

Inspection of Fremington Primary School

Beechfield Road, Fremington, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 3DD

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Caroline Gilbert. This school is part of Tarka Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Richard Light, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Graham Cockell.

What is it like to attend this school?

Fremington Primary School is a friendly and welcoming school. A recent change in leadership has led to raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. Several positive changes to help pupils prepare for their next stage of education have been introduced. However, the impact of the school's ambitious vision is not yet realised and some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Staff and pupils have warm relationships with each other. Pupils know that if they are worried there is a member of staff they can speak to. Pupils know what it means to be a good friend. Behaviour across the school is improving and most pupils behave well. However, on occasions, pupils are upset when their peers say unkind things.

Pupils are encouraged to develop their interests through a wide range of clubs, such as craft club, basketball and cricket club. Pupils also develop their confidence and resilience with visits to outdoor centres to learn to rock climb. Pupils in the school choir are proud to be able to sing for members of the community at the local residential care home. Older pupils take their roles as sports leaders seriously.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced turbulence in staffing, including a change in headteacher. However, since September, new leadership, with the support of the trust, has brought stability to the school. There is a clear and ambitious vision for what the school wants to achieve for the pupils in this community. The changes to the curriculum and raising expectations of what pupils can achieve are showing green shoots.

The school's approach to teaching phonics and early reading is rigorous. Children learn phonics as soon as they join the school. Staff deliver the phonics programme exceptionally well. Those pupils who struggle to learn their sounds are supported to quickly catch up with their peers. The early years curriculum is rich in language, with a focus on developing children's vocabulary. Staff are skilled in modelling subject specific language which children then use in their play. As a result, pupils have a strong start. They learn to read quickly and achieve well in the phonics screening check.

The school has taken a systematic approach to developing the curriculum. In most subjects, the curriculum is coherently designed and builds pupils' skills progressively from the early years to Year 6. For example, in mathematics, pupils are able to talk about how their knowledge of multiplication facts helps them with what they are currently learning.

Staff regularly check pupils' understanding and adapt the learning to reflect what they already know. Pupils produce high-quality work in these subjects. However, in other subjects, teachers' checks on pupils' understanding are not specific enough. Misconceptions in learning are sometimes unaddressed. This means that pupils continue in their learning with gaps in their knowledge. Furthermore, in some subjects, staff's expectations of what pupils can achieve is too low with work often left unfinished. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school has reviewed its provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Those pupils with the greatest level of need are able to access the 'Cocoon' and the 'Ark' where staff provide bespoke support. However, support for other pupils with SEND across the school sometimes lacks the same level of precision. This means that some pupils with SEND do not receive sufficient support to build their knowledge well enough across the curriculum.

Historically, expectations of pupils' behaviour have not been high enough. Recently, the school has implemented a new behaviour policy which has led to an improvement in pupils' conduct. However, the school's new approach is not fully understood by staff and pupils. This means that inconsistencies persist in how staff address poor behaviour. As a result, at times some pupils' conduct stops others from learning.

Pupils' attendance remains below the national average. However, the school is diligently focused on building close bonds with families to provide personalised support to help pupils attend more often. This has led to an improvement in rates of attendance.

Pupils' personal development is supported through trips to Bristol where they visit the planetarium and science museum. Pupils also watch theatre performances in London's West End and stay away overnight. These experiences help pupils to build a sense of independence and develop their understanding of culture and the arts.

Staff are supportive of the leadership of the school and are proud to be part of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's new approach to managing poor behaviour is not fully understood by staff and pupils. This means that there are inconsistencies in expectations around behaviour and how pupils' behaviour is managed. The school should ensure that the new behaviour policy is consistently understood and implemented.
- Support for some pupils with SEND lacks sufficient precision to ensure pupils receive the help they need to learn a broad and balanced curriculum. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not build their knowledge well enough across the curriculum. The trust should improve the quality and effectiveness of support for pupils with SEND and ensure that staff are appropriately skilled to implement it.
- In some subjects, teachers' checks on pupils' understanding are not specific enough. This hinders staff from readily addressing misconceptions and learning activities are not

always adapted well enough to meet the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils develop gaps in their learning and do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers' checks on pupils' knowledge are well matched to the knowledge in the curriculum so that misconceptions can be identified and promptly rectified.

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	148019
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10344845
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Cockell
CEO of the trust	Richard Light
Headteacher	Caroline Gilbert
Website	www.fremington-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Tarka Learning Partnership.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2024.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, art and design and music. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with teachers, 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, CEO, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector also met with the chair of the board of trustees.
- 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 with some parents in person. The inspectors also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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