

Devonshire Primary Academy

Devonshire Road, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY3 8AF

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching requires improvement. The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school.
- Teaching does not always gain the interest of all the pupils. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve or of how they present their work. As a result progress is not good enough.
- Marking and feedback does not consistently give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- The school's view of its performance is inaccurate. Senior leaders do not use the wide range of information they have available in order to accurately plan for improvements and then to check that these improvements are having a positive impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils' achievement over time in all year groups has not been good enough. Leaders have not successfully ensured consistently high expectations across all year groups.
- The early years provision requires improvement. Children are not challenged or stimulated enough in their learning to enable them to make good progress.
- Leaders, including governors, do not review the progress different groups of pupils make rigorously enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are generally polite and well mannered. They behave sensibly around the school. Pupils feel safe and well supported.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and the staff. They value their children's educational experiences at the school.
- Middle leaders are developing their skills and taking on more responsibilities. As a result the depth of leadership and the impact on teaching and achievement is improving.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good in some parts of the school, especially in Year 6, where activities are better targeted at the abilities of the pupils.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the pupils is well developed. Pupils take pride in belonging to the school, accept the needs of others and have a strong sense of fairness.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons throughout the school. These included observations carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They also looked at a wide range of pupils' work and listened to them read.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, the Chair and several other member of the governing body, representatives of the multi-academy trust, an external adviser and members of staff.
- The inspectors took account of 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). The responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire were also considered.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including information on pupils' current and recent progress, the school's plans for improvement, the management of teachers' performance, the use of pupil premium funding, and documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Adrian Francis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bernard Cassidy

Additional Inspector

Sharon Bruton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Children in the early years are in Nursery part time and in Reception classes full time.
- The school has a breakfast club and after-school club run by the governing body.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Devonshire Primary Academy converted to become an academy on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, Devonshire Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall. It is part of the Blackpool Multi Academy Trust.
- The headteacher is providing support to a local primary school as part of the multi academy trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management at all levels and governance by:
 - having consistently high expectations of teaching and learning across the school
 - increasing the accuracy with which senior and middle leaders check on pupils' progress and achievement
 - developing leaders' skills so that data and information gathered is used accurately to plan improvements with clear goals and criteria so that success can be checked and measured
 - ensuring that governors check the performance of different groups of pupils as part of their role in holding leaders fully to account for the school's performance.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and pupils' achievement improves rapidly, by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations about what pupils are to learn and how their work must be presented
 - teachers always give pupils work that captures their interest and is hard enough to enable them to achieve the standards of which they are capable
 - teachers check pupils' understanding frequently in lessons so that those in need of further support or guidance receive extra help
 - a consistent and rigorous approach is developed to the marking of pupils' work so that they know how well they are doing, what they need to do to improve and have the opportunity to make and learn from improvements.
- Improve the early years provision by:
 - providing exciting, challenging activities across the areas of learning
 - ensuring that all adults are effectively deployed to have maximum impact on learning and development
 - ensuring that the leadership clearly understands the expectations for early years and promotes it rigorously to ensure that children learn in a relevant and purposeful manner.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Over time, the school leaders have not improved the quality of teaching sufficiently to enable all pupils to make good progress from their individual starting points. Teaching in some classes, including in Year 6, has had a positive impact and pupils are making better progress as a result.
- The headteacher has a strong vision for the school and high aspirations for the pupils. Staff were unanimously positive in telling the inspectors how they supported the school's vision. However, rates of improvement have been slow. Although the headteacher and senior colleagues have identified weaker teaching, the urgency and rigour in the processes designed to bring about the required improvements in order to impact on achievement over time have not been consistent across all year groups.
- Leaders at all levels have plans to improve the school further. There have been some specific successes over the past year, for example, improvements in younger pupils' phonic knowledge and skills, and in pupils' attendance and punctuality. However, there is not always a clear and accurate understanding of exactly what improvement is expected to be achieved in what timescale. Leaders are not all held sufficiently accountable by the governing body for the success of their actions, particularly with regard to the progress of groups of pupils from their starting points.
- The senior leadership team has taken on most of the responsibilities in reviewing the progress the pupils make and the quality of teaching in the school. However, the skills of the middle leadership are developing and middle leaders are taking on more responsibilities. The school is providing support to key members of staff to move into these roles. Some subject leaders are checking the quality of teaching in their particular areas but the middle leaders have yet to begin to check the progress different groups of pupils make across the school.
- Support for the school and reviews on behalf of the multi academy trust have not identified that the progress made by pupils across the school is not consistently good. Although some external reviews have been undertaken that have identified aspects for improvement, pupil achievement has not improved as a result.
- The school's leadership understand that opportunities for salary improvement or opportunities for the promotion of teachers link closely to the achievement of the pupils they teach, and use this to effectively manage teachers' performance.
- The school works hard to enable all pupils to have an equal opportunity to succeed and achieve. Discrimination is challenged and is not tolerated.
- Pupils who are entitled to pupil premium funding receive appropriate and effective support for their specific needs. For example, funding provides targeted learning support from additional members of staff, including learning mentors and teaching assistants. The strong focus on personal development is impacting well on the ability of some pupils to work more independently in lessons. As a result attainment gaps are closing.
- The programme of learning activities is broad and balanced. Learning is supported with visits to places of significance or with visitors to the school. Developments are well underway in response to recent changes to the National Curriculum, involving key middle leaders working with colleagues from across the school to ensure balanced provision.
- The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to explore the beliefs and customs of other faiths. The school's values and beliefs encourage pupils to develop and foster understanding, tolerance and good relations within school and with others who may be different to them. Teachers and visitors to the school lead assemblies. These allow pupils to ponder and reflect on moral issues and key messages about how they should care for others.
- Pupils learn respect for other cultures and British culture through religious education, history and assemblies. They learn about fundamental British values through being school councillors and other positions of responsibility.
- The school makes very good use of the primary sport premium. Through this funding, it has been able to train staff in specific areas of physical education. By working alongside professional coaches, staff are more confident in teaching a range of sports. The school has been able to offer a wider range of sporting clubs and opportunities for the pupils to participate in tournaments and competitions.
- Parents are very positive about the school. The parents who met with an inspector or expressed a view through Parent View said the school was welcoming and that their children were well looked after and kept safe. They liked the school's provision of breakfast for all pupils and felt that this provides the children with a good start to each day. They felt their children were making good progress.
- Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are effective and robust and meet statutory

requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are not fully effective in holding school leaders to account for the school's performance. However, governance demonstrates an improving ability to do so. Governors have attended training to sharpen their skills in analysing data. School records show that they regularly question leaders about aspects of the school's performance, such as the impact of pupil premium and the quality of teaching. Governors make regular visits to the school to find out what is happening but, currently, they are provided with very little information relating to the performance of different groups. Governors are more adept in other aspects of their role. For example, they provide good support in reviewing the financial position of the school and additional sources of revenue, such as the primary sport funding. The governors check the effectiveness of the safeguarding procedures in school to make sure they meet the required standards. Governors understand the areas the school is working on to improve. They understand the information provided by school leaders with regard to improving the quality of teaching and tackling underperformance in school. The governors are very interested in linking the information they receive from the headteacher and external consultants to gain a view of the quality of teaching in the school. They understand how teachers' salary improvement and promotion opportunities are linked to the pupils' achievement through performance management.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Occasionally, when lessons do not engage them, they lose interest and chat to each other or become distracted.
- The school has consistent strategies for managing behaviour and pupils are clear about the rewards and sanctions that apply if they misbehave. They are clear about the significance of the behaviour ladders that are colour coded to reflect the quality of their behaviour.
- The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, are keen to learn and are interested in all that is on offer. However, despite pupils' good attitudes to learning, remaining weaknesses in teaching are preventing achievement from being good.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being school councillors and playground buddies. They enjoy helping other pupils and improving the school.
- Pupils are fully aware of what bullying means, including cyber bullying, through regular discussions in assembly and activities such as anti-bullying and e-safety weeks. Pupils say that there is little bullying in school and, if it does occur, it is dealt with quickly by staff. The school has few recorded incidents of bullying and has clear policies and procedures in place to deal with them.
- Attendance is improving and is now in line with the national average. The school monitors it carefully and follows up any issues as they arise. There have not been any exclusions.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know that adults will help them if they have any concerns or worries.
- The school ensures pupils' safety through activities such as road and internet safety training as well as through a range of opportunities in the wider curriculum. Pupils also learn about the dangers of alcohol and drug addiction.
- Disadvantaged pupils and their families are well supported through a range of effective strategies that are well targeted at their needs. The school makes good use of outside agencies, where necessary, to provide specialist support as well as specialist staff employed by the school.
- Parents are confident that the school ensures that their children behave well and keeps them safe.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable across the school. Not enough pupils make good progress and achieve well in all year groups.
- Reading, writing and mathematical skills are taught effectively in some year groups, including in Year 6 where attainment in 2014 and predictions for this year's outcomes are above the national average. Pupils have opportunities to explore mathematics and use their understanding to solve problems linked to shape,

for example, and in real-life situations. They also develop an increasingly sound grasp of number and how number systems can be used in problem solving.

- Where learning is weaker, pupils do not make sufficient gains in their knowledge and understanding because teachers do not set work that meets their learning needs or challenges them enough. Pupils' misunderstandings are sometimes left unchecked and therefore progress is not good.
- Where learning is stronger, it is often because teachers check assessment information carefully and use this to plan additional support for groups. Where this has happened it has led to greater progress and attainment for pupils. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, all adults worked effectively with individuals and groups. They provided further challenge pupils when required, managing their behaviour and learning well. As a result pupils of all abilities were improving their use of vocabulary in their writing about animals.
- The quality of presentation in pupils' books is not consistently good as too many books are poorly presented and organised. Most books are marked frequently by teachers. The school introduced a new marking policy earlier this year where pupils are expected to improve their work following teachers' comments. However, teachers' comments do not always lead to better learning because they are not always focused on next steps and pupils lack regular opportunities to respond to teachers' marking.
- Where pupils make the best progress, teachers set clear and high expectations of what children and pupils should achieve and use good subject knowledge to engage them throughout lessons. Teachers provide challenge and promote good relationships so that pupils are motivated to build confidence and learn. In a Year 1 lesson, where pupils were producing a local leaflet, pupils concentrated well, produced meaningful sentences and made good progress in their writing. Work in their books shows that this focused approach and good achievement in writing are typical.
- Pupils generally enjoy reading. The teaching of letters and the sounds they make is increasingly effective and many pupils were seen using these skills well in their writing. Reading skills are taught well to younger pupils, which accounts for the improving outcomes in the Year 1 screening check.
- The school employs a large number of teaching assistants, most of whom are deployed effectively throughout the school. Many work with disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs. On some occasions, teaching assistants are too eager to support pupils they work with rather than challenging them to develop their own skills and understanding.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Over time, not enough pupils in each year group have made good progress to raise standards of attainment. They generally make expected progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Through better teaching in Year 6, pupils make more rapid progress in all subjects. However, the same level of progress has yet to be seen in other year groups.
- In 2014, the attainment of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 was broadly in line with national averages.
- The presentation of pupils' work in their books is not consistently of a sufficiently high standard. Teachers do not make it sufficiently clear as to the standards expected.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Younger pupils say they enjoy reading because 'it helps you with things'. By the time pupils get into Year 6, they are reading with accuracy and developing expression and enjoying books by a range of authors.
- The school targets its use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. The progress of these pupils requires improvement compared with other pupils nationally. The gaps in attainment between these pupils and other pupils are generally closing across the school and when compared with other pupils nationally. In 2014, the gap in mathematical understanding and in reading of disadvantaged pupils was three terms behind other pupils in school and just over two terms in writing. When compared with pupils who are not disadvantaged nationally, they were just over a term behind in mathematics and over two terms behind in reading and writing.
- Focused support and guidance for the most able Year 6 pupils in 2014, particularly in mathematics, resulted in these pupils reaching the higher levels. Across the school, however, the most able pupils make similar progress to other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make variable progress over time. Some make excellent progress, some make slow progress. Targeted support is monitored carefully. However, the impact of the support from teaching assistants has been more successful for some than for others.

The early years provision**requires improvement**

- Children start school with a range of skills and competencies that are below, and in some cases significantly below, what is typical for their age. As a result of good early identification of their needs they make steady progress across the areas of learning. However, they do not catch up quickly enough. As a result the proportion who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception is below the national average and some children are not well prepared for Year 1.
- Teaching requires improvement. It does not sufficiently challenge children through effective questioning, or with learning opportunities that meet their needs well. Other adults are not always effectively deployed to ensure that exciting activities are planned and resourced to stimulate children's curiosity. This means that children do not make consistently good progress.
- There is appropriate attention to the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) but there is too little focus on linking the skills learned to other areas of the curriculum.
- The teacher-led writing activities are effective in engaging the children's interests and building basic skills and understanding, but there is too little emphasis on providing sufficiently exciting activities to promote interest in writing.
- Children mainly enjoy the activities that are on offer and work well together. However, they sometimes become bored when the activities do not engage them and so wander aimlessly. Planning appropriately covers the areas of learning to ensure sufficient coverage. Regular assessments recorded in their learning journals and electronically mean that children's progress is monitored across the areas of learning and additional help given where needed.
- Good relationships and welfare provision mean that children are confident, feel safe and well cared for. Staff keep children safe and ensure that they learn about how to keep themselves safe.
- Children behave well, share resources and are kind and friendly towards each other.
- Early years leadership, although supportive, is not clear enough about how to promote effective learning and this limits its impact on improving provision.

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	140128
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	450347

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	484
Appropriate authority	Blackpool Multi-Academy Trust
Chair	Sylvia Taylor
Headteacher	Neil Hodgkins
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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