

Inspection of a good school: North Tawton Community Primary School and Nursery

Exeter Street, North Tawton, Devon EX20 2HB

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 June 2022

Outcome

North Tawton Community Primary School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their school and are proud of it. They enjoy school leadership roles, such as being a member of the school council or a wildlife ambassador. They also enjoy attending school trips and visits. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners who take pride in their work. One parent summarised the views of many with the comment, 'My children love this school. The balance of academic challenge and pastoral care is excellent.'

Pupils are well mannered and polite. They behave well in and around school. Pupils say that, occasionally, there have been incidents of bullying, but that adults sort it out quickly and it stops.

Children get off to a great start in the nursery. They benefit from nurturing relationships with adults. The youngest children spend time with key adults and learn alongside their older friends. Staff have high expectations of pupils. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn to read, write and use mathematics well. Leaders are refining a minority of other subject curriculums to ensure they are of the same high standard.

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

Over the past few years, there have been significant changes to the leadership of the school. These led to some turbulence and dips in the school's performance, as shown in the most recent published data. The school joined a multi-academy trust in 2018. Since his appointment in January 2021, the chief executive officer (CEO) has built a strong team. Despite challenges presented by COVID-19, trust leaders and school leaders have worked swiftly and conscientiously to ensure that all pupils receive a full and ambitious curriculum. This has paid off in most subjects.

Leaders have rightly prioritised improving the reading and mathematics curriculums. Consequently, children in the early years learn to read from the day they start school. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes enjoy joining in with familiar stories, songs and rhymes. Staff follow the school's phonics programme consistently. This helps all pupils, who are at the early stages of reading, to read and write well. Pupils read books that are matched accurately to their ability. Those who have fallen behind are supported swiftly by knowledgeable staff. Pupils are immersed in a wide variety of suitable texts and take great pleasure in reading books. They look forward to hearing their teacher read aloud to them every day.

Strong direction and high expectations from the trust have resulted in a mathematics curriculum that is consistent in policy, systems and assessment. Starting in the early years, pupils learn to use numbers and explain their thinking well. Over time, they learn to solve increasingly complex problems. Most pupils, including those who need to catch up, benefit from a curriculum that is matched well to their starting points. Occasionally, some stronger mathematicians, in key stage 1, would benefit from more difficult challenges.

Curriculum leaders drive their subjects forward with deep knowledge and determination. They relentlessly seek out new opportunities and learning experiences for pupils. Consequently, most subject curriculums are well designed, sequenced effectively and help pupils to build knowledge over time. Nevertheless, leaders know that a minority of subjects, such as history and geography, require more attention. Currently, staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils in key stage 1 can achieve.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of school life. They check that these pupils are supported effectively. Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and make appropriate adjustments to help pupils to succeed, and they do. Extensive work with other professionals allows pupils and families to receive timely and effective support.

Pupils are suitably equipped with a secure understanding of risk and have the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions. They learn about online safety, cyber bullying and how to stay safe in the local area. They cooperate well together in classrooms and respect each other's opinions. Therefore, learning is rarely disturbed by poor behaviour.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with a strong knowledge of equality. Pupils learn about protected characteristics. They speak confidently about prejudice and how, at their school, everyone welcomes and celebrates social, spiritual and cultural diversity. The school prepares pupils very well for life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have all the necessary information they need to be able to identify signs of potential abuse swiftly. Staff are knowledgeable about how to keep pupils safe and include this in the curriculum. They work with a wide range of other

professionals to support pupils and families. Staff use the school's system for reporting concerns confidently and leaders respond quickly.

Recruitment processes are thorough. The learning environment is well organised and secure. Staff supervise pupils vigilantly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum intent is ambitious in all subjects. However, staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils, in key stage 1, can achieve in a few subjects. Pupils are given curriculum activities that are too easy. This hampers their learning. Leaders need to assure themselves that all pupils are learning an appropriately challenging curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, North Tawton Community Primary School and Nursery, to be good on October 2014.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145333
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10227695
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	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tania Skeaping
Principal	Tara Penny
Website	www.ntcps.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in January 2018. At this time, it joined the Dartmoor multi-academy trust.
- The Nursery and Reception classes cater for two-, three- and four-year-olds.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, spoke with some pupils, teachers and curriculum leaders, and viewed curriculum plans. The inspector also considered some aspects of pupil's work in geography.
- The inspector met with the principal, curriculum leaders and the trust's leaders for pupils with SEND.

- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local stakeholders' board, the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO.
- The inspector considered school documentation, including behaviour and bullying records. She also reviewed leaders' school improvement and self-evaluation plans.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader. She checked safeguarding records, including the single central record, policies and safer recruitment administration.
- The inspector took into account the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including written comments. She also considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Sue Costello, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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