

Inspection of Countess Gytha Primary School

West Camel Road, Queen Camel, Yeovil BA22 7FF

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Countess Gytha primary is a vibrant school. Relationships between staff, pupils, parents and the community are strong. Pupils visit the community, for example visiting a local care home, and members of the community come in to school to run clubs or give talks. Local church members run a weekly assembly with 'Open the Book.'

Pupils look after one another. When there are friendship fallouts, they know how to help one another resolve issues. Pupils feel safe at school. They know who to speak to if they have concerns. Staff are prompt to help when needed.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They talk about their school with pride. Around school and at breaktime, pupils are calm. They understand and follow the expectations of leaders.

Leaders are proud of the many clubs and trips that happen throughout the school year. They timetable a vast range of activities, such as chess, animation, country dancing and mathematics, for every age group. Pupils enjoy the sports clubs and fixtures that run. Attendance for these is high. Leaders plan events to celebrate different subjects, such as the languages café. Older pupils chosen as language ambassadors serve traditional foods and celebrate different cultures.

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

Leaders have planned a broad and well-sequenced curriculum. Beginning in the early years, leaders have curated and sequenced the curriculum to make sure pupils in mixed-age classes move through their learning without repetition or gaps in their knowledge. Published outcomes for pupils in mathematics, reading and writing are high.

Teachers assess and track pupils' progression through the curriculum in all subjects. They plan support when pupils need help. In a few subjects, leaders are not clear enough about how well implemented the curriculum is. This limits the precision of their development planning.

Leaders have created a culture of reading. Pupils talk excitedly about their reading. Older pupils support younger pupils as reading buddies. Pupils enjoy the reading challenges set termly by visits from 'Bookman'. Leaders have prioritised early reading. They have ensured that a well-implemented phonics programme is in place. They plan training for all staff. This means staff teach the programme with accuracy. Pupils who need support to catch up, receive help to keep up with their peers. As a result, leaders are confident this is having a significant impact helping pupils to read with confidence.

Early numeracy, and letter and sound recognition, begin in pre-school. A well-planned provision helps children develop their understanding through thoughtful

activities and high-quality interactions with staff. In Reception, the focus on some of the wider provision is not as sharp. As a result, a few children are less resilient in their interest and engagement. However, leaders prepare children well for their formal learning. For example, children learn phonics as soon as they start in Reception year.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have the adaptations they need to access the full curriculum. Staff receive training and updates specific to the needs of the pupils they teach. As a result, they make sure pupils with SEND have appropriate support. For pupils with more complex needs, careful plans and guidance help them to be successful.

Leaders have planned a personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum that begins in Reception and develops through to the end of Year 6. Older children learn about puberty and change in an age-appropriate way. Leaders focus on discussion and problem-solving. This helps pupils to remember their learning well. Pupils make presentations about British values in assemblies. They have a good understanding of values and why they are meaningful. Pupils relish the many ways they can take leadership roles. In ambassador roles, they promote subjects or champion reading. As members of the school council, they contribute to discussion with leaders about their school. Leaders invite an array of speakers to talk about their careers to pupils in key stage 2. Pupils recall these well and talk about a broad range of careers.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. Leaders plan meaningful professional development. The governing body is knowledgeable and secure in its ability to challenge and support leaders effectively. Governors and trust leaders provide development and evaluation for leaders to do the best for pupils. Leaders have prioritised building relationships and engaging parents and community in the life of the school. Parents are extremely positive about the school and the experience their children have.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a team of staff leading safeguarding. All staff receive update training on national and local safeguarding matters. They are confident in noticing and reporting any concerns they have. Leaders comprehensively track, check and follow up on safeguarding concerns. They act promptly to work with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families.

Leaders, including governors, make sure procedures and policies for safer recruitment are consistent. They check to ensure that safeguarding paperwork is thorough.

Pupils learn to stay safe through the planned curriculum. They know how to stay safe online and in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders' checks on how well the curriculum is implemented are limited. This means that leaders do not have the knowledge to inform precisely the next developmental steps. Leaders need to monitor these subjects more effectively so that they can assure themselves of how well they are being implemented.
- In parts of the wider provision in Reception, some activities and interactions with children are not carefully planned. As a result, a few children are not as resilient in their wider learning as they could be. Leaders need to ensure that the planning for wider development in Reception is more focused.

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

Unique reference number	146446
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10268176
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	146
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Kerrigan
Headteacher	David Gordon
Website	www.countessgythaprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Preston Primary Academy Trust in February 2019.
- Its predecessor school was judged to 'require improvement' in July 2017.
- The school has pre-school provision for two-, three- and four-year-olds.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- There is a breakfast club and an after-school club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils, the chief executive officer of the trust, governors, including the co-chairs, and the special educational needs and/or disabilities co-ordinator.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1 and 2 read to a known adult.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. They met with pupils and discussed their views about the school.
- Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and governors about how the school keeps everyone safe. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader and reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on adults working in the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the views of staff in Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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