

# Inspection of Swimbridge Church of England Primary School

Barnstaple Hill, Swimbridge, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 0PJ

---

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 April 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 11 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school's ethos is based on the strongly held values of wisdom, community, hope, love, dignity and respect. Pupils' wisdom is celebrated when they show curiosity and their resilience is rewarded when they show a positive attitude towards being 'stuck'. This starts in Reception. By the time pupils leave the school, they know how to be successful learners.

Reading is central to school life. Pupils enjoy visits from authors linked to the local book festival. They are excited to see examples of their own writing published. Picture books are shared in assemblies to get pupils thinking about what life is like for people with different backgrounds and challenges.

The school opens pupils' eyes to the world beyond north Devon. For example, the school sponsors a family in Uganda. By connecting with children growing up elsewhere, pupils learn about the difference education can make to people's lives.

Increasingly, pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities by teaming up with their peers in other local primary schools. For example, pupils recently showcased their creative talents, performing alongside friends from other schools in a local 'proms' event. The school supports pupils who are facing challenges in their lives to develop their confidence and self-esteem through outdoor and adventure-based learning.

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

The teaching of reading is highly effective. Almost all pupils become accurate readers by the end of Year 1. Staff check pupils' understanding of phonics systematically. From the Reception year onwards, pupils read and are read to regularly. This helps them to develop fluency and a love of reading. The school carefully considers the range of books pupils read. Older pupils describe the way that their tastes in reading have developed as a result of the school's influence.

Pupils learn a curriculum that is ambitious and presented to them clearly. The approach to assessment helps teachers to spot what pupils know and what they still need to learn. As they grow older, pupils produce increasingly confident work, for example in mathematics projects and across a range of media in art. Curriculum subjects are well led. There is a culture of ongoing curriculum development. The school has recently enhanced pupils' experience of fieldwork in geography through trips to Northam Burrows and the river Torridge, for instance.

Children with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early, often before they begin the Reception Year. Most learn the curriculum successfully. They receive effective support which helps them to understand challenging ideas and overcome any social or behavioural difficulties. The school adapts the curriculum and the provision, sometimes to a large degree, to support pupils with their individual goals and targets. Occasionally, however, the school does not identify

pupils' needs clearly enough. When this happens, the support planned is not precisely matched to pupils' needs or circumstances. There is sometimes a lack of clarity as to what is working well and what could be done differently, to meet pupils' needs more effectively.

Typically, pupils learn without disruption to their lessons and enjoy one another's company during social times. A range of clubs, sports and games are offered across the school year. The school recognises that there is a need to further develop the range of activities on offer during social times. Some pupils would like to participate more than they currently do, but require support to manage the social challenges of this.

Pupils come together in their 'family groups' to discuss and debate global challenges, such as the need for sustainable development. They learn about different places and people through trips to the city, including a tour of a mosque. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about how to keep safe when online. All of this helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

The school benefits from capable and committed leadership. Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced significant challenges. The school was required to temporarily relocate while essential work was carried out on the school site. Everyone is rightly proud of the way the staff and community ensured continuity for pupils during this time. Leaders' determination to maintain the school's ethos and standard of education in this context is commendable.

A skilled governing body provides effective strategic direction to the school. Governors ensure that the school benefits from collaboration with other local schools. The governing body has added leadership capacity to the school by working with a multi-academy trust. This has enhanced the range of opportunities on offer to pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- At times, the school does not identify pupils' special educational needs clearly. For a small number of pupils, this means that the school does not have a clear understanding of how best to support them, or of what is working well. The school should ensure that pupils' needs are clearly identified and evaluate the impact of the support provided more precisely.
- Some pupils do not make the most of the school's extra-curricular offer. This means that they do not get the benefit of some of the sporting and social

opportunities available to them. The school should encourage and support pupils to enjoy a range of sporting and cultural activities together.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113455
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10307233
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	86
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Colin Wadsworth
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Dan Polak
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gemma Poland
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.swimbridge-primary.org">www.swimbridge-primary.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 February 2013

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a head of school has been appointed. The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2023.
- This is a smaller-than-average, Church of England primary school within the Diocese of Exeter.
- The school's provision for religious education and collective worship was last inspected under section 48 of the 2005 Education Act in March 2018.
- The school is part of a management partnership agreement with a local multi-academy trust.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors 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 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.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, the head of school, senior staff from the multi-academy trust and members of the governing body, including the chair and vice chair of governors. The lead inspector held discussions by telephone with representatives of the Diocese of Exeter and Devon local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. 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.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and visited lessons in other subjects.
- 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.

### **Inspection team**

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Bray

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024