichment projects enable them to apply the character virtues the school teaches them in practical situations.

Staff have the expertise they need to perform their roles to a high standard as a result of leaders' actions. Professional development for all staff is well aligned to their particular roles and interests, as well as the school improvement priorities. Support and challenge from trustees, local governors and the trust have enabled the school to improve rapidly.

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 is not always well matched to pupils starting points. When pupils have deficits from the previous curriculum these are not identified and closed. Consequently, pupils have gaps in their knowledge that persist. The school must ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified and rectified.

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	145770
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10298063
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	33
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
CEO of the trust	Neil Moir
Chair of trust	Gill Marlow
Headteacher	Samantha Drew
Website	www.clintonanddolton.org
Date(s) of previous inspection	10 January 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has provision for two- and three- year- olds.
- This is a Church of England school, within the diocese of Exeter. The most recent inspection under section 48 of the education act took place in 2019; the next should take place by 2027. Section 48 inspections focus on the impact of a Church school's Christian vision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: Early reading, mathematics 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 inspector/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.
- An inspector met with a trustee, local governors and with staff from the multi academy trust, including the CEO.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the views of staff and pupils in Ofsted's online survey. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff in meetings and around the school site.
- An inspector spoke to a representative of the diocese of Exeter.

Inspection team

Sarah Favager-Dalton, lead inspector His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Tustain Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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