

Copplestone Primary School

Bewsley Hill, Copplestone, Crediton, Devon EX17 5NX

Inspection dates

25–26 September 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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have failed to develop a curriculum to sustain an outstanding standard of education for pupils in the school. Too many pupils are not suitably prepared for the next stage in their education.
- School leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good.
- Several middle leaders are new to their roles and have still to develop the skills needed to lead their areas of responsibility well.
- Imprecise improvement plans hinder leaders' ability to check the effectiveness of their actions. This slows down the pace of improvement.
- Too few middle-ability pupils go on to achieve high standards because teaching does not challenge them to do their best.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have been too low for too long. Teachers in key stage 2 have paid too little attention to pupils' starting points in the past.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make good progress.
- The writing of too many pupils in key stage 2 is marred by errors in their grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent from school.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are not consistently good in all classes and subjects.
- Many parents and carers express concerns that leaders' communication has been weak and children's behaviour poor.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed head of school has quickly gained the confidence of parents.
- The early years provides children with a good start to school. They become confident, able and inquisitive because of good teaching.
- Over the past year, the momentum of improvement has gained pace as a result of leaders' decisions and determined efforts.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics at Year 1 has been consistently above the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - tackling the variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that there is greater consistency across classes and subjects
 - sharpening leaders' plans for improving the school to show clearly when and how success will be assured
 - supporting middle leaders' skills in bringing about improvement in their subjects
 - ensuring that governors hold senior leaders rigorously to account for the quality of provision in the school, particularly for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - improving communication with parents.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils in key stages 1 and 2, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, make at least good progress by teachers:
 - providing greater challenge for middle-ability pupils
 - helping pupils to develop their skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling
 - adapting activities when individual pupils need additional support.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - teaching pupils the skills of effective learners so that they consistently take pride in their work and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning
 - ensuring that the attendance of pupils who are persistently absent from school improves.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has experienced considerable changes in staffing since the previous inspection. Current leaders are promoting significant changes for the better. However, school improvement has not been rapid enough to overturn weaknesses.
- School leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good. Staff training has been effective in improving teachers' subject knowledge. However, improvements in the quality of teaching have yet to compensate for previous gaps in pupils' learning.
- Middle leaders that are new to their roles have made a good start to address weaknesses. However, they do not yet have the skills needed to lead their areas of responsibility well.
- Leaders' plans for further improvements are based on an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, planned actions are not always outlined clearly and lack precision. Consequently, the information provided does not enable governors to offer leaders the challenge they need to tackle remaining weaknesses swiftly.
- Leaders do not communicate effectively with parents. Several parents express concerns that senior leaders have not dealt with poor behaviour well. However, parents spoke positively about changes over the past year and particularly this term. They describe a marked difference in leaders' expectations and say that the school atmosphere is much more positive.
- Changes in teaching and previously low staff morale have held back pupils' achievement. Over the past year, the quality of education provided is once again moving in the right direction. Almost all of the current staff support the positive changes being made in the school. Staff morale is gathering strength.
- New appointments are enthusiastic and keen to make a difference. For example, the newly appointed federation special educational needs leader has already supported teachers to enhance the quality of their support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Leaders are establishing strong links for staff to visit and liaise with other schools. These actions have been effective. Teachers' skills are improving. Even so, turbulence in teaching and previously low staff morale have held back pupils' achievement.
- Leaders understand and take full account of issues affecting disadvantaged pupils' learning. They set appropriate priorities and actions for the use of the pupil premium funding. This is helping the few disadvantaged pupils to learn more successfully.
- Leaders previously identified areas for improvement in reading. Their actions to raise the profile of reading and to develop a reading culture and love for reading have been successful.
- Similarly, leaders previously identified weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics. New approaches to planning, together with intensive staff training to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge, have paid off. More pupils are achieving well in mathematics.

- Leaders have been effective in their approach to raising pupils' overall attendance but recognise there is more to be done.

Governance of the school

- Governors take their roles seriously. Their commitment to the school can be seen in the successful way they have developed their systems in line with advice from a recent governance audit.
- Governors are aware of their duty to monitor the use of additional funding. Governors' challenge to leaders is increasingly reflected in improved standards of attainment for disadvantaged pupils. However, governors' actions have had limited influence in making sure that additional special educational needs funding supports pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make the progress they need. They do not have a clear enough view of the success of initiatives. This is primarily because the information governors receive from leaders in the school does not assist them in gathering a clear view of the progress that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's performance. They debate and challenge what leaders tell them. Governors undertake visits to understand the school's performance. They write reports and share them with other governors to consider any necessary action.
- Governors have acted decisively to ensure that there is leadership capacity within the federation. In 2018, Devon Moors Federation joined with a local trust to form a cooperative partnership. The school has restructured, and several middle leaders are new to their posts.
- The governing body has been instrumental in determining a new and more rigorous term report of standards from heads of school and the executive headteacher.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established effective routines and systems to keep pupils safe. In addition, they responded promptly to a local authority audit to ensure that pupils were clear about who to go to if they had concerns. Pupils say they feel confident to raise any worries they have with staff.
- The designated safeguarding leaders ensure that staff are competent in identifying and reporting concerns. Leaders keep detailed records of actions taken and are persistent in pursuing help from local authority services for vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Leaders ensure that employment checks are in place in line with statutory requirements.
- Leaders are alert to potential risks to pupils. For example, the buildings and grounds are secure and the identity of visitors is checked fully by office staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too many teachers do not make effective use of the information they have about what pupils already know, understand and can do. This often results in pupils completing work that is too easy or too hard for them. These lingering inconsistencies in teaching continue to hold back pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils. The presentation of pupils' work, and the quality of their handwriting, are not consistently high across the school.
- The teaching of writing across the year groups varies in its effectiveness. On too many occasions, in Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils' work repeatedly shows simple spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.
- Teachers are increasingly using their improved subject knowledge in mathematics to use questioning that deepens pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts. Consequently, standards are improving. Pupils who had gaps in their learning are beginning to catch up. However, some teaching fails to provide the necessary challenge for pupils of average ability to reach the higher standards.
- The teaching of reading skills has been a strong focus for leaders and teachers. There is now a consistent approach to the teaching of reading skills across the school. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' abilities to provide the appropriate match of reading books. As a result, most current pupils are achieving well in reading.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are making better use of their assessments this year to quickly identify gaps in pupils' learning to help pupils catch up.
- Although improving, teachers' work to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not finely tuned to pupils' needs and therefore is not helping to remove barriers to their learning. On occasions, pupils lose attention and their behaviour becomes negative because of a mismatch of work to their needs.
- In most year groups, teachers engender positive relationships with pupils, who in turn show great respect for their teachers and others in the class. However, teachers in some classes struggle to motivate pupils and this results in pupils not concentrating as well as they should.

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 reported that, in the past, they have not felt safe at school because of the poor behaviour of a small number of pupils. Several parents expressed a similar view. However, pupils say they feel safe now because pupils are complying to the new school rules increasingly well.
- A few pupils' negative attitude to learning in year groups across the school results in low-level disruption and slows down pupils' progress. However, pupils' attitudes are improving. Work in pupils' books reflects that pupils are taking a greater pride in their

work and are achieving more in lessons this year.

- Leaders have implemented new systems to help pupils to understand what it is to be a successful learner. However, these systems have yet to be fully established to bring about strong learning behaviours.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In some lessons and year groups, a minority of pupils quickly lose concentration and consequently do not make the progress they should. This low-level disruption is not consistently addressed by teaching staff swiftly enough.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They are polite and friendly. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are harmonious occasions where pupils play happily together.
- Pupils' overall attendance has increased to be in line with the national average. However, the school has failed to tackle the poor attendance of pupils who are regularly absent from school. Too many pupils are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been below the national average for the past two years. Although there were slight improvements in 2018, too few pupils make the progress they should, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- A high proportion of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 do not have the skills they need to be proficient writers. Despite their good understanding of phonics, pupils' spelling is often inaccurate. Their grammar and punctuation skills undermine the good vocabulary and content of their writing.
- Current pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not made good progress from their starting points. Although leaders have been successful in ensuring that pupils' individual plans are suitably matched to their needs, other work does not support these pupils to make strong enough gains in their progress. Interventions to meet these pupils' needs and accelerate progress have not been in place long enough to fully evaluate the impact.
- Although boys and girls in the early years and Year 1 achieve equally well, historically, gender differences begin to emerge by the end of key stage 1. Gender gaps are closing; however, boys who are low prior achievers do not catch up quickly enough.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils' progress is variable across year groups and subjects. In the past, key stage 1 pupils have achieved better standards than key stage 2 pupils in science, for example. This is because work in key stage 2 has not been as well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils' behaviour has deteriorated as a result and, consequently, their progress has slowed.
- Over time, too few pupils have caught up from their low starting points in mathematics by the end of key stage 1. Standards improved in 2018 so that more pupils made good progress to reach the expected standard in mathematics compared to others nationally.

In addition, a greater proportion of pupils reached the higher standards.

- Pupils in key stage 2 demonstrate increasingly proficient skills in mathematics, overcoming previously weak achievement. The most able pupils continue to make good progress. However, too few average-attaining pupils go on to make strong progress to reach the higher standards.
- Although improving, attainment in writing has been below the national average at key stage 1 for the past two years. However, 2018 saw a rise in the number of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards in writing. Work in books this term shows that pupils in Year 3 continue to achieve well in writing. They punctuate their sentences appropriately and make effective use of vocabulary.
- The few disadvantaged pupils make good progress and their attainment is broadly average. Differences between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics screening checks is consistently above the national average.
- Key stage 1 pupils' reading skills have risen year on year and are now above the national averages. The proportion of pupils who reach the higher standards in reading is also in line with the national average. Improvements in the quality of the teaching of reading at key stage 2 are also reflected in improved outcomes. Pupils' attainment in reading at key stage 2 is now in line with the national average.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start in the early years. As a result of effective teaching, children develop good learning behaviour. They listen attentively and are eager to learn and explore. Transition arrangements into the Reception class are effective. Pre-school and the Reception class share outdoor spaces and staff. Consequently, children rapidly adapt to the Reception class and settle with ease.
- Early years staff foster positive relationships with parents. Parents contribute to their child's learning journey and are kept well informed about their child's school day.
- Adults in the early years are effective in developing children's level of independence. Resources are organised safely and effectively so that pupils can make choices in their learning. As a result of adults' effective encouragement and guidance, children quickly develop good listening skills and share equipment well.
- Adults in the early years model effective talking strategies. These are prioritised to ensure that good-quality speaking and listening activities deepen children's understanding and curiosity to learn in a wide range of activities across the day. As a result, increasingly, children are developing their speech and language skills well.
- Children develop a wide range of valuable skills. This is because staff plan activities carefully and use assessment precisely to identify where children need further support or challenge. Both the pre-school and Reception class indoor and outdoor spaces have a wealth of inviting resources and planned activities to ignite children's curiosity and imagination.
- High levels of staff supervision and well-qualified staff ensure that children are safe.

Leaders keep effective records when incidents occur and carry out daily risk assessments. Children are taught how to keep safe. For example, a child using a toy chainsaw told the inspector how to be safe, citing how it is important for him to wear goggles, gloves and a helmet.

- Staff ensure that children who have SEN and/or disabilities have their needs identified quickly and they seek advice to ensure that these children receive the support they need. Effective liaison with health and external agencies ensures that staff are well-placed to support children's needs.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils within the early years to form any meaningful comparison with national averages.
- Children enter the pre-school with levels of development typical for their age and make good progress in all aspects of their development. The proportion of children leaving the early years with a good level of development has been consistently above the national average for the past few years. There was a dip in 2018, but this still represented good progress from children's starting points because several children caught up from low starting points. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	113068
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10049067

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jayne Hooper
Executive headteacher	Stephen Mellor
Telephone number	01363 84265
Website	www.copplestone-primary.devon.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@copplestone-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2013

Information about this school

- Copplestone is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is part of the Devon Moors Federation, a federation of four schools. The schools are managed by the same governing body and they have joint budgetary arrangements.
- In February 2018, the federation joined with the United Schools' Learning Partnership in a cooperative trust. Trust leaders have supported the school's senior leaders in the recruitment of new staff and in making checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is above the national average.

- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The local authority has provided support to the school in developing subject leadership in English and mathematics. In addition, the local authority has carried out audits of the school's safeguarding, special educational needs and behaviour management practices.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out visits, accompanied by senior leaders, to all classes across the school. They held discussions with pupils, both formally and informally, to find out what it is like to be a pupil in this school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders and middle leaders to discuss the impact of their actions. The lead inspector held a meeting with two representatives of the governing body. She also conducted a phone call to a local authority representative.
- Inspectors gained the views of parents at the beginning and end of the school day. The responses of 50 parents to the online survey, Parent View, were considered along with parents' free-text messages.
- Documents were scrutinised, including school improvement plans and leaders' notes of the checks they make on the quality of teaching. Inspectors also examined notes from external reviews and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- Safeguarding documents were scrutinised, including the school's record of the recruitment checks made on adults, risk assessments and records of incidents of pupils' poor behaviour.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alexander Baxter

Ofsted Inspector

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