

Devonshire Primary Academy

Devonshire Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY3 8AF

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2017

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Despite many improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the last inspection standards in reading, writing and mathematics are too variable.
- The progress that pupils make across key stages 1 and 2 is not consistently good.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 are too low, especially in writing. Not enough pupils achieve the higher levels of reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- The early years provision requires improvement. Leaders have not yet ensured that provision across the Nursery class and the Reception class is consistently strong. Disadvantaged children do not make the same gains in learning as their classmates.
- Leaders at all levels are working hard to improve outcomes over time, but this has not yet had an impact on outcomes across all aspects of the curriculum.

The school has the following strengths

- Since his appointment in September 2016, the headteacher has provided strong leadership and has driven improvements across the school. This has brought about a better quality of teaching and the development of clear, precisely targeted plans for improvement.
- Leaders at all levels play a valuable role in school improvement.
- The local governing body has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors know the school well and are more effective at holding leaders to account.
- Recent improvements in teaching and the latest assessment information indicate that the school has the capacity to get better.
- Pupils are keen to come to school and learn. Behaviour across the school is good and pupils consistently display good conduct.
- Pupils are safe and well cared for. They are well behaved, polite and considerate to each other and to adults.
- The quality of teaching is much improved since the last inspection, although this has not yet had an impact on outcomes over time.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for all groups of pupils by:
 - ensuring that a greater number of pupils reach the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics across both key stages, and that this is sustained over time
 - ensuring that all subjects in the wider curriculum are delivered in sufficient depth.
- Embed the role of middle leaders in developing the wider curriculum to further improve outcomes for pupils in subjects such as science, history and geography.
- Improve provision in the early years by:
 - developing planning and assessment systems so that the progress and attainment of all groups of children are more closely tracked
 - ensuring those children who are disadvantaged make greater gains in their learning
 - ensuring a greater consistency of provision across the early years setting.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has, since he joined the school in September 2016, led with passion and a clear determination to make this school better. He has made strong and effective decisions around all aspects of the school, including staffing. He is well supported by his senior and middle leaders.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the pupils in his care and has built a team that is committed to achieving the best for them. He and his senior leadership team are well aware of the challenges that the school faces. They show a strong and determined commitment to improving academic outcomes for pupils. They lead with honesty and integrity.
- Leaders evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately. This enables them to prioritise the actions they need to take to improve the school. Consequently, standards are starting to rise. This improvement has not yet been seen in the outcomes at the end of each key stage.
- Along with support from the local governing body and his leadership team, the headteacher has raised staff aspirations for pupils and enhanced support for pupils' personal development and welfare.
- Leaders have introduced the role of phase leaders, mentoring, sharing best practice, more focused individual support and high-quality professional development. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and pupils' outcomes are starting to improve.
- The senior and middle leadership teams make regular checks on the quality of teaching and this is starting to have an impact on progress for pupils across the school. There are training opportunities available to help them develop their roles and skills.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork across the school, with a clear focus on improvement. This is communicated well by the school's leaders and this determination to improve is shared by all staff and governors at the school.
- Leaders accurately identify the school's strengths and priorities for improvement through a range of self-evaluation activities. Clear plans are in place to drive further school improvement. Staff understand the goals that the school is aiming to achieve. This has resulted in leadership and staff who are well motivated and clear in their intentions to drive improvement.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles discrimination of all kinds effectively. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils have useful opportunities to discuss their views. They understand the importance of tolerance and respect for those with characteristics that differ from their own.
- Leaders ensure that pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding effectively. There are a wide range of school trips, visitors to school and curriculum enrichment in arts and music. This is enhanced through an enquiry-led curriculum which has a range of opportunities for pupils to discuss moral issues and explore a range of different cultures.
- Leaders have thought carefully about the needs of the pupils in their school, and are

adapting the curriculum accordingly. As a result, pupils are experiencing a suitably broad curriculum and have useful opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across a wider range of subject areas. This continues to be a key focus for the school as the curriculum is not yet planned or delivered in sufficient depth in some subject areas, such as science, history and geography.

- The use of additional sports funding to enhance the school's promotion of health and physical education is very effective. Pupils participate in a wide variety of sporting activities and have a good understanding of how to stay healthy.
- Careful consideration is given to ensuring that the pupil premium funding is spent to remove barriers to learning. Leaders have a clear rationale for the allocation of the fund. The funding is mainly used to provide additional staffing, ensuring that small-group work and interventions are of good quality. Changes to the use of funding were not made soon enough to affect test scores at the end of each key stage but disadvantaged pupils who are currently in school make effective progress.
- Past outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not match those of other pupils nationally. However, funding for those pupils is now well used to ensure that they make good progress in their learning.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors are effective in holding leaders at all levels to account for their impact on pupil achievement.
- The local governing body is highly supportive of the school. Governors visit the school regularly. They know the children, parents and staff well. They are very committed to the school and its future development.
- The multi-academy trust receives regular reports from the headteacher relating to the quality of teaching and the progress that different groups of pupils are making. Rightly, the trust recognises that more support is needed.
- The trust has been proactive in organising new structures and approaches to school improvement. They have appointed new trustees to improve the level of challenge and accountability. They have also introduced a more rigorous approach to evaluating and challenging leaders in schools across the trust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school works well with parents and other stakeholders to ensure that children are kept safe. The designated safeguarding lead is meticulous in her record-keeping and tenacious in following up any concerns effectively.
- The caring culture established among staff and pupils creates a climate where concerns are identified and reported openly. Staff know possible signs of abuse to look out for and use school systems for passing on concerns. Leaders act on information in a timely and effective way.

- Leaders have created a culture where safeguarding, safety and support for pupils' well-being are of the highest priority. They check that policies are kept up to date and that systems are fit for purpose. They check that staff are well trained and fully informed about the latest guidance for keeping pupils safe in areas such as child protection. Training, procedures and protocols are regularly reviewed.
- Important records are kept in an organised manner. All checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are carried out and recorded systematically.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, it has not yet had enough time to have an impact on test results at the end of key stages 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Previous weaker teaching has left some pupils with gaps in their learning. However, inspectors saw evidence that, for pupils currently in school, better teaching is leading to better progress.
- Across the school, well-defined learning routines underpin the productive and focused learning atmosphere. Teachers' expectations have improved greatly and are generally high. In Year 5, for example, pupils worked on a variety of problems with increasing complexity. They solved word problems involving money, fractions and proportion. Pupils worked together, sharing their ideas and supporting each other with their learning well.
- The school has made some strong new appointments. The induction process for newly qualified teachers has significantly improved as a result of better-quality mentoring. The school has worked with a range of partners to develop and train its own teachers. This has ensured that they are well supported in developing as high-quality teaching professionals.
- Middle leaders and phase leaders take an active role in training and coaching staff across the school. This is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching.
- Strategies to improve the quality of teaching are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. This is evident in the progress seen in pupils' books, their classrooms and the school's own tracking data.
- Teachers know their pupils well. As a result, they plan experiences for their pupils that match the abilities of most pupils well. Teachers use regular assessment to identify pupils who are not making sufficient progress and provide these pupils with additional help.
- The expectations for behaviour are consistent and clear across all classrooms. Pupils try hard, even if they find something difficult, because they have a strong sense of pride in their work and a determination to succeed. For example, in one lesson in Year 6, pupils looked at how they could summarise and analyse extracts from a Harry Potter novel. They worked independently or in pairs for extended periods. Prompting from the teacher and a series of complex questions challenged the pupils to think more deeply about the text and provide more sophisticated pieces of writing.

- Pupils have very positive relationships with staff and this contributes significantly to the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils cooperate well and share their ideas enthusiastically when asked to.
- The strongest teaching is characterised by high expectations and excellent preparation and planning. This is based on an accurate assessment of what pupils can do and what they need to do next to improve their learning. This includes the use of effective resources to support and inspire pupils' learning. Pupils respond enthusiastically and their books show that they make good progress over time. Work in books and in lessons demonstrates that current pupils are starting to improve. Expectations are clear and feedback in books provides areas for improvement which pupils respond to well.
- Due to their higher expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve, teachers are now deepening pupils' understanding through tasks that extend their thinking. For example, the most able pupils are challenged effectively to explain their reasoning in mathematics and to consider what the author is inferring in the books they are reading. The school has introduced a new system of increasingly complex challenges in a range of work across the curriculum. This is well understood by all pupils as a scaffold to increase the complexity and levels of challenge in their work.
- Teaching assistants and teachers work well together. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They help children understand how to improve their work and support children who find it difficult to work in a classroom setting. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Phonics sessions are fast, fun and challenge pupils to think and work hard. Pupils of different ages use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to good effect when trying to pronounce unfamiliar words. The teachers promote the teaching of reading effectively.
- Leaders have taken steps to generate pupils' interest in reading through the promotion of literacy across all key stages. Older pupils read with fluency, although sometimes their understanding of the text and vocabulary is below expectations for their age group. Pupils in Year 2 develop a love of reading and use their phonic skills to make sense of unknown words.
- Regular checks of teachers' assessments within school and in collaboration with other schools across the multi-academy trust help teachers to make accurate judgements of pupils' progress and to identify gaps in learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Securing the best possible personal development, attitudes and behaviour has been central to the headteacher's ambitious vision for pupils at Devonshire Academy.
- The atmosphere throughout the school is calm, friendly and engaging. Pupils are proud of their school, they care for each other and are courteous, polite, confident and welcoming.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They do their best in learning and are ready to learn. In Year 6, for example, children enter the classroom and immediately begin to review comments from the teacher about their previous work and practice or develop their work in light of these comments. They move to lessons and between activities calmly and purposefully, meaning that learning time is maximised. Pupils know that perseverance and resilience will help them to learn well.
- Lunchtimes and breaktimes are very positive and well supervised. Pupils mix and play extremely well together. There is a strong sense of trust between pupils and staff.
- Pupils are punctual and are quick to return to lessons after social times. They move around the school from activity to activity with no loss of time.
- Pupils are confident, self-assured and are proud to attend Devonshire Academy. Pupils show respect for each other. Older pupils show a responsible and caring approach to younger members of the school.
- The school is a safe environment where all pupils are known and respected. Staff provide strong levels of support to the pupils. Pupils feel confident to talk to any member of staff.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of e-safety. They learn how to stay safe online when using computers or mobile phones and social media.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well cared for and given every opportunity to participate in lessons. The inclusive nature of the school is a strength.
- Leaders and staff are successful in teaching pupils about discrimination and extremism in an age-appropriate way. Pupils can describe opportunities they have had to debate issues and show how important it is to listen to and respect the views of others.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and the distress that it can cause. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare, but if it did happen adults in the school would deal with it promptly and effectively.
- The work of 'The Hive' is appreciated by pupils, staff and parents. A small minority of pupils who struggle to regulate their own behaviour within the normal classroom environment benefit from this high-quality provision. This helps these pupils with their learning.
- Parents are generally supportive of the school's actions to support pupils' personal development and welfare. However, some parents say that communication between home and school could be improved.
- The school's culture promotes pupils' welfare effectively. Pupils are safe and feel safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for learning, together with their positive relationships with each other, ensures that lessons proceed without interruption or distraction. This results in a calm environment in which pupils can learn.
- Staff quietly, but effectively, manage pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond well to the high

expectations for behaviour and conduct, including during social times.

- Pupils behave consistently well in lessons and are highly attentive. Pupils are keen to answer questions, share ideas and contribute effectively to discussions.
- During lessons, pupils persevere and maintain their concentration, even when they find learning challenging. They keep their focus and attention and participate in activities well.
- Attendance has been around or above the national average for the previous three years. Persistent absence is below the national average as a result of the hard work of the school and the pastoral team.
- Behaviour management systems are used consistently. Consequently, there is almost no poor behaviour. There have been few fixed-term exclusions and these are only used as a last resort by the school and its leadership.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Overall, pupils make better progress than previously, due to the improved quality of teaching. However, for some pupils, there are still gaps in their knowledge and skills because of underachievement in the past. Teaching in the past has not been good enough and as a consequence pupils did not make enough progress or reach the high levels of attainment of which they were capable. Leaders have made significant improvements to the school and to the quality of teaching. While there are now signs of improvement, these changes have not yet had enough time to have an impact on outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Historical inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that pupils have not made sufficiently strong progress during key stage 1 and key stage 2. Standards were low in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2017.
- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because in key stages 1 and 2, pupils' progress has been variable over the last three years. The quality of teaching has not been consistently good over time.
- Some groups of pupils in key stage 2 have made significantly better progress in recent months due to substantial improvements in teaching. High-quality mathematics teaching ensures that pupils develop an increasingly secure mathematical understanding.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was low. Current pupils are making better progress from their starting points. A greater proportion of pupils are currently working at the expected standards for their age.
- The proportion of pupils working at greater depth at the end of Year 2 has been too low. Actions instigated by leaders are addressing this shortcoming. Consequently, the work in key stage 1 shows substantial improvements and a greater proportion of pupils are working at greater depth.
- Pupils' rates of progress are clearly accelerating across the school. In-year performance information is reflected in pupils' work, which shows good progress over the course of

this academic year. This is beginning to raise pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Leaders, supported well by the trust, work closely with teachers to ensure that assessments are more accurate than in the past. Teachers work with colleagues from across the trust to validate their judgements. This helps teachers to identify where pupils are underachieving, so that extra support can be supplied to help those pupils to catch up.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have made variable progress and sometimes their progress has been below that found nationally. The highly experienced leader for special educational needs and/or disabilities has started to take relevant action to address this shortcoming.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported effectively and are now making improved progress and catching up to other pupils nationally with the same starting points. The pupil premium grant is being used effectively to support their needs.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years is ably led by a capable and effective leader who has made significant improvements to provision in the short time she has been in post. She has an accurate picture of the early years provision, which is gained through rigorous self-evaluation. However, standards across the early years are not yet of a consistently high quality and there is variability between Reception and Nursery provision at the school.
- The Nursery needs to raise standards of provision to equal that of the Reception class, to ensure consistency across the early years. More work needs to be done to ensure that children in Nursery make accelerated progress from their given starting points. More focused assessment and greater levels of challenge are required to ensure that all pupils achieve the levels of which they are capable.
- The early years team are knowledgeable and continue to improve the provision. They know there is still work to do but are clear about what actions are required and are taking strong and determined action to improve consistency.
- Safeguarding is effective and staff training is up to date, including paediatric first aid training. There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements. Child protection policies and procedures are implemented consistently.
- The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development has been just below the national average for the last three years. This represents good progress from children's starting points. There is, however, too much variation in outcomes between those children who are disadvantaged. Disadvantaged children do not make as much progress as their peers. While differences are diminishing, they are not shrinking quickly enough.
- Most children enter early years with levels of development that are below those typical of children of this age. For some children, speech and language skills are poor.
- Children settle quickly and play well together and independently. Learning is planned to incorporate children's interests and builds very effectively on what children know.
- Children are well behaved and confident. They listen to instructions and follow them

carefully. They persevere with activities and get along very well with each other.

- The outdoor area is well equipped and includes all areas for learning. It provides opportunities for children to develop their sensory, construction, physical and communication skills well. The well-designed provision and the highly effective support from all adults ensure that children progress well.

School details

Unique reference number	140128
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10036761

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	478
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Lorraine Stephens
Headteacher	Nick Toyne
Telephone number	01253 478271
Website	www.devonshire.blackpool.sch.uk
Email address	admin@devonshire.blackpool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2015

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 much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British Heritage.
- Children in the early years are in Nursery part-time and in Reception classes full-time.
- The school has a breakfast club and after-school club run by the governing body.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons throughout the school, which included observations carried out jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of pupils' work and listened to them read.
- Inspectors observed pupils on the playground and in the breakfast club.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, the chair and several other members of the governing body, representatives of the multi-academy trust and members of staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with those responsible for leading and administering safeguarding.
- The inspectors took account of seven responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). The 31 responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire were also considered.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including information on pupils' current and recent progress, the school's plans for improvement, the management of teachers' performance, the use of pupil premium funding, and documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Mike Tonge, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Leon Bernstein	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Curtis	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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