

Inspection of Huish Episcopi Primary School

North Street, Langport, Somerset TA10 9RW

Inspection dates: 26–27 February 2020

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

What is it like to attend this school?

The current headteacher has made many improvements to this school since she arrived. The headteacher and her dedicated staff aim to provide the best possible education for all pupils. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly pleased with the school. One parent summed up the views of many with the comment: 'We have been thoroughly impressed by the headteacher and the staff, all of whom rightly have tremendous pride in the school.'

Pupils like coming to school. While they are enthusiastic about their learning, some older pupils do not learn to write as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that pupils' writing in key stage 2 matches the high standards seen in reading and mathematics.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Sport is popular with pupils of all ages. They enjoy taking part in the variety of sporting clubs on offer, especially kick-boxing. Pupils enjoy leadership responsibilities, such as representing their class on the school council.

Staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Consequently, it is often exemplary. Most pupils show good attitudes to learning. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They trust staff to quickly sort out any bullying that may occasionally happen.

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

The last few years have been turbulent for the Levels multi-academy trust (MAT). Several changes within the MAT leadership have resulted in a period of instability. This has disrupted communication between the local governing body and the trustees. Leaders, including trustees, are aware of the shortcomings of the trust. MAT leaders have not made appropriate checks on the school leaders' actions to bring about improvements. Nonetheless, school leaders have remained determined and focused on improving the quality of education. School leaders' aspirations for pupils are evident in the school's values and ambitious curriculum.

Leaders have implemented a reading curriculum that enables pupils to learn to read well. Parents support the leaders' efforts to ensure that pupils read high-quality books from the 'golden bookshelf' at home. Highly skilled teaching assistants provide the precise, additional support that some pupils need. Consequently, those who fall behind catch up quickly.

Pupils' early reading skills are well developed. Phonics teaching starts as soon as children join the Reception class. Teachers ensure that books match the sounds that pupils know. In key stage 1, pupils build their phonics knowledge securely. Teachers make regular checks to find out how confident pupils are in using their phonics knowledge. Leaders check teachers' assessments are accurate and that they are used to adapt the curriculum well. Consequently, most pupils read confidently and spell accurately.

Leaders have designed an effective mathematics curriculum. Teachers use well-selected activities, such as challenges, to help pupils remember what they have learned. Leaders ensure that pupils have the knowledge they need before they move on to more complex mathematics. Pupils enjoy learning mathematics and achieve well.

Writing curriculum plans show that the key steps to successful writing, such as spelling, grammar and punctuation, are well sequenced. However, useful strategies to help pupils in key stage 2 to achieve the highest standards in writing are not applied consistently in all subjects. For example, history and geography workbooks show that some low- and middle-attaining pupils do not get enough opportunities to consolidate and practise their writing. Leaders do not ensure that older pupils learn how to use well-formed letters in their handwriting.

Teachers and support staff have an in-depth understanding of pupils' additional needs. In class, and in the many one-to-one support sessions, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are encouraged to do their best. Staff adapt the curriculum successfully so that all pupils can take part. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well throughout the school.

Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Leaders have embedded effective strategies to overcome any barriers to the curriculum and raise these pupils' aspirations. The 'Raising the Future' programme provides pupils with an opportunity to find out about the world of work. For example, visits from local companies, such as Leonardo Helicopters, have allowed pupils to explore engineering as a potential career.

Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders understand the contextual challenges of their rural location. The curriculum enables pupils to learn about life in cities. For example, Year 6 pupils visit busy locations, such as London, to explore world religions and culture. The strong physical education (PE) curriculum ensures that pupils know how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Staff morale is high. Staff say that leaders always consider their well-being. Teachers at the start of their careers are well supported by more experienced colleagues.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's ethos of being 'at the heart of safeguarding in the community' underpins the excellent work to keep pupils safe. Staff are vigilant and know how to spot signs of harm. The emotional literacy support assistant helps pupils to manage their social, emotional and mental health effectively.

Administrative procedures are robust, and the appropriate checks are made on adults who visit or work at the school.

Pupils learn about risks and how to manage them through the curriculum. For example, the computing curriculum ensures that pupils know how to stay safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The MAT trustees and leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of education. They do not communicate effectively with the local governing body in order to support and challenge leaders well enough. The MAT needs to be clearer about the delegation of trust roles and responsibilities in order to provide effective support and challenge to school leaders.
- Pupils have the skills and knowledge to write well. However, too few pupils achieve the highest standards of which they are capable in writing by the end of Year 6. This is because teachers do not use the curriculum effectively enough to allow pupils to consolidate and practise their writing. Teachers in key stage 2 need to improve pupils' writing, including handwriting, so that pupils write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	141790
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10111556
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gary Piper
Headteacher	Tiffany Doughty Davis
Website	www.huishepiscopiprimary.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	22 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school opened in March 2015, when it joined the Levels Academy Trust. The MAT has four primary schools.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We visited lessons with the headteacher.
- We scrutinised samples of pupils' work.
- We talked formally with pupils from the school council, as well as with other pupils informally across the school.
- We held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, members of the local governing board, the lead for pupils with SEND and the chief executive officer of the MAT.

- We analysed the 56 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, and met with some parents at the start of the day. We analysed responses to Ofsted’s staff surveys completed during the inspection.
- We did deep dives in reading, writing, mathematics and PE. We also conducted a shorter review of history. We looked at pupils’ work in writing, mathematics and history. We met with senior and curriculum leaders, teachers, support assistants and pupils. I listened to some pupils read.

Inspection team

Sue Costello, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Rob Meech

Ofsted Inspector

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