

Fishponds Church of England Academy

Fishponds Road, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 3UH

Inspection dates

25–26 April 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that the school has continued to provide a good quality of education since the previous inspection.
- Teaching staff and leaders have not, until recently, been held to account sufficiently for the quality of teaching or pupils' progress.
- The quality of teaching is too inconsistent, especially at key stage 2, and has not led to good outcomes for pupils over time.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough for different groups of pupils in key stage 2. Consequently, too few pupils make the progress they are capable of.
- Although attainment by the end of Year 6 is improving, standards are not yet high enough in reading and mathematics.
- The curriculum does not encourage pupils to fully develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupil premium funding has not been used effectively to meet the precise needs of disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, they have not made good progress over several years.
- The attendance rate of pupils overall, and of disadvantaged pupils in particular, is below that seen nationally.
- Pupils in key stage 2 do not show good attitudes to their learning. Too many pupils are not confident in their own ability and give up too easily when they face difficulties.
- Many subject leaders are new to their post and have not, as yet, had sufficient impact on improving teaching, learning and outcomes in their subject areas.
- Recently introduced systems to improve the school have not yet been fully developed to secure the rapid improvements needed.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal is acutely aware of the school's weaknesses as well as its strengths. She has managed the high turnover of staff well and has set a clear agenda for improvement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective.
- Children make good progress and build skills across all areas of learning in the early years because of the strong care and opportunities offered.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the local board continues to strengthen its procedures for holding school leaders to account for improving the quality of education provided
 - pupil premium funding is better used in order to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils
 - school leaders fully embed and accelerate the new procedures for managing the performance of staff and so improve teaching and pupils' progress quicker.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, especially in key stage 2, so that all groups of pupils make rapid and sustained progress, by ensuring that:
 - teaching consistently challenges all groups of pupils, including the most able and the disadvantaged, to make good progress
 - improvements to the teaching of mathematics and reading are fully embedded and consistent across the school
 - further developments in the curriculum in key stage 2 encourage more pupils to be enthusiastic about their lessons and progress their reading, writing and mathematical skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - building on the work that has already begun to develop pupils' confidence in their own abilities more fully
 - making sure learning activities are interesting and stimulating so that pupils are consistently motivated to concentrate and succeed
 - working more closely with parents and carers to ensure that all groups of pupils, but especially disadvantaged pupils, attend school more regularly.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers, including the local board, have not made sure that teaching is good enough to lead to good outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- The principal, appointed after the previous inspection, is ambitious and determined but her actions to improve the school have been impeded by a high turnover of staff.
- Effective systems have only recently been put in place to hold staff to account for the progress made by pupils. Consequently, leaders and teachers have not been challenged enough to ensure that pupils of all abilities, but most noticeably disadvantaged pupils, make good progress over time.
- The processes for managing the performance of teachers have not been used effectively enough since the previous inspection to secure rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and leadership.
- The quality of middle leadership is too variable. Many subject leaders have only recently been appointed and do not yet have the skills and expertise to fulfil the roles expected of them. Actions to improve teaching have not been taken urgently enough in some subject areas.
- The impact of extra funding for disadvantaged pupils has not been analysed in sufficient detail to pinpoint actions that will improve their progress. Staff have not been alert enough to the barriers to learning that such pupils face. They have not been able to develop the correct strategies that will lead to better learning.
- The principal and vice principal are acutely aware of the need to improve pupils' progress. They have increased the rigour of teachers' performance management and teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement are starting to rise.
- The principal is building strong and increasingly effective teams. She has tackled difficult situations very well and has managed staff changes sensitively and effectively.
- Staff are now overwhelmingly supportive of the principal and her leadership and fully support the renewed vision set out by her and senior leaders. They are well motivated and, newly qualified teachers in particular, have high morale.
- School leaders have a good understanding of the needs of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and also the large number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. They use this good understanding to ensure that teachers support these pupils well. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are currently making good progress across most year groups.
- Leaders evaluate how well they use the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium to make sure that it is used effectively to engage pupils in a wide range of physical activities. Sports coaching is having a strong impact on pupils' attitudes to PE and there has been a sharp increase in participation in sporting activities.
- Leaders are improving the content of the curriculum and making sure that the requirements of the national curriculum are now fully met. The curriculum for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is effective in promoting pupils' understanding of

the need for tolerance, respect and care for others. However, leaders recognise that the curriculum in key stage 2 is not designed well enough to motivate, excite and enthuse pupils. They are not encouraged to develop their wider skills of reading, writing and mathematics across the curriculum.

- The fundamental British values of democracy and the rule of law, tolerance and mutual respect are taught well. Pupils understand and value the class and school rules, and they consider the consequences of their own behaviour and relish taking on responsibilities.
- The school works well in partnership with other schools in the Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust. Trustees support collaboration and the schools are working together on validating and checking each other's work.
- The local board, principal and newly developed senior team are clear sighted and focused in their drive to improve the opportunities, experiences and outcomes for the pupils and the community they serve.
- Most parents who spoke to the inspectors, or responded to the online Parent View questionnaire, are happy with the quality of education and care that their children receive. One parent spoke for many when saying:
'All three of my children are happy, content and progressing at this school. I'm always engaging with their teachers and, in response, teachers have reciprocated in a positive and engaging manner. The overall ethos at school is exactly what a parent like myself expects. I'm very happy with the school.'

Governance of the school

- The chair of the local board is knowledgeable about the school and passionate about its role in the local community. However, governors know that standards have not been good enough in recent years and that the local board has not consistently provided effective challenge to senior leaders over pupils' progress.
- Governors have not been vigilant enough in ensuring that leaders use additional funding sharply and precisely to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to others.
- Governors now have a good knowledge and understanding of the school and have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. They fully support the principal in ensuring fair and consistent application of policies so that only the best teaching is rewarded with pay increases.
- The local board is highly ambitious for the school and fully supports the principal's drive for improvement. Governors are working well with her to develop the school further. They have a realistic and accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a secure culture of safeguarding, promoting leaders' and adults' vigilance to ensure that all pupils are kept safe.

- Staff are clear about their responsibilities and know what to do if they have any concerns over pupils' welfare. Records are well kept, referrals are made in a timely manner and outside agencies are used appropriately.
- Staff receive regular training and they know and understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe from harm, including from radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not been consistently good enough throughout the school to secure good progress for pupils.
- Teaching is effective at key stage 1 and in the early years, but weaknesses remain in key stage 2. Over recent years, there has been a high turnover of staff and movement across the school, which has diluted leaders' efforts to improve teaching.
- Weaknesses in teaching include: teachers not being familiar enough with the needs of all groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils; teaching does not use assessment information consistently well enough to plan activities that build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding; expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, particularly the most able, are too low.
- At key stage 2, pupils do not have enough opportunity to work on writing tasks that require them to apply their understanding, especially those who are most able. As a result, pupils' progress in this subject has been too slow.
- Pupils' writing at key stage 2 remains too inconsistent. Pupils' writing books demonstrate that although they develop their vocabulary and grammar well, they are not consistently using clear and well-developed sentence construction or extending the range of punctuation they use.
- The school has been slow to make sure that other subjects across the curriculum contribute to pupils' writing and mathematical skills. Scrutiny of pupils' topic books shows that too little is done to develop pupils' creativity and imagination in their writing or to apply the reasoning skills they gain in mathematics.
- At key stage 1, pupils build well on the understanding of number gained in the Reception Year and they develop fluency and a good understanding of calculation.
- Teachers at key stage 1 have a secure understanding of pupils' needs and good subject knowledge. Teaching assistants and parental volunteers are also well deployed as an extra resource to support learning.
- Phonics is taught well. Younger pupils are able to use their phonics skills to break down unfamiliar words into their sounds then blend them back together with confidence.
- Older pupils told inspectors that they enjoy reading for pleasure and have recently developed the range of texts they are reading. Pupils were able to readily answer literal questions when asked about their reading, but found questions on interpretation difficult, reflecting their weaker comprehensions skills.
- The atmosphere, culture and environment in the classrooms and around the school are increasingly supporting pupils' learning, especially at key stage 1. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, as well as those who speak English as an additional language, are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. This helps these pupils engage in

learning alongside their peers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning at key stage 2 are not consistently strong. Too many older pupils lack the self-belief to persevere with their academic work when it proves difficult. They are often passive in lessons and show little enjoyment or enthusiasm for their work, reflecting a legacy of weak teaching and a high turnover of teachers.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Senior leaders use lessons, assemblies and special events well to make pupils aware of how to stay safe in a variety of situations. For example, pupils know how to avoid risks when using social media websites and to stay safe when outside school.
- Pupils say that bullying and unkind behaviour does happen at school but also say that staff take it seriously and deal with it effectively. Pupils describe several effective strategies used by the school which allow them to voice any concerns they have.
- The small number of pupils who attend The Nest are well looked after and make good progress at developing their social and personal skills.
- Pupils enjoy the breakfast and after-school clubs. These provide a caring environment where pupils can relax and play games. They enjoy a healthy breakfast or snack at the start and the end of their day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behaviour on the playground, in the dining hall and as they move around the school is calm and orderly. Staff supervise the site diligently and, as a result, pupils feel well looked after and secure at all times.
- Pupils get on well with each other and there is a very real sense of community in the school. Pupils are typically polite to each other and to visitors. The vast majority of pupils have a strong sense of moral duty. They accept each other regardless of differences in their backgrounds or circumstance. This contributes strongly to the welcoming ethos at the school.
- Pupils were confident when talking to inspectors and were uniformly positive about the school and the support and help they receive. Older pupils said that behaviour had improved significantly over their time at the school. They were insistent that racist and homophobic incidents do not occur. This was exemplified by how well pupils from a range of cultures and ethnic backgrounds feel at home in the school.
- Attendance, which has been below average for some time, is improving. Senior leaders have sought advice and support from outside agencies. They have worked well with parents to ensure that the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has been reduced. Despite this tenacious approach to reducing absence, some

disadvantaged pupils still face severe difficulties in attending school regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The standards that pupils reach and the progress they make have declined since the last inspection.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics was below that seen nationally. Progress was below average in reading and mathematics and was in the bottom 20% of schools in the country in these subjects.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils has been particularly poor. For the past three years, the progress made by this group of pupils has been significantly below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outcomes at key stage 1 and in early years have been stronger. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard and also those working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 has been close to the national average. This represents good progress given the starting points of these pupils.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception Year was in line with the national average in 2017. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been rising steadily over the last three years and was above average in 2017.
- Pupils currently in the school are making more progress across the curriculum in key stage 2 as a result of recent efforts to improve teaching. Work seen by inspectors supports the school's information that pupils across the school are reaching higher standards and making better progress than in the recent past. Pupils are currently making strong gains in reading and mathematics in Years 1 to 4.
- Nevertheless, because these changes are recent, pupils are still not making the progress of which they are capable, especially the most able. This is because teaching is not challenging enough or well enough matched to the needs of these pupils.
- School leaders have not used pupil premium funding well enough to ensure that the high numbers of disadvantaged pupils are well supported. Although improving, the differences between the progress of these pupils and that of others are still wide across the school, particularly in writing in Years 5 and 6 and in mathematics in Years 2, 3 and 4.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have made the same variable progress as their peers over recent years. The new special educational needs coordinator has made sure that all staff now have an increasingly clear understanding of the needs of these pupils and has put in place appropriate interventions and support to enable these pupils to make faster progress.
- The school is now making better provision for those pupils who speak English as an additional language. A clear focus on helping these pupils quickly acquire the language understanding required to be successful in their learning, through individual and group work and through support from their peers, is boosting their progress.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is well led. There is a very clear view about the strengths and weakness of the early years. The curriculum is well planned and highly organised so that the needs of all children are closely met. As a result of strong improvements, the setting is now good, even though other aspects of the school require improvement.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Generally, children enter the Nursery with levels of development that are below those typical for children of this age and they make strong progress from their starting points.
- Activities in both Nursery and Reception are well planned and include a range of different approaches. Adults provide effective opportunities for children to develop language and enhance their vocabulary through, for instance, questioning children as they play and by modelling language. This approach has led to improvements in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development, which is now above average.
- Teachers and other adults plan highly imaginative activities, helping the children develop both socially and academically. The outdoor space is used well by the children and there are numerous opportunities for them to develop their understanding of number and to begin to develop their writing.
- Children are developing their early phonics skills well and are using these to write and unpick unfamiliar words.
- Adults closely track the children's progress to provide a continuous record of their development. As a result, when children move up to the next year group within the setting, staff know precisely where to deploy additional support. This helps to accelerate progress.
- Baseline assessments are accurate and rigorously overseen by leaders. They are used effectively to identify children who will need additional support to meet their end-of-year targets. This particularly includes disadvantaged children, those new to learning English and those who have SEN and/disabilities.
- Children are calm and considerate to each other and to adults. They cope well with moving from structured learning, for example in phonics, to learning through play. They adhere well to routines because of the consistent approach to behaviour adopted by staff in all areas of the setting. These approaches dovetail well with those used by staff in key stage 1 and, therefore, support children in making a good start in Year 1.
- Safety procedures are strong and children are vigilantly monitored when they play inside and outside.
- Leaders have begun to put in place opportunities for parents to learn how best to help their youngsters, which include opportunities to work alongside the setting's staff. However, leaders recognise that there is still more to do in guiding parents in supporting their children's learning and development.

School details

Unique reference number	138794
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	10047597

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	442
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Trish Dodds
Principal	Debbie Coker
Telephone number	0117 9030491
Website	www.fishpondschurchacademy.bristol.sch.uk
Email address	fishpondsacademy@bristol-schools.uk
Date of previous inspection	May 2014

Information about this school

- The school became part of a multi-academy trust, the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust, in 2012. The school is managed by a principal and is governed by a local board.
- The principal has been in post since September 2016. A high number of teachers have left and others have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative, off-site provision at The Nest.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for their SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The school runs an on-site breakfast club, and an after-school club which is managed by the governing body.

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

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in visits to lessons across the school, most of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Discussions took place with the principal, senior leadership team, the chair and four other members of the local board, and the school improvement adviser from the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including school improvement plans and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspection team carried out joint scrutiny of the quality of pupils' work in books with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons and lunchtimes. Inspectors listened to pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtimes, breaktimes and around the school.
- An inspector visited the on-site breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Inspectors considered the 74 responses to the online survey, Parent View, as well as the 72 free-text responses from parents, the 80 responses to the online pupil survey and the 24 responses to the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Michael Merchant, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Bradley Murray	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Wigley	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018