

Gunnislake Primary Academy

Chapel Street, Gunnislake, Cornwall PL18 9NA

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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

- Governors have not challenged leaders robustly enough. Therefore, leaders have been too slow to bring about improvement in the school.
- Senior leaders have not fully developed middle leaders' skills. They are unable to effectively support school improvement.
- Leaders' planning of the curriculum lacks coherence. It does not support pupils to fully understand links between different aspects of their learning or build on prior knowledge.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable. Teachers do not routinely use assessment information to identify pupils' misconceptions or build on what they already know. This slows the progress pupils make, particularly the most able.
- Pupils' outcomes in reading and mathematics are not yet good enough at key stage 2.
- Leaders' evaluation of the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not precise enough. Disadvantaged pupils do not make sufficient progress.
- Absence and persistent absence rates are above the national average.
- Pupils do not consistently apply their best efforts to learning. Their compliant behaviour does not always translate to positive learning habits.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders now have a clear understanding of the areas for development and are working on the right priorities.
- The results of the phonics screening check have been above national figures in recent years.
- Teachers' planning in early years closely matches children's needs. Children progress well from their starting points.
- Pupils receive strong academic and pastoral support for their emotional, social and behavioural needs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors continue to develop their skills to enable them to challenge leaders stringently
 - ensuring that strategies to develop teachers' use of assessment are embedded to improve pupils' outcomes
 - developing the capacity of middle leaders to support whole-school improvement
 - refining the curriculum so that there is a coherent approach to the development of wider knowledge and the application of core skills
 - ensuring that the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is fully evaluated to support this group to make more rapid progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - developing teachers' skills in using assessment information to plan and adapt teaching so that it meets the needs of all pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers challenge the most able pupils to build on the skills they have to deepen their understanding and achieve greater depth of learning
 - improving teachers' proficiency in developing higher order skills in reading.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - continuing to implement strategies to robustly challenge those who do not attend school regularly
 - further developing pupils' ability to persevere with learning when they find it difficult.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not been swift enough to address the issues that have led to gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge, particularly in reading and mathematics. As a result, there is too much variation, across both key stages, in pupils' ability in these areas of learning.
- Recent changes to governance and leadership structures across the multi-academy trust provide increased support and capacity. However, much of this work is recent and therefore the impact is yet to be fully realised in improving outcomes. Leaders' self-evaluation is now more precise and has accurately identified actions that have the potential to support pupils to make more rapid progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not making the progress they should. Leaders have identified the barriers to learning for this group of pupils and now track their progress regularly, implementing strategies and reviewing the impact of actions taken. Many of these barriers are social and emotional and, where this is the case, leaders have provided effective support. However, they are less incisive on the impact of actions on academic outcomes.
- Leaders have not ensured that middle leadership is sufficiently developed within the school. Leaders are aware of this and have used expertise from within the trust to provide training and support for newly appointed leaders. For example, the new literacy coordinator is developing skills and expertise and is implementing strategies that are beginning to have a positive effect, particularly in writing. However, this support is still at an early stage and yet to have a full impact on outcomes, particularly in reading. There is currently no coordinator for numeracy, which means that developments in this area are at an earlier stage. Pupils' outcomes, particularly at key stage 2, reflect this.
- The curriculum provides suitable coverage of a range of subjects. However, it lacks the structure to fully support pupils to be able to understand the links between different aspects of their learning. This means that pupils are not able to successfully build on their prior knowledge to develop a coherent understanding across a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders have more recently tracked pupils' progress at regular points in the year. This enables them to have a more accurate understanding of the progress pupils are making. Teachers moderate assessments with staff from other schools across the trust so there is greater confidence in the accuracy of this information. However, leaders have not fully embedded the use of this information in classroom practice. Therefore, teachers do not use this information consistently or precisely enough to identify what pupils are doing well and the areas that require further development. This slows the progress that pupils make.
- Leaders provide suitable support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Additional adults liaise closely with classroom teachers and are skilful in providing support that is well matched to pupils' needs. Leaders carefully evaluate the impact of these interventions. Pupils make good progress from their

starting points.

- Leaders show an ambition for the well-being of pupils. This underpins all aspects of the school's work, resulting in a positive climate. Staff feel supported, receive suitable training and are proud of the school.
- Extra-curricular activities, trips and visits support pupils' learning well. Leaders have used the physical education and sport premium effectively to provide specialist coaches and have made exciting links with local community groups. Leaders ensure that all pupils are able to access the opportunities provided and pupils are enthusiastic about these.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not had the skills and knowledge needed to effectively support and challenge leaders in recent years. They acknowledge this and are committed and determined to improve the effectiveness of their work. The skills of new governors have the potential to ensure that this happens.
- Governors have not been incisive enough when reviewing the impact of additional expenditure on the academic progress disadvantaged pupils make. Therefore, disadvantaged pupils do not make rapid enough progress.
- Governors now have a clearer understanding of priorities and are developing the expertise required to support the school effectively. To achieve this, governors have accessed training from within the trust as well as further afield. As a result, governors are now better equipped to evaluate the evidence provided by school leaders. However, there is still more work to do and, as it is in its early stages, it is not possible to see the full impact of this work.
- Governors have raised their profile with parents and carers and now meet regularly with school leaders. They visit the school to ensure that they have first-hand evidence to support the assertions made by school leaders. Consequently, they now have a better understanding of the quality of education the school provides.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff know their pupils well and are confident in applying child protection procedures. Relevant training is up to date and includes protecting pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and know whom to refer information to if they have a concern.
- Leaders work effectively with external partners and parents to support pupils who are at risk. Where necessary, they ensure that referrals are timely and that effective action is taken. Leaders review policies regularly and adhere to safer recruitment processes. However, there were some administrative oversights on the single central record, which leaders had rectified by the end of the inspection.
- Pupils from across the school can clearly explain how to recognise risk and stay safe, particularly when online. Parents agree that their children feel safe at school and pupils

support this view, saying that their teachers look after them well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much across the school. The teaching of current pupils is improving, but teachers' planning does not take into account pupils' starting points. This means that teachers do not regularly challenge the most able pupils to extend their thinking so that they are able to demonstrate higher levels of understanding. Teachers' support for those pupils who fall behind is not developed sufficiently to remedy historical gaps in knowledge and skills. Therefore, the rate of progress that pupils make in core areas is inconsistent.
- Teachers' planning does not address specifically enough the needs of disadvantaged pupils. At key stage 1, this cohort of pupils do not perform as well as their peers and this continues into key stage 2, where pupils do not make the progress they should, particularly in reading.
- The teaching of reading is developing across the school. Pupils have a good understanding of phonic skills and the majority of pupils meet reading expectations for their age at the end of key stage 1. However, most-able pupils do not use these secure foundations to extend their skills to demonstrate a greater depth of understanding. Lower ability pupils are hindered by a lack of vocabulary. Therefore, as pupils move into key stage 2, they are not as secure in their ability to infer, predict and analyse. This holds back the progress pupils make at the end of key stage 2.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving across the school. Leaders have recently taken action to provide more structure to the teaching of mathematics, using strategies to develop greater mathematical fluency. Therefore, pupils meet age-related expectations at the end of key stage 1, but are not secure enough in this knowledge to be able to apply what they know to more complex, multi-staged problems. Some gaps in knowledge persist and pupils do not make sufficient progress by the end of key stage 2.
- Teachers' focus on the development of literacy skills is having a positive impact on pupils' ability to write in a more independent and extended way. Teachers make explicit to pupils the skills they need to demonstrate in written responses. In response, pupils are able to articulate what makes a good piece of writing and know the areas they need to work on next. Pupils meet age-related expectations at the end of key stage 1 and, as they move into key stage 2, they demonstrate increasing confidence in composition. Pupils' accuracy in spelling and punctuation is not secure, but they use a variety of sentence construction to create effect and are beginning to employ more adventurous vocabulary. Pupils make good progress by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have appropriate provision to support their needs. Additional adults are effective and use questioning well to develop and enhance pupils' understanding. Teachers use intervention sessions to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, pupils in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 demonstrate improvement in their skills from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are encouraged to read for enjoyment and leaders value and actively encourage

this aspect of pupils' learning. Teachers involve children in the choice of texts read in class and direct pupils to books that are suitable for their ability for individual reading. Pupils are happy to talk about their choice of books and appreciate the newly refurbished library where they like to make recommendations to other pupils about what they have read.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff provide a variety of experiences for pupils to explore their local cultural heritage. Pupils participate in activities to work with partners on community projects and have a well-developed understanding of their social responsibilities. They speak enthusiastically about the many fund-raising projects they have been involved in. Teachers use these events to enable pupils to consider and understand the experiences of people on a wider global scale.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum provides meaningful activities for pupils to develop their understanding of issues relating to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils regularly discuss moral issues and consider current affairs, such as the use of plastics and their effect on the environment. As a result, they have a strong understanding of concepts such as democracy and respect, making them well prepared for life in modern Britain. Additional visits and visitors enhance pupils' experiences further.
- The majority of pupils are positive about their experience of school. They understand expectations and believe that teachers encourage and support them to do well. They particularly enjoy the sporting activities that the school provides, are proud of their school and respect their environment.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, and have confidence that staff deal with it quickly when it occurs. Pupils told inspectors that they know whom to talk to when issues arise.
- Parents are positive about the work of the school in supporting their children's well-being. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View feel that teachers know their children well and meet their emotional and welfare needs.
- Staff successfully develop pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy and to understand risk. For example, older pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and younger pupils understand what a healthy diet is. Pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe online is particularly strong, but they are not as confident in their understanding of radicalisation and extremism.
- Staff are clear about the core values and the characteristics of good learners that underpin the school's work. Teachers model these with pupils and use displays around the school to reinforce positive traits and expectations. As a result, interactions between staff and pupils are good. Pupils demonstrate these core values in their relationships with each other, but do not always apply concepts such as resilience to their learning.
- Pupils feel that sometimes the play areas can become crowded, but say that staff

supervise them well and deal with disputes when they arise. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that the site is safe and secure.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The rates of absence, particularly persistent absence, are still too high. Leaders have recently implemented more rigorous systems to ensure that pupils attend regularly. They are aware of more vulnerable pupils and work with families to promote the importance of good attendance. As a result, attendance has improved and persistent absence has decreased. However, the impact of this work is inconsistent and therefore it is too early to see sustained improvement over a longer period.
- Pupils and parents generally agree that conduct is positive, but a minority of pupils do not always apply these attributes to their learning. They lack the resilience to persist with learning when it becomes difficult and do not readily focus on tasks unless they are under the direct supervision of a teacher. Therefore, these pupils do not use time efficiently to consolidate their learning. Other pupils say that the distraction of this minority makes it difficult for them to concentrate fully in lessons.
- The large majority of pupils conduct themselves well, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are welcoming and polite to visitors, responding to greetings and being willing to talk. At lunchtime, pupils of all ages sit together at the table to eat and social interaction is positive.
- Teachers are aware of pupils who find behaviour expectations difficult to manage and have strategies to address this. The number of behavioural incidents is low and, when they do occur, leaders involve parents. Staff provide additional support to enable pupils to adhere to expectations where necessary. There have been no exclusions in the last two years.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- For the last two years, the proportion of pupils achieving the combined expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been below the national average. Current pupils show an improvement in this expectation, but this is still below national comparisons. While pupils reached the expected standard in writing, they did not do so in reading and mathematics. No pupils achieved the higher standards.
- Pupils' progress for the last two years has been weak in reading and mathematics, particularly for middle-prior-attaining pupils, but has been strong in writing. Current pupils show an improvement in the progress they are making in reading and mathematics.
- In 2016, the proportion of key stage 1 pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below national figures, particularly for girls. This improved in 2017, when the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard was either in line with or above national comparisons in reading, writing and mathematics. However, over the last two years, no pupils have achieved higher standards. Current

pupils' outcomes are not consistently good in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Over the last two years, disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 performed below national figures in reading, writing and mathematics and none achieved greater depth. This is reflected in the progress that current pupils make.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 performed below national figures in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the progress pupils made from their starting points was strong in mathematics and writing, although weak in reading.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes at key stage 2 improved in writing and were above national figures. However, this was not the case for reading and mathematics. The progress pupils made from their starting points was weak in mathematics and reading. Current pupils do not make sufficient progress compared with that of their peers.
- Over the last two years, key stage 1 pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities did not meet the expected national standard. However, while this was also the case for pupils at key stage 2, the progress that these pupils made, particularly in writing and mathematics, was strong. This continues to be reflected in the progress of current pupils.
- Over the last two years, attainment for the most able pupils at the end of Year 2 was above national figures for reading and mathematics. However, this was not the case for writing.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the required standard in the phonics screening check has been strong over a three-year period. In the last two years, all pupils in Year 1 have reached this expectation.

Early years provision

Good

- The proportion of children who reach a good level of development, the standard expected at the end of early years, has been above national figures for the last three years. The progress of current children shows that teachers support the most able to demonstrate a higher level of understanding.
- Leaders' strategic planning is thorough and thoughtful. Leaders have a clear understanding of priorities and regularly evaluate the impact of actions. Staff are, therefore, clear on their role in supporting the development of the children in this provision. Teachers and additional adults provide effective individual support for those children who fall behind, supporting the majority to catch up.
- Teachers' planning is detailed and precise, identifying children's starting points and ensuring that provision is well matched to their needs. Leaders ensure that curriculum activities enable children to develop skills across all areas of learning. Leaders have developed the outside spaces to support this further. Children in Nursery are making good progress from their starting points in most areas and the majority of children are on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- Leaders are accurate in their assessment of the needs of children who have SEN and/or disabilities or who require additional emotional and social support. Teachers plan appropriate activities and provide additional interventions and, as a result, children

demonstrate improvements from their starting points.

- The teaching of mathematics ensures suitable support and challenge. Teachers regularly use a variety of methods to develop sequencing and counting skills. Teachers pose more complex number problems to children who are most able and these children demonstrate that they are able to apply their knowledge to solve these.
- Most children are beginning to read phonetically regular words, and the most able children are confident in reading irregular ones. Teachers support children through a structured approach to phonics, alongside a guided reading programme. Parents are encouraged to support their children's reading and this results in an improvement in children's ability to decode words and comprehend texts.
- Teachers plan activities, both in structured situations and free play, to support the development of children's fine motor skills. As a result, children successfully develop their ability to form letters and numbers. Teachers provide children who are more confident in writing with tasks that require them to write independently and in greater depth. These children demonstrate an understanding of sentence demarcation and an awareness of different types of punctuation.
- Staff have created an environment that is nurturing and safe. They have created clear routines, which means that children cooperate well with each other and respond positively to adults. They want to show adults what they are doing and are able to follow more complex instructions.
- Staff communicate regularly with parents and successfully involve them in their children's learning. There is, therefore, a shared understanding of children's achievements and welfare needs. Parents feel that teachers support their children well, and those who have older children say that this provision has supported them to successfully make the transition to the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	142496
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10053498

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	46
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Cheryl Hill
Headteacher	Lynn Nash
Telephone number	01822 832685
Website	www.federationofgunnislakeanddelaware.co.uk
Email address	secretary@gunnislake.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Gunnislake Primary School joined Bridge Schools Multi-Academy Trust in December 2015.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background and the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- Owing to the small numbers, the school is exempt from the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons across a range of subjects and age groups, and scrutinised pupils' written work. Some of the observations were jointly conducted with members of the leadership team.
- Meetings were held with members of the leadership team, a representative from the multi-academy trust and members of the governing body. In addition, the inspector met with curriculum leaders and pastoral managers.
- The inspector met with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their learning.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation, including the evaluation of the school's effectiveness and priorities for future improvement, progress, behaviour and attendance information relating to current pupils, and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The school's policies relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour, the use of additional funding (including pupil premium and the physical education and sport premium), and the curriculum were also scrutinised.
- The inspector listened to a selection of pupils read.
- The inspector considered three responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and six responses from staff. She also referred to information from the recent survey conducted by the school of the views of pupils and parents.

Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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