

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Trefonen CofE Primary School

School Lane, Trefonen, Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 9DY

Inspection date:

11 March 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. They settle in quickly after starting in Reception. They feel safe and say there is no bullying. Pupils are usually very happy, polite and confident. They behave well and work eagerly in lessons. They enjoy talking to each other and using the attractive and well-resourced playground. Pupils know what to do if they encounter difficulties in lessons or during social time. Most say that any concerns or disagreements are sorted out without fuss.

Pupils usually learn well in lessons. The school has high expectations of all pupils. Experienced staff keep a close eye on all pupils. They know if any pupils struggle or fall behind. They provide extra help quickly, including to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils' attendance levels are high. The school is quick to support families if any attendance issues arise.

Leaders have worked hard to improve many aspects of the school since the last inspection. Better outdoor provision in the early years and a new curriculum in most subjects mean that pupils have wider and more effective learning opportunities. However, some weaknesses in provision remain. Most parents and/or carers say that their child is doing well at school. A few would not recommend the school to others. In particular, they have concerns about how well the school communicates with home.

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

All pupils learn an ambitious curriculum. They are usually taught well by expert staff who have sound subject knowledge. Staff know what pupils should learn in each subject and year. They plan lessons so that pupils' learning increases steadily as they grow older. Pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as other pupils. Staff identify and know the needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils get any necessary assistance.

Pupils begin to learn to read as soon as they start school. Any pupil who falls behind gets the extra help they need to catch up. Pupils who struggled a little in Year 1 last year now read with sufficient fluency and confidence. Pupils learn basic mathematical knowledge securely because of effective teaching. Most pupils successfully develop the fluency and confidence to enable them to read well.

The early years curriculum gives children solid foundations for the next stage in most areas of learning. It is carefully organised to link with the curriculum in later years. Although improvements made to outdoor provision since the last inspection help children learn better than they did, some early years teaching remains ineffective. For example, children do not always get the guidance they need to write well. Too many children struggle with letter formation or make uncorrected mistakes when writing. Not all early years staff have enough expertise to help children write well.

Relationships in the school are usually very positive. Staff know and care for pupils very well. Individual pupils are given extensive support with any medical or emotional issues. The school celebrates and rewards pupils' positive attitudes. Any disruptive behaviour is usually very minor and managed effectively. Nearly all pupils benefit from carefully considered and well-established routines. In a few instances, pupils do not learn as much as they could because staff are not clear enough about how they should help.

Pupils' wider development is a strength in the school. All pupils have ample opportunities to extend their horizons and broaden their interests. Pupils enjoy many extra-curricular trips and activities. These include school council, helping in the library, running a book shop to raise money for charity, representing the school at sports events, and links with a school in Kenya. The personal, social, health and economic programme is organised well and meets statutory requirements. It is supported by regular assemblies that encourage pupils to think for themselves.

Staff who responded to the staff survey were generally very positive about most aspects of the school. However, not all staff are clear enough about what is expected of them or know how to improve their effectiveness. This is particularly in relation to how to support pupils in class. As a result, the support given to pupils is uneven across classes.

The school is ambitious for all its pupils, and leaders act in the best interest of pupils. Some aspects of the school remain strong. However, some parents still have concerns about the quality of school engagement with parents. School governors have extensive experience. They take a keen interest in how well pupils learn. This usually ensures that they are effective in holding the school to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Provision in the early years is weaker than it should be. In particular, children are not given enough support when writing. The school should ensure that all staff are supported and trained sufficiently so that they help all children to learn to write well.
- The school introduced new systems for communication with parents after the last inspection. However, many parents still have concerns about the effectiveness of communication between home and school. The school should take further steps to ensure that parents know how their views are taken into account and understand the reasons behind decisions taken by the school.
- Not all staff are clear enough about what they should do to support pupils' learning. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school should clarify to all staff what is expected of them and provide appropriate training to enable them to understand how to support pupils to enable them to learn well.

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 May 2019.

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	123507
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10343856
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Malcolm Kirk
Headteacher	Cathy Dunleavy
Website	www.trefonenschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England primary school. The last section 48 inspection was in November 2024.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other staff. They spoke with members of the governing body, a representative from the diocese, and two officers from the local authority. Inspectors also met with a sample of parents.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

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