

Foxhole Learning Academy

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

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have worked successfully to improve the standard of education at the school. As a result, current pupils are making good progress and achieving well.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. It now meets the needs of pupils more precisely and provides them with more challenge, whatever their starting points.
- The curriculum is well conceived and planned, with a key focus on raising pupils' aspirations in an area of relatively high economic deprivation.
- The quality of governance has improved since the last inspection. The trust has taken effective steps to ensure that the rigour of critical oversight provided by governance has been heightened.
- Leaders have created an enthusiastic new middle leadership team. These middle leaders, however, have not yet had the time to demonstrate significant, sustained impact.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They conduct themselves well both inside and outside the classroom.
- Leaders and other staff work well to promote pupils' personal development. The enrichment of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development lies at the heart of the curriculum.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start to their education. Experienced staff ensure that children settle quickly and begin to learn well.
- Phonics teaching is very well organised and delivered. As a result, pupils make good progress in their reading and writing.
- The quality of assessment of pupils' work has improved noticeably since the previous inspection. Leaders now have a much better understanding of the progress that pupils are making. Nonetheless, the quality of assessment in the classroom, including by questioning, is sometimes not precise enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by developing middle leaders' understanding of their new roles further, so that they can support the senior leadership effectively in school improvement.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers use precise, ongoing assessment of pupils' work in the classroom to adapt their teaching to pupils' developing needs
 - teachers use effective questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to identify quickly any misconceptions that are a barrier to further learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection in 2016, the executive headteacher, the head of school and other staff have worked successfully to improve the quality of education provided by the school. They have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that it still needs to work on. As a result, leaders' planning for further improvement is secure and forms the basis of a coherent programme of training and development for staff.
- Leaders have made good progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. Teaching is now more challenging and meets the needs of pupils, whatever their starting points, more effectively. As a result, the attainment of pupils has improved markedly and the progress of pupils currently in the school is good.
- Leaders have successfully developed a curriculum built around raising aspirations. The school serves an area of relatively high economic deprivation, and leaders are aware that many of their pupils do not have the opportunities that pupils in more affluent areas do. As a result, they have designed a curriculum that aims to help pupils understand that their futures are not limited by economic or geographical circumstance. A good example of how the curriculum helps to widen pupils' horizons can be seen in history. The history curriculum progresses from local to national to international perspectives. Pupils learn, for example, about the local clay industry and Cornish inventors, progressing on to study of topics such as Ancient Egypt and Victorian London.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is woven through the curriculum and well supported by extra-curricular activities such as trips and after-school clubs. Termly topics, around which the curriculum in foundation subjects is organised, are specifically identified and adopted based on their ability to contribute to SMSC development, including the promotion of British values. Other aspects of school life, such as the school council and the nomination of a citizen of the week, help to develop further pupils' readiness for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use additional funding well. Supported by the trust, leaders pay close attention to promoting better educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, which are improving for current pupils. The pupil premium is used appropriately to support this. In addition, disadvantaged pupils are part of a trust-wide initiative known as 'Academy 11', which acts as a 'virtual school' for all disadvantaged pupils in the trust. Disadvantaged pupils have access to activities they would not otherwise have, such as specific extra-curricular activities, and this makes a good contribution to their personal development.
- The physical education and sport premium is used well to promote participation in a variety of sports, both during physical education lessons and through extra-curricular activities, such as netball and football clubs. The spending is analysed closely to ensure that it is having the desired impact.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is good. Leaders have a secure understanding of the principles of the code of practice

and can demonstrate how additional support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is helping them to make better progress. Individual education plans are of good quality. Leaders identify appropriate support and monitor it well as part of an established cycle of reviews. This means that pupils' plans are useful to teachers in adapting their teaching to meet the needs of pupils in their classes who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- Middle leadership in the school has undergone some recent substantial changes and the new team has not yet had the chance to demonstrate sustained and significant impact. The special educational needs coordinator, the literacy leader and the numeracy leader are all new to their roles and bring enthusiasm to them. They are being well supported by senior leaders and the established early years and phonics leader in order to develop further their understanding of how to carry out these roles effectively.

Governance of the school

- The quality of governance of the school has improved since the previous inspection. The trust has installed an interim management board (IMB) to replace the local governing body. This board has a good understanding of the school's context, current performance and areas it needs to work on. The IMB is made up largely of senior leaders and trustees and is accountable to the whole board of trustees for its work. Records show that the IMB is challenged effectively by the board to secure improvements in pupils' education.
- Trustees and leaders have a clear idea of the future of governance at the school. They have begun the process of transforming the IMB into a local academy board by starting to recruit parents to sit on it.
- The multi-academy trust is providing effective support to the school. This can be seen in several areas, such as the moderation of pupils' work, teacher training and development, and safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The head of school acts as the designated safeguarding lead for the school. Supported by the trust, he has ensured that a secure culture of safeguarding is in place, not least through ongoing, frequent training for staff. Leaders are aware of the new elements in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2018) and all staff had training on this at the start of term. The culture of safeguarding pays close attention to the school's context, and staff training is well focused on developing their understanding of this.
- Some minor clerical omissions in the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff were corrected during the inspection. The checks had been carried out but had not been recorded in the central record initially shown to the inspector.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Leaders have successfully tackled key areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report.
- Teaching is now planned more precisely to meet the needs of pupils, including when they are taught in mixed-age and mixed-ability classes. Teachers have high expectations and plan challenging work. Teachers develop pupils' conceptual understanding well. For example, pupils in Year 1 develop their initial understanding of fair testing in science at an early stage.
- School leaders have put a lot of time and effort into improving the quality of assessment practice in the school. In the past, assessment was often inaccurate, especially at the end of key stage 1. Assessment of pupils' work is much more robust now and gives a much clearer picture of pupils' attainment and progress. Frequent external moderation and standardisation of pupils' work across the trust and through the local teaching school alliance play an important role in this.
- Where teaching is effective, it is characterised by secure assessment of pupils' ongoing progress in the classroom, including through precise use of questioning. When teaching is less effective, however, teachers are not using assessment well enough to judge the security of pupils' current learning. Sometimes questioning is not sharp enough to assess, probe and develop pupils' understanding, address misconceptions and ready them for further learning.
- The teaching of phonics is highly effective. It is well organised by the school's reading leader and taught well by teachers and teaching assistants. Phonics teaching is underpinned by a secure knowledge of the principles and practice of synthetic phonics. As a result, pupils quickly grasp the fundamentals of successful reading and, in 2018, all the pupils in Year 1 reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check.
- Teachers have high expectations of the standard of behaviour in their classrooms. Pupils rise to these expectations and any who slip off task or speak out of turn are quickly brought back to focusing on the task in hand without fuss.
- Teachers follow the school's marking policy consistently and pupils clearly understand the way that it works.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders place pupils' personal development at the heart of the school's work. The curriculum supports personal development well, both in lessons and through additional activities. School trips, for example, widen pupils' horizons and open them up to the possibilities that life might hold. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 returned from a trip to Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose, enthusing about what they had seen and learned there.

- Pupils are developing the habits of successful learners well, as a result of the work of their teachers. Pupils are proud of their work and wear their uniform well. In discussions and in the online survey of their opinions, pupils are very positive about their schooling. As their attendance rates show, they clearly enjoy coming to school. This positive attitude makes an important contribution to the good progress current pupils are making.
- Pupils have an understanding of British values appropriate for their ages. They can describe how they have learned about the variety of faiths in modern Britain and how anyone from a particular faith background should and would be treated equally at the school.
- Pupils say that there is little or no bullying and that the school is a friendly place to attend.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when they are online. Pupils have a good understanding of internet safety and the safety concerns that relate to the use of social media.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well in class and around the school. They are polite to each other and to staff and other adults. They play happily together at break- and lunchtime. Should a pupil slip off task or fall short of teachers' high expectations, they are quickly and willingly brought back to concentrating on their work.
- The vast majority of pupils have developed the self-discipline they need to behave appropriately. There is very little disruption to learning as a result of off-task behaviour. In recent years, school leaders have not had to use either permanent or fixed-term exclusions.
- Pupils' attendance has been in line with the national average for the last two years. Persistent absence has fallen to below the national average. The attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is particularly good. Overall, pupils are keen to come to school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The pupils currently at Foxhole Learning Academy are making good progress and attaining well, including children in early years. They acquire secure knowledge across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Pupils' work shows that they are making good progress across all year groups. Challenging teaching ensures that pupils are able to move forward in their learning, whatever their starting points. This good progress is most clearly seen in pupils who in the past were working at below the age-related expectations for their year group. The work of such pupils indicates that they are making rapid and sustained progress as they catch up. The quality of pupils' work correlates well with the information in the school's assessment tracking, which also indicates a positive picture of progress across

the year groups and key stages.

- Attainment at the end of key stage 2 has risen considerably since the trust took over the school. For example, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading at the end of key stage 2 has risen from 36% to 67%. In mathematics, it has risen from 18% to 61%. Attainment in writing is now in line with the national average. Improved attainment at key stage 2 is especially noticeable for disadvantaged pupils and for girls, both of whose average-scaled scores in reading and mathematics have improved significantly.
- Similarly, attainment in key stage 1 is improving. In reading, it has been well above the national average for the last two years. All of the pupils in Year 1 who took the phonics screening check in 2018 met the expected standard.
- Reading across the school is promoted well by staff. Pupils are keen readers and can talk in an informed way about the books they are reading as a class and in their own personal reading. Pupils successfully use their phonics knowledge to help themselves tackle unfamiliar or tricky words.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, whether that is moving from Reception to Year 1 or moving on to secondary school. Leaders work very closely with the local secondary school that most pupils join in Year 7 to ensure a smooth transition.
- The picture of good progress for pupils currently in the school will not be reflected in the published information relating to progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2. A key reason for this is that assessment in the past, before the current leadership and trust took over the school, was very weak, especially at the end of key stage 1. Inflated assessments of attainment at the end of key stage 1 render the progress recorded at the end of key stage 2 inaccurate. School leaders have acted swiftly to ensure that assessment across the whole school is now on a much more robust footing. Assessments of the progress that current pupils make are now very secure.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision at Foxhole Learning Academy is very well led. Teaching staff have a very clear understanding of the statutory framework and the early learning goals it contains. As a result, teaching is well organised, and children make good progress.
- The quality of assessment in early years is strong. Initial assessments of children's stage of development on entry are supported well by home visits and information from parents. As a result, staff have a good understanding of children's individual learning needs. Children settle in well and get down to learning quickly. For example, after only two weeks in the school, children currently in Reception have made a strong start to learning initial sounds and letters.
- Teaching staff continue with high-quality assessment throughout children's journey through Reception Year. Children's learning journeys record their progress efficiently and well. Assessment is accurate and is used well to identify children's next steps. While in the rest of the school ongoing assessment in the classroom is an area for improvement, in early years it is a strength.

- Leaders encourage parents and carers to become closely involved in their child's education, including through electronic means. Leaders are persistent in these attempts and levels of parental engagement are high.
- Children have access to a wide range of stimulating activities, indoors and out. The early years leader has given clear thought as to how the provision is organised to promote good learning. Children quickly get used to using the various areas and there is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. This all allows children to make progress towards the full range of early learning goals.
- Attainment is good in early years. For the last four years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception has been at or above the national average, often from lower than average starting points.
- Children behave well in early years. They quickly develop the ability to learn and to play cooperatively.
- The good progress that children make in early years means that they are well prepared to enter Year 1. One indication of this is the high proportion who go on to reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Safeguarding is effective, as it is in the school as a whole, and there are no breaches of the welfare requirements as outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'.

School details

Unique reference number	140332
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10058310

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Kay Crosse
Headteacher	Matthew Oakley (Head of School) Claire Smith (Executive Headteacher)
Telephone number	01726 822416
Website	www.foxhole.cornwall.sch.uk
Email address	secretary.foxhole@tlat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 October–24 November 2016

Information about this school

- Foxhole Learning Academy is a small primary school. It is part of The Learning Academy Trust (TLAT). Since the last inspection, local governance has become the responsibility of an interim management board, which reports to the board of trustees. The trust has a chief executive officer, who oversees the work of the executive headteacher and the head of school.
- Pupils are currently taught in four classes: Reception; Years 1 and 2; Years 3 and 4; and Years 5 and 6. These arrangements can vary from year to year, depending on the size of each individual year group.
- The school has a much larger proportion of disadvantaged pupils than the national average. It is situated in an area of higher than average deprivation.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with the head of school, the executive headteacher and the chief executive officer of the trust throughout the two days of inspection. He also held meetings with the chair of the interim management board, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator and the leaders for literacy and numeracy. The inspector spoke to the chair of the board of trustees by telephone.
- The inspector visited lessons, where he looked at pupils' work and talked to them about their learning. In addition, he looked at large samples of pupils' work from all year groups, including early years.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils from a range of year groups and listened to some of them read aloud.
- Before and during the inspection, the inspector examined a range of documentation relating to all aspects of the school's work, including safeguarding.
- In making his judgements, the inspector took into account the responses to Ofsted's online surveys. There were eight responses to Parent View, five of which left additional free-text comments. There were 17 responses to the pupil survey and 10 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Stephen Lee, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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