

Inspection of a good school: Rackenford Church of England Primary School

Rackenford, Tiverton, Devon EX16 8DU

Inspection date: 24 January 2024

Outcome

Rackenford Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Rackenford Church of England Primary School has high expectations for all pupils. The school's vision, 'Let your light shine', encourages all pupils to do their best. Pupils are happy to attend school. They are polite and friendly to visitors and talk with confidence.

Pupils are kind and thoughtful. They live up to the school's values of trust, perseverance, respect, friendship, compassion and truthfulness. Pupils understand why these values are important. In lessons, most pupils are focused and keen to learn. Outside, pupils play well together, sharing equipment and making up their own games. If bullying occurs, adults take swift action.

Strong relationships with staff mean that pupils feel safe. Pupils know they can talk to an adult or use the worry box if something is bothering them. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and understand the dangers of the internet.

Pupils take on positions of responsibility with pride. They value being selected as school councillors. Pupils are proud to have contributed their ideas to changes to the lunch menu. They also enjoy a range of clubs that develop their talents and interests.

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

Pupils learn from a broad and balanced curriculum that is adapted well for mixed-age classes. In most subjects, the school has thought carefully about what pupils need to learn and how this knowledge builds from the early years onwards. For example, in mathematics, children in reception compare different objects, using the vocabulary of 'heavier' and 'lighter'. They use this knowledge well later in their learning. There are plentiful opportunities to practise their number skills independently in the classroom. This prepares them well for their future learning.

However, in a few subjects, the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember has not been clearly identified. Pupils' understanding in these areas is not as

precise because the school has not focused on what is important. For example, in history, pupils have secure knowledge of chronology but struggle to make links between concepts they are learning now and what they have learned before. The school is aware of this and have plans to address the issue.

The curriculum for reading is a strength. It starts in the early years. The school's well-established and systematic approach to early reading ensures children quickly become accurate readers. Reading books are well matched to the sounds that pupils are learning. Pupils who need extra help are quickly identified and receive precise support. They learn to read with confidence and fluency. In addition, pupils in key stage 2 who are not yet secure readers continue to receive phonics teaching. A love of reading is promoted. Pupils enjoy daily story times and can recall key events and themes from the stories they have read and listened to.

Attendance is a priority in the school. By working closely with families, the school has identified the root causes for absence. Through careful analysis and swift intervention, the school has reduced persistent absence.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is high compared with other schools. Pupils with SEND follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Staff who support pupils with SEND know their needs very well. Practical equipment is used to support learning appropriately. As a result, most pupils with SEND are learning well. They enjoy the challenges they face, for example, in mathematics.

The school ensures that all pupils, including those with SEND, benefit from attending clubs that nurture their talents and interests. For example, pupils enjoy cooking, gymnastics and archery. Many learn how to play a musical instrument. The school enhances pupils' knowledge of local history through trips to museums and places of regional interest.

Pupils understand equality and can explain some of the protected characteristics. The school deliver weekly 'picture news' to support pupils' understanding of the wider world and fundamental British values. However, the personal development programme does not prepare pupils well enough for life in modern Britain. Pupils do not know as much as they could about other world religions and the lives of others from different families and cultures.

The vast majority of parents are happy with what the school offers for their children. Staff, parents and carers comment on the close-knit 'family feel' of this school. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the opportunities that they receive to develop professionally, and the consideration that leaders give to their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the knowledge the school wants pupils to know and remember has not been identified precisely. This means that pupils' knowledge does not build well over time. The school needs to ensure that key knowledge is identified, so pupils know and remember more.
- Some areas of the personal development curriculum are not designed well enough. The schools' plans to improve pupils' understanding of lives different from their own are not yet embedded. As a result, pupils' knowledge of how people might live beyond their community is not as strong as it could be. The school should enable pupils to gain a broader understanding of diversity beyond their community.

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 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 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.

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	113495
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10307234
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lucy Bull and Andrew Rigamonti
Headteacher	Samantha Crook
Website	www.rackenford-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in September 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school is part of The Federation of Tiverton Schools.

Information about this inspection

- 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 met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding lead, members of staff and the co-chairs and members of the governing body. The lead inspector had a phone call with a representative from the local authority and the director of education from the diocese of Exeter.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the free-text comments and the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Shirley

Ofsted Inspector

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