

Inspection of Austin Farm Academy

Delamere Road, Egguckland, Plymouth, Devon PL6 5XQ

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the heart of this nurturing and cohesive school. The values of 'proud, resilient and respectful' permeate all aspects of school life. Leaders have high expectations. Parents are extremely positive about the education their children receive. One commented, 'My child thrives at this school. Staff know my child. We know what he is learning and how to support him.' Parents appreciate the continued work of the headteacher in bringing about further improvement.

Pupils like coming to school. They show this in their improving attendance rates. Pupils feel safe. They have a good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils show high levels of respect for staff and each other. They talk of adults being good role models in demonstrating positive attitudes and care towards others. Pupils behave well in lessons. They socialise together across age groups.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the opportunities the school provides for them to develop their individuality, confidence and resilience. They see everyone as equal. Pupils enjoy taking on areas of responsibility, such as representing their peers on the school council. Staff encourage them to be proud of their achievements.

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

Leaders have been relentless in their drive for improvement. In a short space of time, decisive and committed action has rapidly improved the school. Staff are highly ambitious and committed to ensuring that all pupils succeed. Staff are very positive about the support they receive. They share leaders' passion and drive for success.

Leaders prioritise children's language and communication development extremely well in the early years. Younger pupils learn to read well through a consistent and effective approach to teaching phonics. Staff in the early years create a language-rich environment to support pupils' reading and communication skills. Teachers ensure pupils are exposed to a wide variety of texts throughout their time at the school. Pupils practise their reading using books that match the sounds they are learning. Accurate assessment means that those who could fall behind are provided with the support they need to be successful and confident readers.

Older pupils talk enthusiastically about reading. They say they get 'immersed' in books and that books 'enable you to escape from reality'. Pupils understand why it is important to be able to read well.

Staff are highly ambitious for what their youngest children can achieve. Children in the early years have very positive attitudes towards learning. They are highly motivated, curious and inquisitive. This is due to the well-thought-out curriculum they receive.

Pupils receive a carefully crafted and well-considered mathematics curriculum. As a result, they develop into successful and proficient mathematicians. However, staff do

not always use assessment opportunities well or carefully enough to check exactly what some pupils have or have not mastered. As a result, some pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have gaps in their subject knowledge.

Leaders continue to develop and enhance subjects across the wider curriculum. In physical education (PE), pupils receive a coherently planned curriculum where they build on what they already know and can do over time. However, some subjects are less well developed. Consequently, not all pupils talk confidently about their previous learning. Leaders have started to implement a curriculum that will enable pupils to use their prior knowledge to make links with new learning over time.

Staff now have the same ambitious end points in learning for pupils with SEND. They are becoming more precise in adapting learning to ensure those who need the most support can access the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Children in the early years demonstrate high levels of self-control and respect for their peers. Consequently, the school is a calm and purposeful place to learn and play.

Leaders ensure pupils' personal development is a priority. Staff provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to know how to become responsible citizens. Pupils secure their understanding of moral and social issues through regular debate in a considered and mature way. They feel that their voice is heard. Pupils state that you should 'treat others as you wish to be treated'. They understand difference and know that it is good to be different.

Trust leaders hold leaders to account effectively. Careful and ongoing monitoring of the impact of leaders' actions has enabled targeted work to allow rapid improvement in a short time. Staff benefit from high-quality professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure a culture of vigilance exists across the school. Staff are knowledgeable and receive relevant and up-to-date safeguarding training. Systems for recording and reporting concerns are effective. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring decisions are taken swiftly to keep pupils safe from harm.

Leaders carry out the necessary checks on the suitability of staff to establish whether they are safe to work with children. Pupils feel safe and know how to stay safe. They know trusted adults will help them. Pupils learn how to stay safe through the curriculum. They develop an effective understanding of risk in their local community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects in the wider curriculum are at different developmental stages. As a result, not all pupils can recall their prior learning well enough. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects are designed to enable pupils to know more and remember more over time.
- Staff do not always use assessment information precisely enough to check what pupils understand. As a result, pupils have gaps in some subject-specific knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that teachers accurately check what pupils remember and understand, including pupils with SEND, so they can assure themselves that pupils are securing all the essential knowledge they intend pupils to know.

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](#)' 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

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| Unique reference number | 141232 |
| Local authority | Plymouth |
| Inspection number | 10259663 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 138 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Iain Grafton |
| Headteacher | Ruth Baptiste |
| Website | www.austinfarmacademy.com |
| Dates of previous inspection | 13 and 14 December 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Austin Farm Academy is a smaller-than-average primary school. It joined the Westcountry Schools Trust in July 2021. Since the last graded inspection, the school has been supported by another headteacher in the trust.
- The current substantive headteacher took up her post in September 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, groups of staff and representatives from the Westcountry Schools Trust, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in PE and in personal, social and health education with leaders.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including the single central record. They considered how well leaders act on concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and trust representatives about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 12 free-text responses, and 15 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Heather Barraclough, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Craig Hayes | Ofsted Inspector |

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