

Inspection of Black Torrington Church of England Primary School

Black Torrington, Beaworthy, Devon EX21 5PU

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Joanna Luxford. This school is part of the Dartmoor 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, Dan Morrow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tania Skeaping.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Black Torrington Church of England Primary School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. 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 of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Together, the trust and the school have prioritised the development of the curriculum. They are ambitious for all pupils to be successful. The work on the curriculum ensures there are high expectations in place for pupils to learn well. While leaders have taken steps to improve the quality of education pupils receive, it is still early days. The curriculum does not yet support all pupils to build their knowledge well.

Pupils feel safe in school and they are well looked after. The motto 'journeying together in hope and joy' is well understood by pupils. They know this means working together to help each other to succeed. During social times, pupils look after one another and take pleasure in playing together.

The school provides many opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils benefit from clubs to develop their talents such as music and textiles. Experiences are provided for pupils to socialise with peers in other trust schools. This helps to prepare older pupils for their transition to secondary school. Pupils attend residential with other schools. Pupils say that this helps them to make new friends and to develop skills such as learning how to surf.

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

The school has designed the curriculum to identify the knowledge pupils need to know and remember. However, the sequencing of knowledge lacks precision to ensure the needs of all pupils are met. As a result, some pupils find it more challenging to learn the curriculum. Where this is the case, pupils find it difficult to remember important knowledge and to talk about their learning.

Assessment is used in some subjects to check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. For example, in mathematics, gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified and pupils are supported to build their knowledge. However, assessment in other subjects is not used with enough precision. As a result, some pupils have unknown gaps in their learning. These go unaddressed. This prevents pupils from building their knowledge based on what they already know and remember.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early. They are supported to learn the curriculum alongside their peers. However, some pupils do not currently get all the help they need. This is because learning targets lack precision to support pupils in building their knowledge securely. As a result, some pupils make slower progress.

The school supports pupils to learn to read. Leaders have thought carefully about the books they want pupils to read. These include texts that promote pupils' understanding of culture and diversity. While learning to read, staff match reading books to the sounds pupils know. This helps pupils to become confident readers.

The school is calm and orderly. A new behaviour policy has ensured that there are now high expectations of pupils in place. Staff support pupils to follow these well. The school provides additional support for pupils who might struggle to manage their behaviour.

Pupils are supported well to develop beyond the academic curriculum. The school plans opportunities to enhance pupils' experiences. For example, the annual trust event 'festival of hope' supports character development. Within this, pupils take part in community service such as litter picking. This helps pupils to be responsible and active citizens. Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a lived experience of democracy through their school council roles. For example, they have worked together to plan a charity event to raise money for 'Children in Need'. Pupils are supported to understand the importance of equality. The annual 'rainbow day' celebrates diversity. As a result, pupils are inclusive of each other. One pupil said, 'Everyone is different but all worth the same.'

Staff value the support from the trust. This includes training from subject experts to enhance the teaching of the curriculum. Those responsible for governance know the school well, including the areas that need to improve.

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 curriculum is not sequenced effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge securely based on what they have learned before. The trust must ensure that the precise knowledge it wants pupils to learn is sequenced well across the curriculum to help all pupils learn well.
- Assessment is not used effectively to identify how well pupils are learning the curriculum. As a result, some pupils have unknown gaps in their knowledge and so do not build their knowledge well. The trust needs to ensure that assessment is used to identify pupils' gaps in learning so that future learning builds on what pupils know and remember.
- Some pupils with SEND do not receive all the support they need to catch up. This is because some learning targets lack precision. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge securely over time. The trust must ensure that pupils receive all the support they need to learn the curriculum well.

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](#) 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	145341
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10288227
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tania Skeaping
CEO of the trust	Dan Morrow
Headteacher	Joanna Luxford
Website	www.blacktorrington.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. The school is in the Diocese of Exeter. At the most recent section 48 inspection of the school, carried out in November 2016, the school was judged to be good.
- Black Torrington Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in one mixed-age class.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.
- The inspectors spoke with school leaders, subject leaders, parents, pupils, trustees and representatives from the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders and pupils about the curriculum in some 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.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a trusted adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, the inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. The inspectors considered comments made by parents online during the inspection and met with some parents on the first day. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Esther Best, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Bray

Ofsted Inspector

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