

Foxhole Learning Academy

Beacon Road, Foxhole, St Austell, Cornwall PL26 7UQ

Inspection dates

19–20 October 2016, 23–24 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not yet achieve high enough standards in reading, writing and mathematics. There is a legacy of underachievement caused by a history of weak teaching which has not been fully overcome.
- Pupils' progress is inconsistent between year groups and subjects. Although pupils are making better progress this term, standards at the end of Year 6 are not high enough.
- Over time, the academic progress made by disadvantaged pupils has not been good enough. It is too soon to see the full impact of recent actions taken by leaders to tackle this underperformance.
- The quality of pupils' work in a range of subjects is not yet consistently good.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet typically good. In the past, changes in staffing have hampered the rate of improvement at the school. Consequently, not all actions taken to improve the school's performance have been implemented consistently.
- Some teachers do not plan work that provides sufficient challenge for pupils, especially for the most able, so that they reach the highest standards in a range of subjects.
- Over time, governors have not received the information they need to be able to hold leaders to account for the progress of groups of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed head of school and executive headteacher are driving improvement at a fast pace. Leaders demonstrate ambition and high aspirations, and are determined to continue to improve the school rapidly.
- Leaders have successfully recruited a skilled and stable staff team. As a result, leaders' actions are beginning to have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and progress.
- The quality of provision in the early years is good. Children settle quickly and get off to a strong start in their education.
- Leaders have focused relentlessly on improving pupils' behaviour. As a result, the school is now a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils are eager to learn. This is helping them to make better progress in their work.
- Parents are positive about the changes being made to improve learning and behaviour.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils achieve the highest standards of which they are capable by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan work which precisely meets the needs of pupils to enable them to make strong progress in a range of subjects
 - have the highest expectations for pupils' learning and progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - plan work that challenges pupils, and particularly the most able and disadvantaged, so that they make faster progress and achieve the highest possible standards
 - consistently implement the approaches introduced by school leaders to improve the quality of pupils' work.
- Ensure that governors are well informed about the progress of all groups of pupils in each year group so that they can precisely check pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The recently appointed head of school and executive headteacher have an accurate and deep understanding of the school's strengths and the areas to improve. Over time, a culture of weak teaching and low aspiration has resulted in a significant legacy of underachievement. This is still evident in the most recent published information. However, leaders are tackling pupils' underachievement with determination and rigour. They are driving improvement forward at a fast pace. As a result, pupils are making faster progress. The school's capacity for further improvement is strong.
- Leaders have high aspirations. They have built a highly committed and skilled staff team, most of whom are new to the school this term. Teachers are ambitious for their pupils. They fully support leaders in their vision to improve the school rapidly. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of their work to improve the quality of education and pupils' outcomes.
- The new staff team benefits from high-quality training which has enabled it to 'hit the ground running'. The quality of teaching is improving quickly. In addition, the support provided by the schools in the Learning Academy Trust is helping teachers to develop their subject knowledge and improve the quality of their teaching. As a result, the school is securely on the journey to improvement. Staff morale is high.
- Leaders have stepped up the frequency and rigour of their monitoring of teaching and learning. Records of leaders' work confirm that they precisely check the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and their learning behaviours. This work is of a high quality and is helping the school to improve quickly.
- Subject leaders are rising to the challenge to improve standards across the curriculum. They have swiftly implemented new approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics in order to extend and deepen pupils' learning. As a result, pupils are making faster progress across the school. Nonetheless, these improvements are recent and have not yet succeeded in securing consistently good outcomes.
- The curriculum provides rich and interesting learning experiences to motivate and engage pupils to learn. For example, pupils benefit from first-hand experiences such as visits and trips to Charleston Harbour and the Mid Cornwall music festival. These opportunities spark their interest and enthusiasm to learn effectively across a range of subjects. In addition, this work supports pupils to develop their self-confidence, broaden their horizons and aspire to succeed. However, work in 'topic books' confirms that the quality of pupils' work is still too variable. For example, the quality of writing in history and geography is not yet of a consistently high standard.
- The school offers a wide range of after-school clubs and enrichment opportunities to develop pupils' skills in music and sport. Parents state that they are impressed by the improvement in their child's confidence and skills gained in these sessions.
- Pupils' appreciation and understanding of British values are strong. Visits from the police and the lifeguard service develop pupils' good understanding of democracy and the rule of law. Also, leaders give pupils opportunities to develop their leadership skills. For example, pupils worked together to decide on the school's 'three golden rules'. This

work has significantly improved pupils' behaviour at the school.

- The school's development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. This work is pivotal to the school's values and welcoming atmosphere. Parents share in this aspect of the school's work. For example, many families attended the recent harvest assembly, which focused on learning about the traditions of the local farming community.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is targeted for those who need it most. As a result, this group of pupils is making faster progress. However, historically, disadvantaged pupils have not achieved well enough. Leaders have tackled this weakness with urgency so that the funding is allocated and spent appropriately. Nonetheless, the full impact of this work is yet to be seen in improving the outcomes of this group of pupils.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is used effectively to increase pupils' participation in sport. A large proportion of pupils take part in competitive sports, for example football and netball. This is helping to improve their self-esteem, confidence and personal resilience.
- Parents' confidence in the school and its leaders has significantly improved. This has not always been the case. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent. Parents who spoke to an inspector were very positive about the recent changes. They have increased confidence that leaders swiftly address their concerns.

Governance

- New governors have recently been recruited to the governing body. They are ambitious for the school and bring the skills and drive needed to deliver improvement quickly. Together with school leaders, they are tackling the legacy of underachievement with urgency and determination. As a result, the capacity of leaders to implement improvement is strong.
- The trust has acted decisively to place strong leaders at the school to bring about rapid improvement. In addition, it ensures that the expertise available within the trust is used effectively to support the school on its improvement journey. As a result, the school is improving at a fast rate.
- As a priority, governors have tackled the legacy of weak teaching. They have not shied away from tackling underperformance and have recruited skilled and ambitious teachers to drive improvement. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving quickly. In addition, they have recruited an experienced leader to improve the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These actions are having a positive impact on improving the school's performance and pupils' achievement.
- Governors' minutes now confirm that they ask leaders challenging questions to hold them to account for the school's performance. They visit frequently to check for themselves that leaders' actions are having an impact on pupils' outcomes. They know that even greater analysis of the performance of different groups would enable them to hold leaders to account with greater rigour to drive improvement at the pace required.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Staff take great care of all pupils. They are vigilant in their approach to keeping children safe. All staff understand and effectively implement the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. They are well trained to identify and act on signs of risk or harm, including risks relating to extremism and radicalisation. Staff work closely with outside agencies to provide pupils and their families with high-quality support. Pupils say they feel safe and secure. There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- A legacy of weak teaching over time, together with frequent changes to staffing in some year groups, has resulted in pupils' underachievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Not enough pupils reached the expected standard at the end of Year 6 in 2016.
- Current leaders are tackling this legacy of underachievement with purpose, determination and urgency. They have recruited teachers who have the right skills and expertise to rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, pupils now progress at a faster rate in their learning. However, teaching is not yet typically good. Some teachers do not yet consistently implement the new approaches brought in by leaders to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Staff receive high-quality training to develop the quality of their teaching. This is helping them to develop their skills to teach effectively. Leaders frequently check teachers' work and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievement. Although work in books confirms that pupils are making faster progress, the legacy of underachievement has not yet been fully overcome.
- Leaders have put in place a robust system to precisely check pupils' progress over time. As a result, teachers' judgements of pupils' achievement are now secure. Nonetheless, on occasion, teachers do not use the information they keep to plan pupils' next steps in their learning precisely. As a result, pupils' learning and progress slow and they do not achieve as well as they could.
- Some teachers do not plan work which provides sufficient challenge to pupils, particularly for the most able. On occasion, teachers' expectations are not high enough and they accept work which is untidy or incomplete. A small number of pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, say they would like to try harder work. This lack of challenge slows their progress at times.
- Teachers routinely provide guidance and feedback to pupils, in line with leaders' expectations. This ensures that pupils know what they need to do to improve. However, on occasion, some teachers do not implement the school's approach consistently and pupils' progress is hampered.
- Pupils do not yet make consistently strong progress in subjects across the curriculum. Work in books shows that pupils practise their skills in writing and mathematics across a range of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 used their writing and mathematical skills well to record their science experiments. However, the quality of work across the year groups is too variable.
- The teaching of reading has improved. Staff have established a positive culture of reading. Pupils told inspectors that they now read often, including at home. In addition,

improved teaching of phonics, spelling, grammar and punctuation is securing better progress for pupils. For example, during the inspection, pupils receiving support with their reading used their phonics skills to read unfamiliar words. When challenged, the most able pupils could read and spell increasingly harder words. Nonetheless, although pupils are making better progress in reading, there is still some ground to make up.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective and sensitive support to help them to make good progress. Teaching assistants provide appropriate guidance to pupils with gaps in their understanding or skills. This work is successful in helping them to make good progress from their starting points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is now a calm and vibrant learning environment. Pupils are well cared for and they trust the adults who work with them. This is supporting them effectively to make faster progress in their learning.
- Pupils know that they are responsible for their actions and understand the difference between right and wrong. Regular visits from members of the community, such as Olympic swimmers, inspire and focus pupils on the importance of good manners and consideration for others. In addition, they enjoy taking responsibility, for example, helping younger pupils to read. As a result, pupils develop respect and consideration for each other.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations. The school explicitly teaches pupils how to keep safe when using the internet. The inspection found that pupils from each age group know how to keep themselves safe online.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is not an issue. Nonetheless, a very small number of parents told inspectors that they disagreed or were unsure. Evidence collected by the inspection team indicates that the school deals with bullying effectively. Pupils understand that bullying can take different forms such as cyber bullying, and know that they must always tell an adult if they feel unsafe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is typically good.
- School leaders have successfully improved pupils' behaviour as a result of their drive and relentless focus on this aspect of their work. Historically, episodes of poor behaviour hindered pupils' learning. Teachers build positive relationships with pupils. As a result, there has been a significant culture shift in pupils' attitudes to learning and they are now eager to learn. This is helping pupils to make better progress and achieve higher standards than found previously.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and behave well in lessons and at breaktimes. Exclusion is rarely used. All pupils understand how behaviour is managed, and say that the school systems are fair. Consequently, behaviour is typically good.

- Pupils are confident that staff listen to, and act on, any concerns. Incidents of racism are very rare. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Leaders keep up-to-date records of behavioural incidents which confirm the positive impact of the school's actions.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. Pupils value their education and are keen to come to school. Leaders follow up all pupils' absences quickly and take time to explain the importance of good attendance to families.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Historically, a legacy of weak teaching has resulted in pupils' significant underachievement in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of current leaders' determined actions to tackle this underperformance, pupils are now making faster progress.
- Current progress of pupils is improving quickly. Work in books confirms that pupils are achieving higher standards as a result of the improvements made to the quality of teaching. However, although standards have improved since the start of this academic year, pupils in Years 5 and 6, in particular, have considerable ground to catch up.
- The progress of the most able pupils is not yet good. In 2016, not enough pupils reached the highest levels in Year 2 or Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils are now making faster progress. Scrutiny of their work shows that they do not receive sufficient challenge to extend their learning or deepen their understanding. This slows their progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. These pupils are not yet consistently making the progress they are capable of.
- Disadvantaged pupils now receive targeted and appropriate support to meet their needs. Leaders insist that all pupils have equality of opportunity. They use the pupil premium funding effectively to diminish the differences between disadvantaged pupils and others. Nonetheless, the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school remains too variable and some continue to have significant ground to make up.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen to the national average. Teachers' daily focused teaching helps pupils to improve the essential literacy skills that they need to equip them for the raised demands of Year 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 read with greater confidence, fluency and understanding of the texts. As a result, a higher number of pupils are now on track to reach the higher standards at the end of this year.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are now resulting in a greater proportion making better progress than found in previous years. Pupils typically show greater resilience and are more determined to work hard and produce work of a higher quality.
- Until recently, staff did not accurately identify and cater academically for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is no longer the case. As a result, these pupils benefit from high-quality support to help them make better progress. However, school leaders and teachers recognise that some pupils, including boys and those pupils who are disadvantaged, still have a lot more ground to make up.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years foundation stage provides a high-quality education for the children. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is typically good. Children achieve well and make good progress across all areas of learning from their starting points. As a result, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year in 2016 was above the national average.
- Leadership of the early years is good. Leaders train their staff to assess carefully children's individual needs when they start school. Teachers use this information to inform teaching and provision. As a result, children settle quickly and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding to be successful learners.
- Leaders and staff across the trust also work together constructively. As a result, the teaching and provision over time has improved. Children learn to use their imagination and to cooperate well with each other.
- Teaching is well organised to extend children's knowledge, skills and understanding in all the areas of learning. Children benefit from structured activities, for example, daily phonics lessons. In these sessions, children quickly learn their letters and sounds and begin to read and write simple words. In addition, they learn through exploration and play both in the classroom and in the outdoor learning environment. However, on occasion, the activities planned by staff do not sufficiently hold children's attention for long enough. As a result, children move quickly to other activities and this limits their learning and progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use their strong subject knowledge to ask relevant and probing questions. This work enables teachers to extend children's thinking and understanding. Teaching assistants lead other group work and support individual children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children make good progress, particularly with their language and personal and social skills.
- Teachers focus on developing children's language and social skills when they start school. Children are respectful and polite to adults and to each other. They quickly learn to take turns and develop independence.
- The proportion of disadvantaged children attaining a good level of attainment is above the national average for all children. The children are well placed at the end of their Reception Year for learning in Year 1. Nonetheless, leaders have rightly identified that a few boys do not yet achieve as well as the girls.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, now make better progress. For example, in 2016, nearly half of the children exceeded the early learning goals in reading, writing and mathematics. However, on occasion, the activities planned do not provide sufficient challenge for the most able children, which slows the progress they can make.
- Leaders and teachers communicate well with parents. Parents regularly contribute towards the school's online assessment system to record the learning and progress of their child. This partnership effectively ensures that parents are fully involved in their child's education.
- Teachers' work to keep children safe and secure is of a high quality. As a result, children learn and play happily and safely together.

School details

Unique reference number	140332
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10019937

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Sponsored academy converter
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Hobbs
Head of School	Matthew Oakley
Telephone number	01726 822 416
Website	www.foxhole.cornwall.sch.uk
Email address	Secretary.foxhole@tlat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is a member of the Learning Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust of nine primary schools in Cornwall.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. An above-average proportion of pupils leave or join the school part-way through their primary education.

- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government money to support pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- There have been significant changes to the school's staffing team since September 2016. The head of school was appointed in March 2016. The executive headteacher works at the school on a part-time basis to support the headteacher to improve the school.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in July 2016, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Very occasionally, Ofsted will delay publication of a report to ensure full consideration of concerns identified during the quality assurance process. On a rare occasion, this process may suggest gaps in the inspection evidence base, which will cause Ofsted to conclude that the inspection is incomplete. This happened at Foxhole Learning Academy. Inspectors first visited the school in October 2016. Her Majesty's Inspectors returned to the school in November 2016 to gather additional evidence to secure the evidence base. In such cases, the inspection report is not published until Ofsted is satisfied that the inspection is secure.
- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes and made additional short visits to several lessons. Some of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or executive headteacher.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils, senior and middle leaders, the headteacher and executive headteacher, and members of the governing body to seek their views.
- The inspectors took account of 12 responses to Parent View and pupils' views provided through the pupil questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke informally with a number of parents and considered several pieces of written correspondence.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work from a range of subjects. They examined a range of documents, including those relating to school improvement planning and the safeguarding of pupils. In addition, they scrutinised information on the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Stuart Busby, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Brady	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Leahy	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stewart Gale	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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