

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Budeaux CofE Primary Academy

Priestley Avenue, Higher Saint Budeaux, Plymouth, Devon PL5 2DW

Inspection date:

23 April 2025

Outcome

St Budeaux CofE Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The head of school is Natasha Brooks. This school is part of The 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?

The school is ambitious for pupils' achievement and their personal development. Pupils achieve in line with expected standards nationally. They are happy at school and feel safe. Children in the early years are well prepared for their next steps. Pupils in Year 6 are supported effectively in their transition to secondary school.

Staff create a nurturing environment. Pupils are kind and respectful. Older pupils have welcomed the addition of younger ones to the school. Therefore, these younger pupils have been made to feel part of the St Budeaux family. Lessons are mostly calm and purposeful. Pupils are supported in managing their emotions well. Staff deal effectively with any rare incidents of behaviour that fall below the school's high expectations.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their strength of character and understanding of community. For example, pupils raise money for a charity hospice and visit residents at a local care home. Many pupils relish the chance to build and race soap box-style cars and compete against other schools. The school links with a local university to set pupils challenges, including designing a new mammoth house for an exhibition. These activities develop pupils' teamwork and resilience, as well as their understanding of science and technology.

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

The trust has supported the school in its transition to a primary setting effectively. The

school has benefited from the sharing of best practice from other established primary schools in the trust. Pupils from the Nursery Year through to Year 6 learn a broad curriculum. Staff review this regularly to ensure it is age-appropriate and as ambitious as the national curriculum.

Reading is a priority for the school. The new library space is popular with pupils. It supports a positive culture of reading for pleasure. Pupils learn to read confidently and fluently through the school's chosen phonics programme. If pupils struggle with their reading, they receive targeted support to help them catch up quickly. Pupils are taught the correct pencil grip and how to form their letters from a young age. However, sometimes pupils do not grasp these basic skills before moving on to more difficult tasks. Staff do not always insist that these skills are secure. Therefore, where this happens, problems in pupils' writing continue. In key stage 2, this extends to poor quality handwriting and spelling errors that are not always resolved.

The school provides a nurturing and stimulating environment for children in the early years. Staff ensure that the activities support the needs and interests of the children. The outside provision includes many opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills. Children in the Nursery and Reception Year enjoy socialising with older pupils during playtime. They learn to take turns and share with their peers.

Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They present subject matter clearly and carefully check pupils' understanding. Pupils develop detailed knowledge across a broad range of subjects. This was particularly strong in religious education and science. For example, pupils describe the different parts of the heart with confident use of scientific vocabulary.

The school is knowledgeable about the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils have specific targets that are regularly reviewed. This supports them in their academic and personal development. Furthermore, the school identifies any potential additional needs as early as possible. This means that support in school, and from external professionals as required, is put in place promptly. As a result, pupils with SEND are well supported and confident in their learning.

Pupils understand the school's high expectations of their behaviour. Most pupils consistently meet these expectations. At lunchtimes, pupils enjoy the 'family dining' experience. This supports the development of pupils' strong relationships with each other and with staff.

Although most pupils enjoy school, too many pupils are persistently absent. These pupils develop significant gaps in their knowledge from missed learning. The school forges good relationships with families to try and improve this. However, the school's strategies to improve attendance are not having enough impact. The overall attendance of pupils remains too low.

The school's personal, social, health and economic education ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils are encouraged to become active citizens and to understand their own mental health. They learn about different career

opportunities. Extra-curricular activities are well attended and include cookery, junior field gun and various sporting clubs.

Staff have confidence in the leadership of the school. They enjoy working at St Budeaux. The school and trust successfully reduce workload for staff and are considerate of their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, pupils do not secure accurate letter formation, handwriting and spelling before they move on to more complex tasks. Staff do not always give pupils enough opportunity to practise these skills or correct any errors that pupils make. The school should ensure that staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' work so that pupils become fluent in their foundational knowledge and skills.
- Pupils' overall attendance is low. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. Consequently, these pupils are missing large amounts of learning time, which hinders their academic achievement. The school should review the effectiveness of its strategies and develop its work with pupils and their families to improve attendance.

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 predecessor school, St Budeaux Foundation CofE (Aided) Junior School, to be good for overall effectiveness in

January 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	149192
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10378993
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	83
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alexander Walmsley
CEO of the trust	Paul Walker
Headteacher	Natasha Brooks
Website	www.stbfs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Budeaux CofE Primary Academy converted to become an academy school in September 2022. When its predecessor school, St Budeaux Foundation CofE (Aided) Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- In September 2023, the school converted to become a primary school.
- The school has a Nursery with provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- St Budeaux is a Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2017.

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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors held discussions with the head of school, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the chair of the trust and other trustees, and the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors visited classes, spoke to teachers, 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 considered parents' and carers' responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Bray

Ofsted Inspector

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