

# Pennycross Primary School

Arden Grove, Pennycross, Plymouth, Devon PL2 3RL

## Inspection dates

9–10 November 2016

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision for the school and this is shared by the staff and governors. Everyone knows what is needed to be done to make the school an even better place for children to learn in and the leaders of the school are rigorous in their drive to achieve this.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders and governors have instilled a culture of high expectations. All staff and pupils are valued. As a result, the school is improving rapidly. Standards achieved by pupils and the quality of teaching are good overall.
- The quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 does not yet match the best in the rest of the school.
- Senior and middle leaders implement a curriculum that motivates all pupils to learn well. The curriculum is wide-ranging and focuses on enabling pupils to achieve well in the key skills of literacy and numeracy. It is varied and is enriched by arts, sports, outdoor learning and community-focused activities well.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities now make good progress as a result of improving attendance.
- Pupils who are struggling with their learning benefit from a wide range of high-quality interventions to support their better progress.
- Provision in the early years enables children to make good progress from low starting points.
- The dedicated governing body provides very strong support and challenge in equal measure. Governors ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively to raise pupils' standards and diminish differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils in the school and other pupils nationally.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Diversity is celebrated and pupils are taught about their beliefs and those of others well. As a result, pupils have a deep understanding of other cultures.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in years 5 and 6 to match the best in the school, especially in mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and governors, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and middle leaders, have a clear and uncompromising vision to improve the opportunities, experiences and outcomes for the pupils and community they serve. Their drive, passion, determination and hard work have brought about significant improvements in the school since the previous inspection.
- Leaders set a culture of high expectations for pupils and staff. The headteacher has been rigorous in developing the quality of teaching staff. Adults are challenged to perform better in the classroom for children and supported to improve. This results in better-quality teaching and faster progress for pupils.
- A culture of continuous improvement is evident for all who work and learn at the school. For example, the training of teaching assistants to support phonics teaching is improving pupils' phonics skills. Newly qualified staff make a confident start to their careers due to highly effective mentoring that supports their professional development. All middle leaders and the deputy headteacher value and engage in the training they receive which leads to recognised qualifications.
- Staff are fully supportive of the headteacher and her leadership, as shown in the results of staff surveys and in discussion with inspectors. Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff showed that all staff felt the school had improved since the previous inspection and that children were safe.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that the school is well led. The school works very closely with parents 'beyond the school gate'. Life skills sessions for adults, provided during the school day, ensure that pupils' needs at home are being better met. The school-run classes for parents in academic subjects ensure that pupils are more able to receive the guidance they require to successfully complete any homework set.
- School leaders are rigorous in their approach to improving teaching, learning and assessment. They do not shy away from making difficult decisions when improving the quality of teaching. Decisive changes to staffing and investment in staff training, including the coaching of staff, are improving the quality of teaching. A strong feature of the school is the consistent, systematic approach to the teaching of core subjects, especially in the early years and key stage 1.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of interesting activities such as working with former armed forces personnel to develop pupils' social skills for later life. The school seeks new ways of engaging and enthusing the pupils through extra-curricular activities which are numerous and varied. For example, a mixed-age group of pupils performs regularly at Armed Forces Day, the Devon County Show and other events.
- Middle leaders have introduced a systematic approach to interventions for those pupils who require additional support in their learning. These effective activities have had a positive impact on improving pupils' progress. Pupils' misconceptions are addressed quickly to support them in their learning. As a consequence, pupils make good progress even when they start the school later in the school year.

- Leaders and teachers carefully and regularly track the progress of all pupils, including the most able disadvantaged. Staff take appropriate actions when pupils fall behind expectations. As a result, progress for pupils across the school is at least in line with other pupils nationally, and improving.
- Previously, senior leaders identified some shortcomings in the teaching of mathematics. Effective work with Plymouth University introduced a more systematic approach to develop pupils' understanding in mathematics. As a result, progress and outcomes in mathematics have improved rapidly in the early years and key stage 1. Progress has also improved in key stage 2 but pupils have some historical gaps in their knowledge and understanding that still need to be addressed. Evidence from pupils' workbooks confirms that the school's assessments are accurate.
- All leaders carefully plan and evaluate the use of pupil premium funding. This funding is used well to support learning in classrooms as well as enrichment activities and support for pupils before school. As a result, most disadvantaged pupils across the school make progress at least in line with that of other pupils nationally.
- Sports premium funding has enhanced the physical education curriculum for pupils. The school has used this funding well to coach and develop teachers' skills as well as to employ specialist teachers. The school's work with a group of local schools has resulted in an increase in competition levels for pupils. Specialist teaching of hockey develops pupils' performance skills quickly. The school also provides football during before-and after-school clubs which has resulted in an improvement in boys' attendance.
- Pupils are effectively prepared for life in modern Britain and able to talk about what this means for them. The school works actively with local community groups to teach about other faiths and celebrate diversity.
- Leaders are ambitious in their aspirations for all pupils and actively research methods for improving teaching. For example, the deputy headteacher is working with Queen's University Belfast and the Education Endowment Fund to examine the impact of a particular phonics programme on disadvantaged pupils in an effort to further develop reading and writing across the school.
- School leaders use resources and the additional funding effectively to improve the progress of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, the school is undergoing a major building programme and is currently housed in temporary accommodation. Staff have embraced this change by creating lively learning environments which stimulate pupils' learning.
- Equality of opportunity is core to the ethos of this school. For example, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are deliberately coached then given roles as lead learners – helping other pupils with their learning.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is strong. The chair of the governing body is relentless in her desire to help leaders and staff enable pupils to make good progress.
- Governors know the school well and have high aspirations for pupils, staff and the community. They provide good support and challenge to senior leaders in equal

measure.

- The governing body ensures that pupil premium funding is used effectively to raise pupils' standards.
- Governors receive regular updates on progress and visit the school to challenge and test these. They are knowledgeable about teaching and learning and engage in regular training, making sure that they are kept informed about developments in education. Governors bring with them a wealth of experience from their own backgrounds, including in education and human resources.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff all receive training in safeguarding and new staff who join during the year are also trained. Safeguarding record-keeping is accurate and training prepares staff well to identify and support pupils. Leaders engage well with parents and carers. Pupils are supported and kept safe in school.
- Volunteers receive training in safeguarding. During the inspection, the inspectors spoke with staff and adults working in the school who were all clear about their safeguarding responsibilities.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching, over time, throughout the school has improved and is now good. Teachers are consistently robust in their approach to teaching and learning. The strong self-evaluation by teachers is used to support development of their own teaching. Weak teaching has largely been eradicated.
- Good routines for learning are evident throughout the school. Children are taught to be empathetic and reflective learners. They listen to each other and give thoughtful responses. The school has clear expectations for all learners and the values of the school, 'secrets to success', are regularly referred to in teaching. For example, in the early years children read stories which develop the idea of 'being your best' and 'understanding others'. Teachers often encourage children to 'push yourself' and 'not give up'. Pupils are clear they need to 'work hard'.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and make sure that learning is interesting and engaging. For example, in key stage 1 pupils' enjoyment of language is enhanced when making nonsense words about aliens as part of their phonics work. In key stage 2, pupils sustain their interest in work when studying the poem 'Night mail' by W. H. Auden. Pupils carried out a detailed text analysis of it, then looked at a map examining key features of the landscape on a train journey before finally making that train journey and writing their own poem using a similar form. The work produced was of very high quality.
- Leaders ensure consistent teaching of the core subjects in all years, although this is less well developed in Years 5 and 6. The school tracks progress rigorously and this results in well-matched intervention to improve pupils' achievements.

- Pupils value the guidance they receive which helps them to correct their mistakes and deepen their understanding. As a result, almost all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged, the most able and the most able disadvantaged, are making good progress.
- Teachers ensure that pupils are given time to talk about their learning, work together with peers and explore their ideas through group or paired work. For example, pupils' mathematical language is enhanced when they work together to check their learning on fractions.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Children are engaged in their learning and take a real interest in their progress. They understand the importance of working hard to achieve their best.
- The school provides a large number of enrichment activities before, after and during school to support pupils' personal development. Teachers, teaching assistants and external specialist trainers organise popular opportunities to enhance the experience pupils receive at school.
- Pupils spoke about their respect for their teachers. One pupil commented that 'the teachers care' and that 'they want us to do well'.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. For example, pupils in Year 1 were very enthusiastic about their reading and the choice of books available to them.
- Pupils spoken to by inspectors had a good understanding of how to stay safe, including when online, and know whom to speak to if they are concerned. Advice and guidance are also provided to parents to help them support their child's safety.
- Pupils are confident learners. Children support each other's learning.
- The school works with other organisations and agencies to support the community. Parents comment that the communication with the school is good in helping them to develop their child's learning and social skills in and outside school. The school supports parents in the community well.
- Children enjoy the opportunities and responsibilities of being leaders in the school. For example, they have designed parts of the uniform to ensure younger children can identify trained pupils from different year groups who can help them if they have worries.
- The school supports pupils in their understanding of the world. They teach empathy in lessons and in extra-curricular activities, giving children the opportunity to share their learning, interests and concerns.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and respectful of one another, adults in the school and visitors. Behaviour is good in all respects: in class, around the school,

during play and lunchtimes. Parents, pupils, governors and staff are positive about how the pupils behave.

- Pupils are welcoming to visitors, communicate well with each other and with adults who support them. For example, at lunchtimes pupils interact positively with one another and with adults in a respectful manner. Pupils are helpful and attentive to visitors, show good manners and use appropriate language.
- The school is working hard to improve attendance and has developed initiatives such as a 'walking bus' to collect children from the local area. Early morning clubs, targeted at attracting specific children into school, and a breakfast club for pupils encourage good attendance. The school is also proactive in working with other agencies and in ensuring parents understand the importance of their child attending school. As a result, attendance is now broadly in line with national levels. Current attendance figures show an improvement on 2015/16 information, including for different groups. Leaders are aware that this improvement needs to be sustained.
- Children commented that bullying is rare at the school and that any instances are dealt with swiftly by the teachers and 'student council'. They are clear about what bullying is and the different forms it takes. They are also clear about the difference between bullying and 'falling out'.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- The results of national tests at key stage 2 in 2016 show that the school is performing in line with national expectations for progress and attainment in reading, writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling. In mathematics, while attainment was below the national average, the progress that pupils make from their starting points is good.
- Attainment in key stage 2 tests over the last few years has been in line with national averages for writing, broadly in line for reading and below for mathematics. Good progress is made by pupils from their starting points. The slight dip in performance in mathematics in 2016 was associated with the high proportion of pupils who entered the school late in key stage 2: while they made rapid progress during their time at the school, there was much lost ground to catch up.
- The school's own data shows all current groups of pupils across the school, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Inspection evidence supports the school's judgements. The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, make good progress and reach the higher levels. There is clear evidence in pupils' books of good progress being made by the most able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. This is particularly strong in the early years, key stage 1 and Year 4.
- Progress by the end of key stage 1 is good in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils read fluently and are enthusiastic about books and reading. They reflect on books they have read and show an enthusiasm for reading in and out of school. The school supports pupils' reading well, for example a weekly 'mystery reader' comes into classrooms and reads with pupils.
- In mathematics, the school is working closely with Plymouth University to improve teaching and its impact of pupils' learning in mathematics. A systematic approach to

the delivery of mathematics, focusing on correcting misconceptions and concentrating on understanding for all pupils is a key feature of the school's chosen model of delivery. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards has improved rapidly over the last two years. This is particularly evident in key stage 1 and Years 3 and 4. Pupils' progress in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 is on an improving trend but practice is not yet at the high level seen in the rest of the school.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Good provision in the early years enables children to make good progress from average starting points.
- The lead for the early years is passionate about her role. She has a secure knowledge of the area and is focused on driving through improvements. For example, some topics have been adapted to make them more engaging for boys who were not making the rapid progress expected. Resources have been wisely used to provide larger play equipment and develop a 'mud kitchen'. Using the 'mud kitchen', teachers have developed pupils' fine motor skills to improve their letter formation. They go on to apply their phonics knowledge to write simple words.
- Outcomes improved in 2016 and are continuing to improve. Any past differences in the attainment of boys and girls no longer exist.
- Adults know the children well and plan for their learning. There are good relationships with pre-schools and nurseries and parents are positive about provision in the early years.
- Children are enthusiastic early learners. Children are very excited about their reading and were very keen to read to inspectors. There are clear routines for parents to engage in reading at home to build on the good work in school.
- There is a culture of high expectations in the early years, in terms of learning and behaviour. Children learn and play together well, displaying empathy and high social skills. Children are keen to help one another and adults in the classroom.



## School details

Unique reference number	113297
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10019952

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Noden
Headteacher	Carole Waziri
Telephone number	01752 705137
Website	<a href="http://www.pennycross.plymouth.sch.uk">www.pennycross.plymouth.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:pennycross.primary.school@plymouth.gov.uk">pennycross.primary.school@plymouth.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	22–23 October 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Pennycross Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and most pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.
- Pupils in the early years are taught in two Reception classes and attend full time.

- The school runs a breakfast club.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed all classes. Some observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, middle leaders, staff and a group of governors. A telephone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school development plan and data relating to pupils' achievement and progress.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils in lessons and at lunchtimes to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtime. The inspectors listened to pupils read.
- An inspector met with the professor from Plymouth University who is leading the mathematics development programme.
- The inspectors considered the 33 responses by parents to Parent View, and spoke to parents informally at the start and end of the school day, as well as by telephone.

## Inspection team

Matthew Shanks, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Roy Souter	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Tregellas	Ofsted Inspector

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