

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: West Alvington Church of England Academy

West Alvington, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 3PP

Inspection dates:

3 June 2025

Outcome

West Alvington Church of England Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Katie Coombe. The school is part of Learning Academy Partnership multi academy 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), Tracey Cleverly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joanne Tisdall.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and families are proud to be part of this village school. They describe it as a nurturing environment that feels like a family. Pupils are safe and feel well cared for. The school is ambitious for what its pupils can achieve, both academically and in their wider development. Pupils meet the school's high expectations. Pupils' behaviour consistently reflects the school's values of 'friendship, honesty, respect and responsibility'. Older pupils act as positive role models for younger pupils and take this responsibility seriously. As a result, pupils are polite, well-mannered and welcoming to visitors.

The school places a strong emphasis on community engagement. For example, pupils visit local residential homes to sing. Pupils also take part in fundraising activities for local and national charities. These experiences help pupils to develop a strong sense of responsibility. The school council plays an active role in school life, working alongside staff to suggest improvements. This helps pupils to develop a meaningful understanding of democratic processes.

The curriculum is enriched with a range of wider opportunities. Across the year, pupils take part in activities such as sailing and archery. These experiences enable pupils to develop new skills, build confidence and discover personal interests beyond the classroom.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. It sets out the core knowledge it wants pupils to know and remember. In mixed-age classes, teachers ensure that work is well matched to what pupils know and can do. Pupils complete tasks to a high standard and take considerable pride in their learning. This ensures they are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Reading is central to the school's curriculum. Phonics is taught effectively. This means pupils learn the letters and sounds they need to know to become confident readers. Older pupils demonstrate a genuine love for reading and speak confidently about a wide range of authors and texts. They draw from a rich and diverse selection of authors when discussing their favourite books, reflecting the school's strong reading culture.

The school has ensured the wider curriculum is enriched with opportunities that broaden pupils' horizons and develop their cultural understanding. For example, in history, pupils learn about historical topics such as the Shang dynasty. There is a consistent approach to checking pupils' understanding during lessons. This helps ensure that misconceptions are addressed before new learning is introduced. Pupils are encouraged to articulate their ideas using full sentences. This supports the development of oracy. However, in some instances, staff do not use interactions as effectively as they could to extend pupils' language and communication skills. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these areas.

Personal development is a strength of the school. A range of experiences, including visits to London and the Houses of Parliament, contribute to pupils' strong understanding of fundamental British values. The school also welcomes visitors from a range of cultural backgrounds. This helps pupils to understand about people's lives who are different from their own.

Pupils behave well across the school. They show respect towards staff and their peers. Breaktimes are harmonious, with pupils of different ages playing cooperatively. In lessons pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school. Attendance has improved over time and remains a key focus for leaders. When pupils struggle to attend regularly, staff work closely with families to provide effective support.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the curriculum successfully alongside their peers. The school is quick to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. The school benefits from working with the trust and external specialists. This helps ensure that there is ongoing and effective support for pupils with SEND.

In early years, school routines are established from the time children start school. Enthusiastic staff help children to engage in a wide range of activities. From Reception Year onwards, children have the opportunity to participate in overnight residentials. This helps children to develop independence and resilience from a young age.

Staff are proud to work at West Alvington Church of England Academy. They are effectively supported by school leaders and by the trust. The local 'ethos and advisory committee', along with trustees have a strong understanding of the steps the school needs to take to continue to build on recent successes. They are supportive of school leaders and provide an effective balance of support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes staff do not develop pupils' knowledge or language skills effectively. As a result pupils do not deepen their understanding as much as they could. The school should ensure that staff promote language development consistently well, to ensure that all interactions continually focus on building children's knowledge.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2020.

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	144070
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10378959
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	36
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joanne Tisdall
CEO of the trust	Tracey Cleverly
Headteacher	Katie Coombe
Website	www.westalvington-lap.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 March 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Learning Academy Partnership multi academy trust.
- The school is registered to provide nursery education for two- and three-year-olds.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.
- This is a Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2019.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and took that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, members of the trust leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, trustees and members of the local ethos and advisory committee.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted Parent View and by talking to parents. The inspectors also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

James Gentile, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Lovett

Ofsted Inspector

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