

Inspection of Drake Primary Academy

1 Johnston Terrace Ope, Keyham, Plymouth, Devon PL2 2EN

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. Staff go the extra mile to help pupils whenever they need it. This included providing high-quality support following the pandemic and the events that occurred in Keyham during the summer. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), feel happy and safe. They describe Drake Academy as 'one big happy family'. Pupils generally conduct themselves well around the school, and when they are in lessons. Bullying is rare and pupils say that, when it happens, it is usually dealt with quickly.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. For example, the new Reception children already know the class rules and routines, such as tidying up together at the end of the morning, to make this a better school for all.

Pupils learn effectively through a well-considered curriculum. This provides a secure foundation of knowledge for the next stage in pupils' education, including in English, mathematics and across the range of subjects. However, pupils do not always connect what they know between subjects well enough. Overly ambitious plans in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) do not get all children off to the best start possible.

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

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils, including those with SEND. They provide effective support and challenge to teachers. As a result, pupils benefit from carefully planned learning and positive experiences. Teachers, and other staff, fully embrace the work of leaders in creating a positive environment. Consequently, Drake Academy is a happy place for staff and pupils alike.

Leaders are not complacent. They continually strive to make the school better through ongoing checks and review. When leaders identify areas for improvement, they take swift and effective action to remedy these. For example, following a recent decline in pupils' phonics scores in key stage 1, leaders completed an audit of the school's early reading and phonics approach. This led to the introduction of a new and much improved phonics programme from September 2021. This is already having a positive impact, particularly in helping those pupils who need to catch up, including in the early years.

Reading is a prominent feature of the school's work. Following the recent overhaul of the phonics programme, the youngest pupils are making great strides. Teachers' assessments are accurate. They use this information to match work and books precisely to pupils' needs. For pupils with SEND, individual learning plans are suitably adjusted to help these pupils with their reading. Older pupils talk passionately about reading. They like to read books by different authors and study a range of texts. This helps them with other aspects of their learning. By the time they

leave, most pupils are confident readers who are well prepared for the challenges of secondary education.

Subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They have high ambitions for pupils. Curriculum plans are well thought through. Pupils acquire knowledge in a coherent and logical manner. This helps them to know and remember more over time. For example, in mathematics, pupils are gaining increasing confidence and fluency in their number work to solve a range of mathematical problems. However, despite the many strengths of the curriculum, there is still more to do to enable pupils to apply what they know to a range of different situations. For example, when recounting historical events about Plymouth, pupils found it difficult to explain related geographical information and facts, including where events took place. Consequently, pupils do not benefit from applying key knowledge between subjects in order to help make full sense of all that they know.

In the EYFS, children are supported to do well. The curriculum is designed to build on previous developmental stages, including early communication and language for reading. However, leaders' curriculum plans are sometimes too ambitious. They make demands of children which are overly challenging, for example expecting children to design a 'city for superheroes' before they have the necessary knowledge to be able to do this. As a result, children are exposed to making errors or learning misconceptions that are unhelpful for later learning.

This is a highly inclusive school. Equality is respected and diversity is celebrated. The effective pastoral care of the school, including the high-quality work of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and emotional literacy support adviser, helps pupils to feel special. This combines with a strong personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. Pupils understand the importance of rules and the need for mutual respect. They enjoy the wider opportunities that the school provides, including the sports and breakfast clubs, which are now up and running again. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the joys and challenges of life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding which permeates the school. There are effective systems to protect pupils in place. These include staff recruitment checks and child protection training. As a result, staff are vigilant and curious. They know what they must do to use the agreed systems to raise any concerns promptly. Leaders take swift action and are tenacious in working with external agencies, to keep pupils safe.

Pupils say that they feel safe. They trust staff and have confidence in them. Pupils know how to keep safe in different situations, including when working online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is coherent and well sequenced. However, there are some weaknesses in how knowledge is planned to secure cross-curricular learning. This means pupils sometimes find it difficult to relate what they know about a subject to other curriculum areas. Leaders should develop the curriculum further so that pupils can apply their knowledge successfully between subjects, and in different situations.
- Despite the strengths of the EYFS curriculum, some planning is overly ambitious. This results in children having work provided which is too challenging. Leaders should revise the EYFS curriculum so that its content and knowledge is consistently well matched to the needs and previous experiences of the children.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	144385
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10200932
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	195
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marcus Agius
Headteacher	Joe Roberts
Website	www.drakeprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Drake Primary Academy is a primary school located in Keyham, Plymouth.
- The school is part of the Reach South Academy Trust, comprised of 14 schools.
- Leaders, including governors, work closely in a partnership arrangement with another local primary academy within the trust.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education.
- For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about

their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at individual plans for pupils with SEND to see how these are being implemented.

- Inspectors looked at PSHE education and spoke with leaders and pupils about this subject.
- An inspector looked at the single central register and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and one of the deputy safeguarding leads, who is also the head of school.
- An inspector met with the SENCo to help evaluate SEND provision and practice in the school.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff and met with groups of pupils to find out what it is like to be a pupil, or to work, in this school.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors and trustees, as well as other education officers of the trust. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the chief executive officer.
- The lead inspector reviewed key documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form, school action plans, governors' minutes and leaders' monitoring records.
- The lead inspector checked all survey responses, including those from pupils, staff and parents. This included taking into account the 41 responses to Ofsted's free-text service.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jane Dennis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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