

Kentisbury Primary School

Kentisbury, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 4NG

Inspection dates 24–25 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Over time, mostly through Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has not been good enough.
- Pupils' writing skills and their problem solving skills in mathematics continue to be the weakest elements, although there are recent improvements.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils have not always been challenged sufficiently to make good progress. This is because repeated changes in staffing led to teachers not always setting high enough expectations of what pupils should achieve.
- Leadership has been weakened in recent years by instability in staffing, including at a senior level.
- The leadership roles of staff at both senior and middle leadership levels are under developed. This restricts leaders' ability to check and improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors' and staff leaders' efforts to fully secure improvement have also been impeded by prolonged uncertainty and variations in where pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, could be accommodated and taught.
- Actions taken to return pupils to new facilities, to settle new teachers and restore the full confidence of parents, are bringing improvement. However, they have not been functioning long enough to secure consistently good teaching and restore pupils' good achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of good teaching and close adult support.
- Pupils develop their speaking and reading skills well.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy school and this is seen in their above average attendance.
- Pupils say they feel safe and share warm relationships with adults and each other, which help them to learn.
- Staff and governors work well together to sustain the school's welcoming community atmosphere. They are developing a clear vision and determination for further improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 11 lessons and learning activities at Kentisbury and Parracombe and was accompanied by the executive headteacher for some of these sessions.
- The inspector observed morning and lunch breaks and also observed learning in the woodland and wildlife area within the school grounds, known as the Forest School.
- Meetings were held with a representative group of pupils and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes.
- All three schools in the federation were inspected by separate inspectors, but at the same time. The inspectors of each of the schools in the federation met jointly with members of the governing body, which is responsible for all the schools in the federation. Inspectors contacted the local authority and examined documents outlining the local authority's support of the school.
- The inspector took account of 13 parent responses in the questionnaires sent out by the school. There were not enough parent responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to be included. The inspector also spoke informally with a number of parents and held a telephone conversation with a parent.
- Meetings were held with school staff, including senior leaders, and five staff questionnaires were received and considered.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own information and checks on pupils' progress and the planning and quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspector also examined records relating to behaviour and attendance, the safeguarding policy, procedures and practice. He also considered the school's sport premium action plan.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is broadly average overall.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs varies significantly from year to year.
- Only a very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after. The number of eligible pupils is so small within the differing year groups that it is not possible to compare performance with other groups.
- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school at other than the normal times is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since January 2007, this school has been a member of the West Exmoor Federation, which includes Lynton Cof E Primary School and Parracombe Cof E Primary School. One governing body fulfils the governance of all the schools in the federation.
- This school is led by an executive headteacher who shares her duties equally with the other schools in the federation.
- The school building at Parracombe was destroyed by fire in 2011. Since then all three schools have been used, at various times, to accommodate Key Stage 2 pupils.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are included in a combined Reception and Key Stage 1 class. This class includes pupils from Kentisbury Primary School and from Parracombe Cof E Primary School, and is accommodated at Kentisbury Primary School.
- Following the opening of new premises at Parracombe Cof E Primary School at the beginning of this autumn term 2014, Key Stage 2 pupils from Kentisbury and Parracombe now attend lessons at Parracombe.
- A pre-school, serving the communities of all three schools in the federation, is located at Kentisbury Primary School, where it is now accommodated in a new building. As it is managed independently, it is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school has experienced significant changes in teaching and leadership staff since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistently good teaching and pupils' learning across the school, especially through Key Stage 2, by:
 - making sure that teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Raise pupils' attainment and quicken their progress, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
 - improving the teaching of handwriting, spelling and punctuation skills
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills to solve problems.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing and sharing leadership responsibilities so that staff can play a more effective role across the school in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' learning
 - ensuring that those middle leaders who are new to their role receive the training and support to enable them to have greater impact on their area of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Efforts to secure good teaching and learning during a period of staffing instability, including at a senior level, have not been effective enough.
- Leaders' ability to bring improvement has also been impeded by the fire at Parracombe School and by continued uncertainty about accommodation for Key Stage 2 pupils.
- Some teachers are new to the school or have different senior or middle leadership responsibilities. As a result, leadership skills and roles are still being developed and have not yet had a consistently strong impact in bringing improvement.
- Even so, the previous uncertainty about where pupils can be taught has now ended and new teachers are making positive contributions. Continued good teaching of reading and effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage are now accompanied by more good teaching and learning than in the past in other areas. This shows the school has the capacity to improve.
- Staff and parents continue to share a supportive partnership, as seen in pupils' good attendance. Parents' confidence in the school is also improving as stability in teaching is restored.
- The executive headteacher checks the quality of teaching accurately. She ensures that systems for managing staff performance link pay progression with the need to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. However, in recent years these strategies have not been rigorous enough in dealing with changes in teaching staff and have not secured enough good teaching.
- Increased stability in leadership is now bringing improvement. Leaders are providing additional staff training and are encouraging staff across the federation to share their expertise. As a result, self-evaluation is accurate. Staff now have a clearer overview of pupils' developing skills and are tackling weaknesses more effectively. For example, teachers have strengthened their planning, and the focus on skills such as handwriting, which pupils need to learn next to improve. This is quickening their progress.
- Leaders and managers ensure that current statutory safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, including, for example, secure vetting of all adults working with the pupils.
- Staff treat pupils equally and do not tolerate discrimination. This is seen in the way they support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The few pupils in receipt of additional government funding are also fully included in school activities and learn as well as other pupils.
- The focus on literacy and numeracy is improving, but has not always been strong enough. Nevertheless, the school, aided by its close links across the federation, provides a good breadth of learning experiences in other subjects. These often include pupils' learning outdoors, through visits and activities in the school's grounds. Shared activities with pupils across the federation also include links with pupils in culturally diverse areas. By these means the school promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The primary sport funding is used effectively to provide additional sports such as cross-country running, mini-Olympics and tennis. Across the federation, more pupils are now participating in sports. Specialist coaches are also improving teaching and enriching pupils' skills and fitness.
- The local authority has provided the schools in the federation with a range of helpful guidance on how to raise standards. This support is now helping the school to improve teaching and bring a quicker rate of improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have provided determined stewardship during a period of uncertainty and change. They passionately sustain the community atmosphere across the federation and ensure that pupils benefit from shared access to the breadth of learning activities provided, notably the Forest School. Governors engage fully in school self-evaluation and development planning. They undertake training regularly and have a clear understanding of how the school's performance compares with that of other schools, and needs to improve. Governors hold the executive headteacher to account and now, joined by new governors, have strengthened the way they challenge the school's leadership to drive improvement. Governors further secure their understanding of the quality of teaching and learning by visiting the school regularly. Governors recognise that whilst pupils receiving additional funding are making better progress this year they know that, as with other pupils, this has not yet been sustained well enough over time. Governors work closely with staff to ensure that statutory duties, including the safeguarding of pupils, are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils display positive attitudes and are keen to learn, especially when the teaching fully stimulates their interest. The degree to which pupils apply themselves to their work, especially to produce enough writing in lessons, wavers when teaching is less effective. Even so, learning in lessons is rarely disrupted.
- Pupils enjoy school. They appreciate the wide range of interesting learning activities provided for them and their enjoyment is seen in their above average attendance.
- Pupils share warm and supportive relationships with adults and with each other. Their social skills are well developed and these help pupils to improve their learning by sharing ideas. This occurs particularly well during Forest School activities, where the pupils' eagerness to find things out together enhances their learning.
- Pupils really enjoy outdoor learning activities and are very pleased to use the new adventure climbing equipment at Kentisbury. Year 6 pupils learning at Parracombe are also proud of their 'special area' and 'den' and use them respectfully during break times.
- Pupils and their parents agree that behaviour is good. School records also show that pupils' behaviour has been good over time. No exclusions or racist incidents have occurred in recent years.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils' links with other pupils across the federation help them to be tolerant and respectful of other people.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and appreciate the care provided by adults which enables them to use the spacious, stimulating school grounds safely. For example, pupils say, 'Everyone knows each other and everyone is friendly.'
- Pupils know that bullying may take several forms and understand how to stay safe, for example, to avoid cyber bullying when using computers.
- Pupils confidently state that there is no bullying at the school and this is confirmed by the school's records. They say that if pupils sometimes get 'over-excited during ball games', adults are quick to intervene to 'put it right'.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, over time, it has not consistently promoted pupils' good achievement across the school. At times, especially in Key Stage 2, teachers have not always sustained high expectations of what pupils should achieve and this restricted their learning. Pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to give of their best
- Teachers, including newly appointed staff, are now focusing more specifically on raising the pupils' interest and aspirations and their basic literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, pupils' work is steadily improving and is better presented. Pupils are responding well to increasingly challenging activities.
- There have been recent strong improvements in the way teachers check pupils' progress. For instance, teachers mark pupils' work regularly and make reference to targets displayed on classroom walls to show pupils how to improve. Teachers use questions effectively to check and reshape activities, if necessary, to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers give pupils clearer guidance about what they will learn and how their work should be presented. This is improving pupils' learning, but has not been in place long enough to make a significantly positive impact on pupils' skills, especially their handwriting.
- Teaching is improving across the school as a result of rigorous checks on teachers' performance, accompanied by good opportunities for further training coaching and support where necessary. Teaching has also benefited from the restored learning facilities at Parracombe for Key Stage 2 pupils. For example, during a science lesson, pupils made good use of the spacious classroom and plentiful resources to investigate the role of a fulcrum effectively.
- Adults ensure that pupils learn well in the Reception and Key Stage 1 class by giving them encouragement and close support to lift their confidence in learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants develop pupils' speaking skills well by encouraging pupils to think for themselves and share ideas enthusiastically with each other. For example, this led to pupils in Years 5 and 6 improving their imaginative written descriptions of 'The Most Disgusting Sandwich'.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to safeguard pupils and promote their good behaviour. These partnerships also ensure that disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and others aided by additional government funding receive effective support.

- The teaching of reading is good. Pupils benefit from daily opportunities to read books to extend their learning and for enjoyment. Staff also liaise well with parents to help with pupils' reading at home.
- Teachers enable pupils to learn well through outdoor activities, including sports, gardening and investigations in the school's well-equipped and stimulating grounds. For example, all pupils take turns in experiencing thought-provoking visits to the Forest School where they learn well in response to consistently good teaching.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Differences in the number of pupils within the very small year groups have led to fluctuations in results at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 since the previous inspection.
- There have been no pupils in Year 6 in the previous two years. However, below average attainment at the end of Year 2 and inconsistent development of pupils' writing and mathematical skills across the school show that achievement requires improvement. This also applies to pupils joining later than the usual time of entry and reflects past inconsistency in the rigour of teaching.
- Children start school in Reception with skills that are below those typical of their age. They make good progress due to good teaching and a significant amount of additional adult support.
- Pupils make good progress through Year 1, for example as seen in the consistently above average proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in phonic screening checks.
- Pupils in Year 2 have rejoined the Reception and Year 1 class and are making better progress this term in response to improved teaching and closer adult support. Older pupils in Years 3 to 6 are also achieving well following their return to new facilities at Parracombe.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and reading skills. For example, discussions during Forest School help pupils to rapidly develop their vocabulary and understanding of terms such as habitat and environment. At times though, weak handwriting skills inhibit pupils' ability to fully demonstrate their knowledge and express their ideas when writing.
- Pupils benefit from lots of opportunities to read at school and at home and develop a love of books. As they progress through the school most pupils become confident, capable readers.
- The most able pupils do well in Reception and Year 1. An increasing number of pupils are now making better progress than in other years as teachers increasingly set appropriately challenging work. Over time, however, expectations of the spelling, grammar and problem solving skills of these pupils have not been high enough.
- Additional government funding is used effectively to support individual pupils. For example, funds are used to provide extra assistance from adults to boost pupils' reading and financial help enables these pupils to be included in school trips and out of school activities. The pupils make comparable progress and reach similar standards of attainment to other pupils in the school and pupils nationally.
- Similarly, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also benefit from extra support. This support is more effectively organised than previously and is now quickening pupils' progress.

The early years provision

is good

- The children entering the Reception and Years 1 and 2 class have skills that are generally below those typical of children of this age.
- The new teacher and experienced teaching assistants liaise closely with the adjacent pre-school and welcome new children and their parents warmly. As a result, children in Reception settle quickly, behave well and make good progress across all areas of learning. This is particularly the case because they enjoy learning together and communicate supportively with each other.
- Children also become self-confident learners because they are taught well, have fun and are safeguarded by caring adults. As a result, children progress well in their physical and emotional health and in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children, for example, joyfully developed their creative, physical and speaking skills as they clipped cards together showing various parts of a skeleton. The children took turns to talk with fascination about how they fitted limbs together to make them move and accurately named the various parts to extend their vocabulary.
- The children benefit from a great deal of adult attention. As a result, staff get to know them well and check children's developing skills frequently and accurately. Staff then use the information about children's

progress carefully to plan relevant activities at the right level and to help them to achieve well across the seven areas of learning.

- Children benefit from a wide range of practical activities, both indoors and outside. Activities such as collecting hazel nuts and 'cooking' them during role play promote knowledge and understanding of the world and enhance their physical skills effectively.
- The teacher and teaching assistants develop the children's speaking, listening and reading skills well. Adults provide a lively and well-planned mix of adult led phonics sessions or role play in the 'shop'.
- The children's writing and mathematical skills are taught and developed well, for example through role play indoors when children write and add up shopping lists. However, opportunities to further advance the children's writing skills are not fully available when children choose to learn outdoors.
- Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are effective and strengthened by sharing staff skills across the federation.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113157
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	448171

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Stokes
Headteacher	Jayne Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 November 2009
Telephone number	01271 883263
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