

Bickleigh on Exe Church of England Primary School

Bell Meadow, Bickleigh, Tiverton, Devon EX16 8RE

Inspection dates

28–29 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The much-respected head of school, well supported by the executive headteacher, has woven a culture of high expectation for pupils' achievement into the school's caring ethos.
- All levels of school leadership, including governance, have been strengthened through partnership with leaders across the multi-academy trust.
- As a team, leaders use their enhanced skills to provide good leadership and sustain a strong capacity for further improvement.
- Parents are extremely positive about the school and fully support the head of school's drive to ensure that standards continue to rise.
- Teachers provide a stimulating curriculum and use the school's wealth of outdoor facilities well to enrich pupils' learning.
- There has been a relentless focus on staff development to establish consistently effective teaching. As a result, pupils make good progress and are well prepared for future learning when they leave the school.
- Reading and phonics are taught effectively.
- School leaders and staff fully implement safeguarding procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils behave well and share friendly relationships. Consequently, they enjoy school and attend well.
- Pupils present their work neatly and develop good handwriting skills, although their spelling is not progressing as swiftly.
- Staff identify the most able pupils and are helping them to make more rapid progress than in the past. Progress in mathematics is variable in some classes as tasks do not always stretch and challenge pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. This is because learning activities and adult support are tailored to pupils' next steps in learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress and benefit from having their needs identified and supported well from an early age. Skilled staff guide pupils effectively in class and across the range of extra-curricular activities.
- Strong leadership and good teaching in early years ensure that all children make good progress whatever their starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Remove the remaining inconsistencies in teaching and pupils' learning so that the aspects that are strengths in some classes become established in all classes by:
 - ensuring that work in mathematics is suitably challenging for all pupils, including the most able
 - improving pupils' ability to spell words accurately
 - extending pupils' mathematical and literacy skills when studying subjects across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The relatively new head of school is providing effective, motivating leadership. He has been well supported over the past year by the executive headteacher and other leaders across the multi-academy trust in establishing good teaching that is helping pupils to make faster rates of progress.
- Staff morale is high, with new staff fully 'signing up' to the head of school's vision of a united effort to build on the pupils' good behaviour and raise their academic achievements.
- Trust leaders provide ongoing guidance and specialist training for staff to help teachers and new leaders to 'hit the ground running'. As a team, they continue an impressive momentum of rapid improvement.
- Leaders have successfully tackled areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection. For example, leaders have ensured that teachers identify and support pupils' needs accurately and set high expectations to ensure that pupils make swift progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Leaders at all levels make good use of the wide expertise available to them from colleagues across the academy trust. In particular, senior leaders, including governors, have strengthened the way they check the work of the school to ensure that the right priorities are targeted. For example, teachers now provide clear guidance to pupils about how to improve and this has increased pupils' confidence in learning and led to faster progress.
- Middle leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve their areas of responsibility. For example, this is already enriching provision for children in the early years and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders continue a positive drive to raise pupils' achievements further. However, strategies to fully develop pupils' spelling and mathematical skills have not been in place long enough to have had a full impact on outcomes.
- Teachers provide a broad curriculum that stimulates pupils' interests and is particularly effective in improving standards in reading and writing. Pupils' literacy and mathematical skills in subjects other than English and mathematics are not developed or used well enough to further enrich their learning.
- Teachers make good use of the school's well-developed outdoor areas to successfully promote pupils' scientific enquiry and their sporting and creative skills.
- Pupils experience a range of interesting trips and visits to the local and wider community. Close links with the local church together with assembly themes such as compassion and kindness also contribute well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils study different world faiths in religious education lessons and make reference to the variety of faiths now seen across modern Britain. Pupils participate in mock elections and hold discussions about democracy with their Member of Parliament to raise their awareness of British values.

- The breakfast and after-school clubs are well organised and make valuable contributions to pupils' enjoyment and learning. The leaders of this provision encourage pupils to mix and learn amicably, for example by encouraging pupils to share ideas during craft work and board games and by competing in playground sports.
- Leaders make good use of the additional government funding for sport to engage pupils in healthy lifestyles and exercise. Leaders have built purposefully on the school's well-established provision by employing additional specialist coaches to further develop staff skills and to extend the range of sports clubs provided for pupils. In particular, extra coaching of dodge ball and multi-skills fun activities at lunchtime have proved beneficial in encouraging less active pupils to participate. As a result, an increased majority of pupils now attend at least one lunchtime or after-school club.
- Leaders and other staff build encouraging relationships to secure the pupils' enjoyment of school. They ensure that there is equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination. These are seen in the diligent way that leaders make effective use of additional funds to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, funds are used to boost pupils' self-confidence by including them in school events and competitions as well as providing extra adult help to raise their academic skills.
- Visitors to the school are swift in noting and valuing the welcoming and close community atmosphere promoted in all parts of the school. Parents are particularly appreciative of the way staff get to know their children and treat them with respect. One parent wrote, reflecting the views of others, 'Our children are made to feel very welcome and are very happy and secure here. There are lots of opportunities for them and the school has a lovely, caring atmosphere.'

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- The governors work closely with the directors and other leaders of the multi-academy trust. Their strong collaborative governance is driving the school forward and sustaining rapid improvement. Governors work well with the head of school and have been very supportive of his efforts to build on the school's caring ethos and raise academic standards.
- Governors have significantly improved the way they question school leaders and hold them to account since the previous inspection. Governors make frequent visits to see the work of the school for themselves and receive very detailed reports from the head of school. Governors are therefore well informed and able to challenge the head of school effectively about the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement. Governors and directors also receive reports of the work of the school from the executive headteacher and other specialist staff within the trust. By these means, governors make sure that the right priorities are identified for improvement. For example, they ensure that additional funds are used effectively to help disadvantaged pupils achieve well.
- Governors fulfil a supportive role in sustaining close links with parents, the church and the local community to widen pupils' learning experiences. Governors also keep their training up to date and fulfil their statutory duties to ensure that the school is a safe place for pupils to learn.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that keeping pupils safe is given the highest priority and that safeguarding procedures meet the statutory requirements. School leaders swiftly implement the specialist guidance provided by the multi-academy trust to keep health and welfare requirements up to date and effective. They undertake rigorous checks, including the vetting of staff and assessment of potential risks in and out of school, to keep pupils safe. Senior leaders work well with parents and outside agencies to ensure that pupils considered at risk of harm are fully supported.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good. At times, pupils learn extremely well and make rapid progress, for example when enthusiastically playing a ukulele and rising to the challenge of evaluating each other's efforts.
- Teachers are committed to further developing their own teaching and pupils' learning. They have responded well to the good range of training opportunities that leaders have provided. This is evident in the way that all teachers have raised their expectations to successfully improve pupils' behaviour for learning and the way pupils record their work in books. Pupils' improved learning is also evident in the breadth and depth of their expressive writing and in their more secure numeracy skills.
- Parents readily recognise and appreciate the way teachers strive to enthuse and engage their children in learning and keep them informed about their children's progress. One parent, mirroring the views of others, wrote that 'All teachers and support staff, including in school clubs, treat our child as an individual and focus on his particular learning ability and needs.' Parents also welcome the opportunities through homework to contribute to their children's learning at home.
- Teachers ensure that the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified and tackled effectively. Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively in and out of classrooms to develop pupils' speaking, reading, writing and mathematical skills. Teaching assistants make valuable contributions by boosting pupils' self-confidence, for example during outdoor sport and breakfast club activities.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning and work accurately. They implement the school's updated and agreed marking policy effectively and give good information to pupils about what needs to be improved. This helps pupils to make good progress.
- There is some variation in staff expectations about how pupils should respond to their feedback/guidance. When expectations are less clear, pupils' progress is not as rapid, for example in becoming better at spelling words correctly.
- All teachers set high expectations and insist on pupils presenting their work neatly in mathematics and in their writing. This is particularly effective in helping pupils to develop good handwriting skills. Teachers are not yet as consistent in using every opportunity to further develop these skills across the curriculum.
- All teachers question pupils carefully to extend their knowledge and deepen their understanding. Pupils enjoy taking part in discussions and learn effectively through the

sharing of ideas with others. For example, in computing, Year 6 pupils demonstrated their deepened understanding of coding through their detailed explanations and their control of devices.

- On occasion in mathematics, the learning of a small minority of pupils, including the most able, slows because the work does not challenge pupils sufficiently.
- The teaching of reading and phonics is good. Pupils quickly develop a love of books and, aided by frequent opportunities to read books and to use computers for research at school and at home, become good readers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show respect to all staff and warmly welcome visitors to the school. Pupils listen carefully to the teachers' questions and respond enthusiastically.
- From an early age, pupils clearly show that they want to please their teachers and learn effectively. Pupils work well together and willingly share ideas.
- On occasion, in a minority of classes, some pupils need guidance from adults to stay focused on their learning. Even so, their neatly recorded work in books and lively responses during discussions support the staff's view that 'Pupils' attitudes to learning are better than in the past'.
- Pupils undertake responsibilities sensibly and in a supportive way. Pupils are generous with their time and effort, giving out play equipment and helping other pupils as 'Bullying Ambassadors' at breaktimes.
- All staff ensure that the policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe in school are implemented consistently and effectively.
- Pupils interviewed by the inspector keenly stated that they felt safe in school. One pupil, proudly representing the views of others, said, 'We are kept safe by caring adults'. Pupils expressed every confidence in being able to approach any member of staff if they had any worries, knowing that the adult would listen to them and swiftly help them.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically to the wide and stimulating range of sports activities provided for them. They know that they need to be healthy and so participate wholeheartedly in clubs and games at breaktimes to stay fit and active.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and all those who spoke to the inspector know that their children enjoy their learning experiences and feel safe at the school. One parent reflecting the positive opinions of others wrote, 'My child is happy' and expressed the view that 'A child who is happy is a child who can learn'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The head of school leads by example in ensuring that all staff set high expectations of pupils' behaviour and model the standards and consideration for others that they expect to see.
- Pupils respond and behave well. At times, especially when enthused in class or

listening respectfully and singing harmoniously during assemblies, their behaviour is exemplary.

- Pupils explained that behaviour has improved and there is no bullying at the school. They stated confidently that 'We have trusting friends'.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the types of bullying that could occur and are particularly diligent and knowledgeable about how to avoid cyber bullying and how to stay safe when using computers.
- At times, a small minority of pupils become overexcited during competitive games at breaktimes and need reminders from adults to show more awareness of others.
- The head of school works very supportively with parents and, as necessary, with outside agencies and specialist staff across the academy trust to promote good attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance continues to be well above average and clearly shows pupils' enjoyment of school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- School and national assessment information show that pupils in all classes have made good progress from their different starting points during their time in the school. Where progress is less than expected, teachers are increasingly taking swift action to get it back on track.
- A scrutiny of work completed during the previous academic year, and by current pupils so far this term, indicates that pupils are working at or beyond expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. This is clear evidence of strong improvement, with an increasing number of pupils making accelerated progress as an outcome of good and better teaching.
- Pupils in all year groups demonstrate well-developed speaking and listening skills when replying to teachers' questions. Pupils' answers also show evidence of deeper levels of thinking, further reflecting the positive impact of improving teaching.
- Improved standards are apparent in the pupils' well-developed handwriting and in their carefully presented work in books. Pupils also develop their expressive writing skills well and, to a lesser but still positive degree, their ability to use grammar and punctuation correctly. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed good understanding of how and when to use an apostrophe correctly. Pupils' ability to spell words accurately is currently receiving increased emphasis in all classes, but remains the aspect of pupils' writing that is still not good enough.
- In response to improved teaching, pupils now make rapid progress in developing numeracy skills. Most pupils are also developing their reasoning skills and getting better at solving mathematical problems. For example, in Year 6, pupils successfully interrogated a graph to calculate the daily range in temperature accurately. On occasion, in a minority of classes, pupils' progress in mathematics slows because the work they are given does not extend their understanding sufficiently.
- Most of the time, the most able pupils make good progress because teachers question them closely to deepen their understanding. In the majority of classes, the most able pupils are also given extension work that requires them to grapple with solving more complex problems.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their phonics and reading skills. In 2016,

national curriculum reading assessments in key stage 1 show improved progress across Years 1 and 2. In particular, assessments also indicate that teachers have made effective use of the pupils' continuing above-average performance in Year 1 phonics screening checks to secure their good reading skills by the end of Year 2. The pupils, from different starting points, heard to read by the inspector also demonstrated good phonics understanding and reading skills for their age.

- Teachers encourage pupils to read and enjoy stories at home regularly, as well as at school, and this engenders a love of books. Pupils continue their rapid progress in reading through key stage 2. They benefit from regular opportunities to read books and computer-generated texts to research topics, and doing this helps pupils to learn in other subjects.
- Pupils make good progress across the curriculum, including in music, French and especially physical education. Pupils in Year 6 extend their scientific knowledge well by discussing and measuring variations in daytime temperatures. However, such use and extension of pupils' mathematical and literacy skills is not yet the norm in all classes and is an area for improvement.
- Over the past three terms, teachers' better use of assessment has enabled them to address pupils' different abilities and learning needs more consistently and effectively. This includes those pupils entering the school other than at the normal entry points. The progress of these pupils is boosted by having their learning needs identified as soon as they arrive so that appropriate provision is made.
- Disadvantaged pupils make swift progress. Staff are very aware of the need to boost the attainment of this very small group of pupils in the school. For example, staff have recently identified and been deployed to good effect to increase the challenge presented to the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress. This is because teachers assess pupils' needs effectively to ensure that additional support and teaching are precisely tailored to extend their skills and understanding.

Early years provision

Good

- The new leader of the early years foundation stage provides strong leadership and ensures good teaching. She is building well on the school's effective provision and helping children make more rapid progress.
- With strong support from established teaching assistants, the leader is ensuring that children's skills on entry and their day-to-day progress are carefully and accurately assessed. She liaises closely with feeder pre-schools as well as parents, and has identified the need to quickly boost children's speaking and listening skills. Currently, staff are targeting and developing these communication skills effectively. This focus on encouraging children to talk and answer questions is helping them to settle quickly and to confidently communicate, learn and play together.
- Staff ensure that children's speaking and listening skills are developed well during all types of activity, for example during snack time. Staff promote children's good behaviour and supportive relationships through precise praise and setting clear expectations that children understand. As a result, children enjoy finding things out together and make rapid progress across all areas of early years learning.

- All adults engage fully in training and ensure that statutory welfare requirements are fully met. The teacher and teaching assistants work productively as a team to keep children safe and establish their understanding of school and class routines. For example, children are already showing that they can move in a calm and orderly manner from one activity to another and this is aiding their learning.
- Children's skills on entry most often match those typical for their age. Highly effective teaching and support ensure that children progress well from their different starting points.
- Adults make sure that children behave well and learn to share and respect each other's ideas. During the inspection, for example, children happily took turns being 'Goldilocks' in the role-play area. Meanwhile, other children developed their creative skills by carefully choosing different materials and pasting them on paper to create one of the 'Three Bears'.
- Children experience a wide range of activities to extend their writing and numeracy skills effectively. Currently, the new leader has rightly identified that these skills need further development and is striving to provide more opportunities for children to extend these skills both inside and outside the classroom.
- The teaching of phonics and reading is stimulating and effective. The teacher emphasises and secures children's ability to pronounce accurately the sounds that letters represent. The teacher is swift to question children to assess their understanding. She liaises well with parents so that they can help their children enjoy books at home. Consequently, children make good and increasingly rapid progress in developing their early reading skills.
- Staff check children's progress carefully and keep detailed records of their developing skills in 'Learning Journeys'. These are shared fully with staff and parents and are used well to make sure that teaching and support are adapted to meet children's different needs.
- By these means, children across the range of ability, including those with most ability and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well supported and make rapid progress. School assessments also show that the extra support given to disadvantaged children is very effective in securing their swift progress and diminishing any past differences in their skills compared to their peers'.
- The year-on-year above-average proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the time they enter Year 1 shows that children are well equipped to begin the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	137776
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10019966

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Converter academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Appropriate authority	The trust board
Chair of governors	Christopher Rice
Head of school	Stephen Bosley
Executive headteacher	Claire Baillie
Telephone number	01884 855357
Website	www.bickleighschool.co.uk/
Email address	bickleigh@thepat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below average.
- Children experience early years provision in a combined Reception and Year 1 class. The other pupils across the school are taught in four mixed- or single-age classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics

by the end of Year 6.

- The school joined nine other primary schools to become a member of the Primary Academies Trust in September 2015.
- The current head of school commenced his duties at the school in an acting capacity. He became the substantive head of school in September 2015 and has responsibility for the daily running of the school. He is supported by an executive headteacher who oversees the school's work along with two other schools in the trust.
- Three new teachers joined the staff of the school at the beginning of this academic year.
- A pre-school shares the site. As it is run by a private provider, it was not included in this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 lessons and saw the work of six teachers. The lead inspector was accompanied by the head of school during most of these visits to lessons.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation.
- The inspector examined the school's systems for checking progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspector talked to individual pupils and a representative group of pupils about the school and their work. He listened to individual pupils read and attended an assembly and the breakfast club. The inspector also looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- The inspector held a meeting with members of the governing body and the Primary Academies Trust. He also held meetings with school and academy staff, mainly senior and middle leaders, and held a telephone conversation with an external adviser known as a 'school improvement partner'.
- The views expressed in the 33 online responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and in 13 staff questionnaires and 24 pupil questionnaires were also considered. In addition, the inspector also gathered the views of several parents during informal meetings at the school. He also received a letter from a parent.
- The inspector evaluated the school's use of the sport premium and the pupil premium.

Inspection team

Alexander Baxter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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