

# Looe Primary Academy

Hay Lane, East Looe, Looe, Cornwall PL13 1JY

## Inspection dates

28–29 September 2016

| Overall effectiveness                        | Requires improvement     |
|--|--------------------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | Requires improvement     |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement     |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | Good                     |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | Requires improvement     |
| Early years provision                        | Requires improvement     |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership has been slow to attend to some of the inconsistencies resulting from the high turnover of staffing.
- Teaching staff have not consistently implemented actions to improve the school's performance. This has resulted in variable rates of progress for some pupils in some year groups.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are inconsistent across the school. Not all teachers use information about individual pupils' progress to ensure that tasks challenge and extend pupils' learning. Expectations are sometimes too low.
- Leaders do not carefully check the effectiveness of the pupil premium funding. As a result, not all disadvantaged pupils make the progress that they should.
- The planned curriculum does not support all pupils to learn sufficiently well in all subjects. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in subjects such as geography are underdeveloped.
- The progress children make in their writing in the early years is slower than in other areas of learning. Fewer children, particularly boys, make good progress in writing.
- Pupils' progress is variable between year groups and subjects. Middle-ability writers, particularly in key stage 1, do not receive sufficient challenge to make good progress.
- Reading activities often lack challenge, especially for the most able pupils. Some pupils make slow progress with their reading.
- Governors have not held senior leaders to account with sufficient rigour.

### The school has the following strengths

- Parents have confidence in the new leadership team. Leaders' actions to improve the school are improving standards and attendance.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective. All pupils, including the most able mathematicians, achieve well across the school. Many pupils achieve highly in mathematics.
- Achievement is rising across the school and is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils behave well. They feel safe and happy in school. They say they enjoy school and like the new curriculum.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - the new governing body holds leaders to account for improving the school and, in particular, for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
  - English curriculum leaders support teachers' subject knowledge and implement effective plans to improve rates of progress for pupils
  - teachers are skilled in using assessment information effectively to set work which enables all pupils, and particularly the most able pupils, to make good progress
  - the curriculum supports all pupils to learn successfully, systematically building on skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
  - all teachers in key stage 1 have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing and set tasks to extend pupils' writing skills
  - teachers across the school provide the most able pupils with the challenge and support they need to make consistently good progress, particularly in reading
  - the school's marking and feedback policy is consistently implemented to enable pupils to make more rapid progress.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching of writing in the early years by:
  - ensuring that adults systematically build upon early writing skills for boys in particular.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The school has experienced considerable changes in staffing over the past two years. This turbulence has hampered school improvement. Supported by the Bridge Multi-Academy Trust, the current leadership team has made some effective decisions to bring about improvement. For example, they have appointed a leader in mathematics and made changes to the school's structure. These decisions are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. However, inconsistencies still exist.
- Senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have supported improvement. However, work in books from the previous academic year reflects inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' work. Pupils' learning and progress are much stronger in mathematics than in English. Similarly, inconsistencies exist across year groups. The progress of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is stronger than elsewhere in the school.
- Leaders have not used information about pupils' progress with sufficient accuracy to drive improvement quickly enough. There are signs that recent changes to the class structure and the deployment of staff are beginning to have a stronger impact on raising standards. For example, teachers' effective use of what pupils know, can do and understand in mathematics is helping pupils to make strides in progress in the three mixed-aged Year 3 and 4 classes.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive additional support, but the effectiveness of this is variable. Leaders do not evaluate the success of interventions with sufficient precision. Their analysis of the achievement of groups is not rigorous enough to promote good progress for all. Leaders have not provided governors with sufficient information to make well-informed decisions about the expenditure of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have been slow to tackle poor attendance. Overall absence has reduced but attendance remains stubbornly below the national average. Similarly, although the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has reduced, it is still higher than the national average. However, the effective work of the pastoral team has led to significant improvements in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders now have effective systems in place to check on pupils' learning and track their progress. Historically, this information has not led to consistently good rates of progress. Staff confidence and competence in using such assessment to inform their planning is still too variable. Consequently, these systems are not having a sufficient impact on raising standards. For example, in Year 1, writing tasks set for pupils who achieved particularly well in the foundation stage do not provide pupils with the challenge they need. This slows down the progress that they make.
- The impact of subject leadership in English is patchy. Teachers' subject knowledge is variable and the school's marking policy is inconsistently applied. Consequently, pupils' progress is erratic. However, the trust's leadership training programme has developed staff subject knowledge and expertise in other subjects. For example, there is strong subject leadership in mathematics and, as a result, pupils achieve well above national expectations in this subject. The leadership of physical education is also leading to strong progress and good outcomes for pupils.

- The curriculum does not ensure a good coverage of the skills and knowledge required in all areas of English. Tasks set in reading do not challenge pupils. Most notably, able readers do not all develop a clear understanding of the texts they read. Despite their good phonics knowledge, some pupils do not read confidently, with fluency and expression. Similarly, teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge for middle-ability writers to apply their phonics knowledge when they write. This slows down the progress for some pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven well into the curriculum. Pupils learn about other faiths through their religious education lessons and can talk about the key similarities and differences between religions. Pupils are able to explain a democratic process such as their school council elections and gain an understanding of their contribution to society through fundraising and social events.
- Leaders have very recently developed curriculum programmes to raise the profile of other subjects. This work has been effective in increasing pupils' engagement and enjoyment. Pupils enjoy the wider curriculum, in particular science and the arts. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and links with the local community. For example, pupils grow and sell items from the school garden; older pupils made and sold items for Looe festival. However, leaders recognise the need to strengthen the challenge for pupils in subjects such as geography so that pupils develop age-appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Good use has been made of the additional sports funding to increase the range of sports on offer and to increase participation. Strong leadership of physical education has led to high-quality provision in this subject. Good use is made of assessments to build upon pupils' skills and talents, and as a result, pupils achieve well.
- Almost all parents have a high regard for the work of the school. Some parents expressed concerns about staff turnover and mixed classes. However, many expressed admiration for the current leadership team and are positive about the way teachers inspire their children to learn.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have sometimes relied too heavily on the information provided by senior leaders and have provided insufficient challenge in some aspects of the school's work. The expenditure of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not checked with sufficient rigour to ensure that pupils make sufficient progress. Minutes reflect an absence of understanding of where pupils' progress is not strong. However, minutes clearly reflect governors' challenge to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- The school is currently in a period of transition following the resignation of all but one of the governing body. The trust has been proactive in tackling this issue. An already established governing body with a strong record of accomplishment is set to form a new local governing body to provide challenge and support to facilitate speedy school improvement.
- The trustees' actions have been effective in resolving previous barriers to school improvement. For example, staff morale is much improved. The recruitment and development of key middle leadership are leading to improvements in curriculum provision and pupils' outcomes.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Leaders ensure that staff and governors are fully up to date about keeping children safe. Staff speak knowledgeably about the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child's well-being. Staff training ensures that everyone is alert to the signs which might lead to abuse or exploitation. Records kept are of a high quality and demonstrate that the school's proactive approach to preventing harm. Leaders' close work with external agencies is effective. Meticulous risk assessments are in place for school trips and volunteers are well informed to ensure that pupils are safe both on and off the school premises. The school is a safe environment. The pastoral team works tirelessly and with good effect to support families in need. This work has supported improvements in the attendance of some of the school's most vulnerable pupils.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good. Where teachers' expectations are high and their subject knowledge is good, teachers set pupils challenging activities. As a result, pupils make good progress. However, this is not consistent across all classes or subjects.
- Too few pupils make good progress, particularly in reading. Although pupils' phonics knowledge is good, teaching does not build on what pupils already know, can do and understand. Some teachers provide pupils with practice comprehension questions that do not match pupils' reading skills. Pupils' expression and the fluency with which they read are sometimes hampered because they do not understand the texts they are reading. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in this subject.
- Teachers' expectations in writing are not always high enough. Work in pupils' books confirms that pupils do not write at length in other subjects. Pupils do not develop their written skills and understanding for different purposes. In some year groups, middle-ability writers in particular are not encouraged to apply their writing skills in other subjects beyond labelling diagrams or filling in missing words.
- Teachers do not consistently check pupils' learning in lessons. During the inspection, inspectors witnessed pupils lose concentration in an English lesson as the teacher asked them to do something which was too easy for them. However, in the same year group, another teacher quickly identified what pupils could and could not do before giving them the challenge they needed to improve.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years and Year 1 is effective. This has led to improved outcomes for pupils. However, teachers do not all have sufficiently high expectations to ensure that pupils apply their phonics knowledge to their writing. This hampers the progress that some pupils make.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and achieve above national standards by the time they leave the school. Pupils develop fluency in recalling mathematical facts. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to provide suitably challenging activities where pupils apply their strong knowledge of numbers and facts to problem-solving situations. Two pupils told inspectors, 'Mathematics really makes us think and sometimes our brains ache.'
- Teaching assistants are deployed well. Leaders' investment in training has resulted in a suitably skilled staff who provide effective encouragement and support for the pupils they work with.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders provide appropriate training so that staff can swiftly recognise and act on any signs of risk or harm. The strong work of the pastoral team supports the most vulnerable pupils and their families in getting the help and support they need. Parents value the support that the school provides and say that the school helps them to help their child.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. Parents agree. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens but when it does adults deal with it quickly. Playtimes are purposeful. Pupils cooperate well, participating in sports and games and respond well to the adults who are supervising them.
- Teachers help pupils to keep themselves safe and to manage risk. For example, pupils learn to stay safe when using the internet. Displays in classrooms and in school corridors reinforce clear messages on how to keep safe.
- Pupils who have particular special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. This support helps them to engage with all of the activities that the school offers and supports their emotional growth and confidence.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and respectful to adults and one another. They behave well in lessons and around the school cheerfully opening doors and smiling to visitors. Movement between playtimes and lessons is seamless. Pupils settle quickly to their learning.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are generally positive. On occasions, where teachers do not have high enough expectations, pupils lose focus and become disengaged. During the inspection, the inspectors saw a couple of isolated incidents in English lessons where pupils lost concentration. This was the exception; generally, pupils were totally engrossed in their lessons.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and this leads to a congenial atmosphere. Pupils feel valued and are keen to meet their targets and improve. The staff questionnaire confirms that staff enjoy working at the school.
- Leaders have been resolute in successfully reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school. They have been particularly successful in supporting the most vulnerable pupils in improving their attendance. Overall attendance is improving but remains below the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress of current pupils is too inconsistent because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is also inconsistent. Although staffing is now more stable and there are encouraging signs of strong 'catch-up' for some pupils, inconsistencies have not yet been eradicated.
- The proportion of pupils in the early years achieving a good level of development has continued to improve since the school opened and is now narrowly below the national average. This does not represent good progress from some children's starting points.

- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is inconsistent across the school. Good teaching in Year 6 results in these pupils generally making good progress to catch up with others nationally. However, progress for these pupils in key stage 1 is less strong. The most able readers and middle-ability writers do not always make the progress they should. The school's current information confirms the work seen in books. Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in mathematics, with a higher proportion achieving more than expected progress.
- Attainment at key stage 1 in reading and mathematics has been broadly in line with the national average. Historically, this represents good progress from pupils' low starting points. However, pupil outcomes in writing are not as strong and do not reflect the improved outcomes in phonics.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in phonics was in line with the national average. This represents an improvement on the previous two years and significant progress from pupils' outcomes in the early years foundation stage.
- Work in pupils' books confirms that the most able pupils make variable progress in subjects across the curriculum. With the exception of mathematics, tasks set do not always build upon pupils' previous learning or challenge them to do even better. There is an improving picture, particularly by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics to at least meet and often exceed national averages. Although variable, because of inconsistencies in teaching over time, progress is stronger in mathematics than in reading and writing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in lessons. Historically, this group of pupils have made less progress in writing. This is no longer the case as leaders have been effective in providing training and support to help teachers to meet specific needs. For example, pupils with dyslexia are provided with resources, such as appropriately coloured pages to write on, to remove barriers to their progress.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because, historically, children have not made enough progress in their year in the Reception class. When they enter Year 1, although the proportions of children reaching a good level of development are improving, too few are prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The recently appointed early years leader has developed effective transition arrangements with local pre-schools. She uses this information well to support children's start to school. Children settle quickly. Good lines of communication with parents support the transfer of information between home and school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about their child's start to school.
- Adults check and record children's progress across the areas of learning and encourage parents to share milestones. The teacher uses this information to adapt activities to promote progress. On occasions, this information is not used with sufficient focus to improve children's writing and, in particular, boys' writing. The leader has rightly identified this as an area for improvement and has begun to tackle this issue.
- Phonics is taught well. Children display a good understanding of phonics knowledge and the most able pupils are given activities to extend their learning.

- Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Clear routines and high expectations for behaviour ensure that children quickly develop confidence and learn to cooperate with others.
- Adults are well trained in the procedures to make sure children are safe in school. The Reception team works together effectively to provide a safe and engaging learning environment. Indoor and outdoor classroom spaces are well resourced and set up to support all areas of learning effectively. Children move safely around the areas of learning and show respect for the equipment.



## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 140020   |
| Local authority         | Cornwall |
| Inspection number       | 10019933 |

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

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Type of school                      | Primary  |
| School category                     | Academy sponsor-led  |
| Age range of pupils                 | 4 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 259  |
| Appropriate authority               | The governing body   |
| Chair                               | Paul Sadler  |
| Acting Head of School               | Theresa Fleming  |
| Telephone number                    | 01503262172  |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.looeprimary.co.uk">www.looeprimary.co.uk</a>             |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:secretary@looeprimary.co.uk">secretary@looeprimary.co.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- Looe Primary Academy is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Looe Primary Academy converted to be an academy in November 2013 as part of the Bridge Multi-Academy Trust when its predecessor school, Looe Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in May 2013 and was judged a school that requires improvement.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Children in the early years (Reception class) attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after) is in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the expenditure of pupil premium and the content of the curriculum for each subject and year group.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about schemes of delegation and relevant business and pecuniary interests of their directors and their dates of appointment.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes across the school, most of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Discussions took place with senior and middle leaders and the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including minutes from governors' meetings, school improvement plans and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors gained the views of pupils throughout the inspection, including at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors, with the senior leaders, looked at pupils' work in their books to establish the current quality of pupils' work and progress over time.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes.
- An inspector heard pupils of different ages and abilities read and led a discussion to ascertain pupils' views about reading.
- An inspector conducted a walk around the school with a senior leader to look at curriculum displays and the promotion of British values.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of parents and considered 25 responses to the online survey, Parent View, as well as the school's own survey results. Online questionnaire responses from 10 members of staff were also analysed, along with nine responses from the online pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

|                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Tracy Hannon, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Non Davies                   | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Anthony Epps                 | Ofsted Inspector        |

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