

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Salcombe Church of England Primary School

Onslow Road, Salcombe, Devon TQ8 8AG

Inspection date:

10 June 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that aspects of the school's work may not be as strong as at the time of the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The joint heads of school are Carla Bennett and Heather Slater. This school is part of First Federation Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Walker, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alexander Walmsley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of 'Team Salcombe'. This is underpinned by the respectful and nurturing relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils, staff, parents and carers highly value the safe and happy community ethos of the school. Pupils are encouraged to meet the high standards that the school has for their behaviour and conduct. This begins with two-year-olds in the Nursery and continues throughout the school. For example, children in the early years learn to take turns appropriately. They develop empathy through listening to stories. Throughout the school, pupils play together and ensure, through their understanding of tolerance and equality, that everyone can join in.

The school prioritises widening pupils' awareness of the world around them. This is supported by the well-known school values of 'SAIL - service, aspiration, integrity and love'. Pupils enthused about experiences that enable them to show the SAIL values. These include residential trips and adventurous activities such as sailing or community activities such as beach cleaning.

Pupils are keen to learn, and the school is aspirational for what it wants pupils to achieve. However, the many changes in leadership and staffing since the last inspection have hindered the establishment of a high-quality curriculum and clear expectations of what pupils can do. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

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

The trust has worked tenaciously with the school to minimise the impact on pupils of recent changes at the school. This work has been positive in many respects. However, the quality of the curriculum that pupils learn and how they learn it has been affected. The school has not sustained the quality, high expectations and ambition that have been in place historically.

Recent changes brought in by the trust have shown early signs of improving the quality of what and how pupils learn. The curriculum is designed to support mixed-age classes. Close checks on how well pupils are learning in subjects such as reading are making a positive difference. However, this is not the case in all subjects. Not enough of the new curriculum thinking is replicated across the wider curriculum. Pupils do not benefit enough from the impact of this work. Furthermore, changes to the curriculum over time do not build in sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate what they learn, for example in their writing or in problem-solving. Consequently, pupils do not secure new learning well enough so they can recall it and use it with confidence and increasing success.

The school identifies pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. Pupils who need additional help, not just those with SEND, get the support that they need. Staff adapt their teaching or provide resources to enable pupils to be successful. In addition, the school's highly inclusive ethos means that pupils support each other when they face challenges.

Pupils learn to read well, starting in Nursery. Exploring sounds and learning rhymes and routines prepares children successfully for the phonics programme in Reception and key stage 1. Pupils read books that are matched well to their reading ability. Those who struggle get the additional support they need to learn the letters and sounds needed to develop fluency and confidence in their reading.

The school promotes a love of reading. Pupils are encouraged to read a diverse range of texts. In early years, children enjoy a rich variety of high-quality stories. The school has prioritised children's language and communication development, starting with its provision for two-year-olds. Staff foster children's speech and use of high-quality vocabulary. For example, staff reinforce and embed essential language such as days of the week and numbers.

Pupils' attendance is a school priority. The school is not complacent, despite pupils attending well generally. The trust's recent work to stabilise the school has led to an increase in pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Through the personal development programme, the school shows its commitment to preparing pupils well for their next steps in education and life. For example, pupils learn to be risk-aware through the outdoor learning offer and the school's focus on water safety. Trips out and visitors to school provide pupils with a rich set of experiences to hone their talents and interests. The school sets them up well for life in modern Britain.

The school and the trust are alert to what is needed to improve the curriculum. This work has started under the current leadership. Leaders are working in conjunction with the incoming head of school to ensure a smooth transition. Staff are committed to making the necessary changes to get the best from pupils. The trust's in-depth knowledge of the school, supported by the monitoring hub, positively influences staff's well-being and development. This gives some confidence that, with time, the school has the resources, challenge and support needed to improve the quality of education for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Expectations for pupils' learning are not high enough. Ambition for what pupils can achieve has been hindered by the many changes in the school's leadership and staffing. Consequently, the intended curriculum is not fully realised, and pupils do not learn as well as they should. The school, working with the trust, should ensure that the increased stability in the school leads to fully shared and understood expectations for what pupils can achieve in each subject.
- The curriculum does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to practise, consolidate and transfer what they learn and can do. As a result, pupils do not secure and build new learning well enough or make links within their learning. The school should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects provides pupils with enough deliberate opportunities and time to become fluent in skills and apply learning with greater automaticity.
- Not enough subjects in the wider curriculum are designed and implemented as well as those where the school has focused its attention. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils do not retain their knowledge and learn effectively. The school should ensure that the effective model it has established in some subjects is used across the whole of the wider curriculum and that staff get the necessary training to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality learning offer.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in February 2016.

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	137662
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10344623
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	97
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alexander Walmsley
CEO of the trust	Paul Walker
Headteacher	Carla Bennett and Heather Slater (Joint Heads of School)
Website	www.salcombe-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England school. The school is part of the Diocese of Exeter. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due five years from this date.
- The school provides early education for two-year-old children in the Nursery. The Nursery has been taken on by the school since the previous inspection.
- The school's current joint heads of school are part of the trust's leadership team. They have been in position since April 2025. A new head of school has been appointed and is due to start in September. This will be the school's fourth change in leadership since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education

provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the two heads of school, the school's link director from the trust and school staff. In addition, an inspector met with the CEO, a representative from the school's monitoring hub, a trustee and the chair of the board trustees.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also spoke to a range of pupils to gather their views about the school.
- 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.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement. The inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, SEND, safeguarding and behaviour.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and parents' free-text comments. An inspector met with some parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspectors spoke with staff to gather their views about the school and evaluated their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Shirley

Ofsted Inspector

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