

# Inspection of Membury Primary Academy

Membury, Axminster, Devon, EX13 7AF

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Inspection dates:	1 and 2 July 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Heidi Wickens. This school is part of the First Federation multi academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Walker, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alex Walmsley.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Membury is a small and friendly school that wants the best for every pupil. Pupils like coming to school and get on well together. They behave well in and around the school. Pupils treat staff, visitors and each other with respect. Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school.

The school provides a warm welcome for the many pupils who join at different points in the school year. Whenever they join, new pupils get the help they need to settle in swiftly.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Pupils experience an improved curriculum that helps them to do well. Pupils focus on the task in hand and do what is asked of them. Pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. As a result, most pupils learn well.

Pupils get effective support for their personal development. There are many opportunities in place to broaden pupils' horizons. This helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. The school ensures that pupils regularly meet and work with children from other schools. This helps pupils to be ready for the next stage in their education.

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

In this small school, where all pupils learn together in one class, the school works determinedly to meet the varied needs of pupils. This is particularly successful when supporting pupils to learn to read. The school knows exactly what pupils need to learn in each session. Staff have the skills and subject knowledge they need. They use this well to provide expert support to pupils. This, combined with the school's efforts to ensure pupils enjoy books and stories, means that pupils learn to read well.

Much of the curriculum is structured and sequenced well so that staff know what pupils are expected to learn at each stage of their education. This information is used well by staff to ensure that pupils get regular opportunities to practise and revisit key knowledge. The school's context means a number of different ideas or subjects are taught to the class at the same time. This requires careful delivery of the curriculum. However, sometimes the curriculum delivery is overwhelming. This is particularly the case where important knowledge is not identified in the curriculum so that staff know what content to teach and when. This sometimes slows the rate of learning for some pupils.

Pupils with SEND and those who join the school throughout the year are supported well to adjust to and meet the school's expectations. Pupils focus on the task in hand and do what is asked of them. However, sometimes the school does not help pupils to develop the skills and knowledge needed to work independently. This hinders pupils from getting the practice they need to complete tasks confidently. The school is beginning to improve this area of its work.

The school has an ambitious offer to support pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy a broad range of clubs. For example, the school provides weekly sports activities and clubs,

such as construction and computing with coding challenges. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to develop their musical talents by learning to play an instrument. The school engages well with the local community and welcomes many visitors to enhance pupils' learning. Helpful links are made with other schools so that pupils learn to interact with children beyond their village setting.

Leaders, including those in the trust, are determined that the school will do its best for pupils. Staff feel well supported. The trust knows the school well and understands the challenges it faces. The trust successfully supports the school to improve. This can be seen in the support for pupils with SEND and in the improved curriculum. Together, leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils regularly attend school and progress well through the curriculum.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some areas of the curriculum are not implemented consistently well. This is because, in some subjects, the school has not identified precisely what pupils need to learn at each stage of their education. This results in lessons that try to cover too much content so that pupils do not learn as well as they could. The trust should ensure that the school clarifies what needs to be learned in these subjects, so that pupils gain the knowledge that they need to succeed.
- The school does not ensure that pupils have the right skills and knowledge to work independently. Consequently, some pupils do not successfully complete challenging tasks on their own or in groups. The trust should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to enable pupils to work independently and to successfully complete work that is matched well to their learning needs.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142250
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10378951
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	11
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Alex Walmsley
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Paul Walker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Heidi Wickens
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://membury.acornacademy.org">membury.acornacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 May 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average primary school.
- Previously, the school was part of the Acorn multi-academy trust. This merged with the First Federation trust in September 2024.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, representatives from the multi-academy trust and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in following subjects: early reading, mathematics, and geography. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils during lessons and social times and spoke with them and leaders about pupils' behaviour and attitudes.
- 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.
- To gather the views of parents, inspectors spoke to parents and considered their responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also took into consideration the responses to the survey for staff.

## **Inspection team**

Phil Minns, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Dadds

Ofsted Inspector

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