

Tor Bridge Primary School

Miller Way, Estover, Plymouth, Devon PL6 8UN

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders at all levels do not have the capacity to bring about the urgent improvements needed. Leaders have failed to tackle the school's endemic weaknesses over a sustained period.
- The day-to-day management of the school is weak. Leaders have not been successful in ensuring that staff follow school policies. The school does not function as it should.
- Leadership of teaching and the curriculum is poor. All too often, learning time is wasted.
- Leaders do not provide governors with the information they need to challenge whole-school effectiveness.
- Teaching is inadequate. Teachers' assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do are inaccurate. Teachers do not plan work that meets pupils' needs, limiting their progress.
- Pupils' poor behaviour in lessons and around the school is accepted as the norm.
- Teaching does not challenge or motivate pupils. Middle-attaining pupils, the most able and disadvantaged pupils, do not make the progress they should. As pupils move through the year groups, they fall further behind.
- Leaders accurately identify weaknesses in the teaching of reading. However, changes made are fragile and too recent to see any impact.
- The teaching of writing and mathematics is not good enough. Pupils' underachievement is prevalent across the school.
- Limited strategic oversight of early years means that the school's self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses is inaccurate. Provision is not matched to children's academic and emotional needs well.
- Leaders' feedback to teachers is not having the required impact. As a result, weaknesses in teaching are not remedied successfully and pupils' underachievement continues.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils who attend the school's resource base for speech and language development receive bespoke teaching that meets their needs well.
- The most vulnerable pupils receive caring and nurturing support.
- The very recently appointed chair of governors has brought clarity and direction. Governors are increasingly aware of the enormity of the task ahead.
- Safeguarding is effective.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the governing body secures leadership capacity in the school at all levels
 - leaders provide governors with the information they need to evaluate the school's effectiveness, including the impact of pupil premium funding
 - the school's curriculum is sufficiently challenging and curriculum requirements are met fully
 - leaders' checks on teaching are thorough and teachers act on leaders' advice, so that pupils who have previously underachieved catch up quickly and pupils' outcomes are improved rapidly
 - middle leaders have the skills and knowledge they need to support teachers in planning work to eradicate pupils' prior underachievement in English and mathematics
 - operational leadership of the school day, including the timetabling of lessons and the management of pupils' behaviour, is effective
 - school policies are adhered to by all staff, and teachers' expectations of pupils in lessons, at social times and around school are consistently high
 - disadvantaged pupils, the middle-attaining and the most able pupils make consistently good progress
 - leaders' self-evaluation of whole-school effectiveness is accurate.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - the teaching of reading prepares pupils well for their next stage of education
 - teachers' assessment is accurate and used to inform teaching consistently well
 - teachers plan work that meets pupils' needs so that middle-attaining and the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged are challenged appropriately in writing and mathematics
 - teaching in early years is consistently good, assessment is accurate, and provision is matched closely to children's academic and emotional needs.
- Improve the quality of personal development and welfare urgently by ensuring that:
 - teaching motivates and interests pupils, so that pupils' wilful and persistent disruptions to lessons are minimised and pupils consistently apply their best effort to their learning

- learning time is used to its full extent across the day.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders do not demonstrate the capacity to drive the school forward. Leaders at all levels have not tackled the endemic weaknesses at the school with the rapidity required. The school does not provide an acceptable standard of education. Over a sustained period, pupils have been poorly served. Too few pupils are prepared well for their next stage.
- Weak strategic leadership, including in early years, has resulted in widespread failings. The headteacher does not hold other leaders to account for the impact of their work well enough. Senior and middle leaders' actions have not addressed pupils' widespread underachievement borne out of weak teaching.
- Leaders' inaccurate self-evaluation of the school's performance has been too readily accepted by school governors. The school has been overly reliant on external support. However, little improvement to whole-school effectiveness has been achieved over a number of years.
- The day-to-day leadership of the school is weak. The headteacher and other senior leaders have not ensured that teachers and pupils follow school policies consistently. When leaders ask staff to make changes, some staff are slow to respond. Leaders do not go back and check that improvements are implemented. As a result, discrepancies to school policies and weaknesses in whole-school management remain prevalent.
- Leaders are not taking effective steps to secure good behaviour from pupils. Leaders do not ensure that staff adhere to a consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching over time are not effective. There is a monitoring programme in place to check teaching. However, too much emphasis has been given to checking the strategies teachers use, rather than the impact that teaching has on pupils' progress from their starting points. Leaders' checks on teaching have not been successful in eradicating pupils' widespread underachievement. As a result, weak teaching remains a predominant feature across the school.
- Leaders do not ensure that teaching time is maximised. Learning time is wasted because pupils in a number of year groups spend too long within lessons moving from one teaching space to another. This restricts pupils' exposure to teaching and pupils' learning diminishes.
- Leaders have not assured themselves that teachers' assessments are accurate. Although professional discussions do take place, the headteacher has not checked that these assessments are correct. As a result, governors receive inaccurate information about how well pupils are progressing across their time at school. Inaccurate assessment information accounts for the wide differences between teachers' over-generous assessments and published outcomes that are much lower in reading. Leaders have also failed to challenge and check teachers' assessments in writing at the end of key stage 1. Governors have been too accepting of the improvements that leaders report.
- Leaders' actions to ensure that pupils can read well are not yet effective. Under the

current leadership, pupils' outcomes in reading have continued to decline steeply in key stage 2. Leaders' very recent actions are commendable, but it is too little, too late. Pupils' motivation to read is improving steadily. However, in the few weeks that changes to the teaching of reading have been applied, inconsistencies in this agreed whole-school strategy are already creeping in because leaders have not checked the implementation of the reading curriculum well enough.

- Leaders' use of pupil premium funding has not had an effective impact on pupils' academic performance in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupil premium strategy does not have clear and measurable success criteria. Additional funds have supported broad interventions: the improvement of school attendance for some disadvantaged pupils and closer work between vulnerable families and school. Pupils' emotional development is well catered for. However, disadvantaged pupils' academic performance remains poor.
- The leadership of the curriculum for pupils who attend the resource base for speech and language development is effective. As a result, these pupils make strong progress against their individual targets. However, leaders' interventions to support other pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are not yet effective in ensuring that these pupils make strong academic progress.
- Most respondents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school. However, a minority of parents and carers raised concerns about the leadership of the school, and about the lack of information about their children's progress, and communication.
- The additional primary physical education and sport funding is used well. It has been used to develop staff's skills and has improved pupils' engagement in sport. Pupils experience wide-ranging sporting activities and take-up is high. Leaders have ensured that pupils become involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities to bolster pupils' experiences, such as children's university leadership opportunities across the school. However, the leadership of the curriculum is poor overall. As a result, the curriculum that is implemented is not challenging enough. Curriculum coverage and progression, in some subjects, including humanities, are weak.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governors have failed to hold school leaders to account for improving the school's effectiveness over several years. However, in recent months, a comprehensive package of training has been delivered by a national leader of governance to overhaul the work of the governing body. This, along with very recent changes to the leadership of the governing body, are bringing about immediate improvements to the way governors work. There are early signs of improvement. For example, records of governors' meetings have improved this term. Overall, however, it is too early to see the impact on school effectiveness.
- Until recently, governors have been too accepting of the information they have received from school leaders. This has made it difficult for governors to hold leaders to account in the past. However, the current leadership of the governing body insists that clear guidance is provided to school leaders about what information is required, and

when. Despite this, governors still find it difficult to gain the information they need. This hinders the impact that governors have overall.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders recently commissioned an external safeguarding audit and have followed up any actions quickly. Staff vetting checks and the single central record are up to date. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding make timely referrals and work closely with a range of external agencies to minimise children’s risk of harm. They are tenacious in following concerns through and challenge other agencies as required to ensure that the needs of pupils are met.
- Staff provide strong care and nurturing support for vulnerable pupils. Staff training is up to date and in line with legislation. Staff apply their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding practice confidently, so that pupils’ risk of harm is minimised. However, some safeguarding records are not as well organised as they could be. Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching over time has failed to prepare pupils well for their next stage of education. Leaders have not remedied considerable shortcomings in teaching. Teaching does not meet pupils’ needs well enough. As a result, pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge and skills. This restricts the progress they make towards attaining the standards expected for their age.
- Teachers’ assessments are inaccurate in some classes. Consequently, teachers do not plan work that is closely matched to pupils’ needs. Tasks do not motivate pupils to concentrate. Pupils do not sustain their concentration on tasks, restricting the progress they make. At times, pupils’ wilful disruptions to lessons prevent other pupils from making the progress they should.
- Teachers’ expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Teaching does not challenge middle-attaining and the most able pupils. Although teachers vary the challenge offered through a range of tasks, even the most challenging tasks on offer are sometimes too easy and pupils finish quickly. So, pupils’ learning falters over time.
- Too few teachers have suitable skills in classroom management. This can result in pupils talking over teachers, calling out and demonstrating inappropriate behaviour in lessons. Pupils in some classes are often out of their seats or off task. Teaching assistants overcompensate and deploy caring strategies to manage pupils back to task. However, this restricts the impact that teaching assistants have on pupils’ learning over time.
- The deployment of other adults varies widely across the school. In a few classes, they provide focused teaching to good effect. In other classes, there is little oversight of what teaching assistants are doing when they are working with small groups of pupils.
- Since September 2018, leaders have enhanced the whole-school strategy to teach reading. Just a few weeks in, this is already motivating key stage 2 pupils to read more often. However, it is too early to see any impact on how well pupils read. The teaching

of reading has been weak over time. This limits pupils' understanding of what they read and slows pupils' progress.

- Teaching does not require pupils to write with the accuracy, complexity and detail expected for their age. Considerable weaknesses in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar remain across the school. Current teaching of writing is not making amends for pupils' prior underachievement. Pupils are not catching up quickly enough.
- The school's approach to teaching mathematics is not fully effective. Teaching does not stretch or challenge pupils sufficiently. Staff training has improved teachers' knowledge of the national curriculum. As a result, the full curriculum is increasingly taught. However, teaching in mathematics does not consistently meet the needs of middle-attaining and the most able pupils. The teaching of music, physical education and computing motivates pupils. Pupils say that they enjoy the curriculum on offer. However, inspectors found the coverage of the national curriculum to be too variable, for example in humanities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. The poorly planned and delivered curriculum restricts pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils lack the determination and resilience to develop as confident learners.
- Weak teaching does not motivate or interest pupils. Many pupils find it difficult to remain on task in lessons. Persistent disruption in lessons impedes pupils' progress over time. Teaching assistants provide nurturing support. However, this masks poor teaching, which over time restricts pupils' personal and academic development.
- Breakfast club is a positive start to the day for pupils. Pupils enjoy attending and benefit from a healthy breakfast, so they are ready to learn.
- Pupils say that when bullying occurs, staff sort it out quickly. Pupils said that they trust adults to deal with concerns fairly.
- Inspectors witnessed pupils being disrespectful and unpleasant to each other in lessons and at social times around school. All too often, this is accepted by pupils and staff do not follow it up. Maintaining high staff supervision ratios at breaktimes does not tackle these weaknesses effectively.
- The school provides strong emotional support for its most vulnerable pupils through the work of the parent support adviser and staff's close work with external agencies.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. In several classes, pupils' wilful poor behaviour disrupts teaching. This is not managed consistently because leaders have not implemented a consistent system for the management of poor behaviour in the school.
- Persistent low-level disruption is commonplace in many classes. It is accepted as the norm. Behaviour at lunchtimes is poor. Pupils' return to classrooms after lunch is

disorderly and poorly managed. Squabbles in classrooms and corridors are accepted behaviour. Exclusions were high in 2017. There have been no exclusions so far this year.

- Pupils' attendance has declined over a three-year period. It remains below the national average. Current systems, in place to support pupils and families to improve attendance, are paying off. Persistent absenteeism is reducing because of the effective multi-agency work and leaders' drive to ensure that pupils attend well. However, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities do not attend school regularly enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' underachievement is prevalent across the school. Teaching is not enabling pupils who have previously underachieved to catch up. As pupils move through key stage 2, they fall further behind. Leaders' actions have not stemmed this decline.
- School performance information shows some improvement in pupils' outcomes in writing overall. However, current assessment systems are not fit for purpose. All too often, teachers' assessments of pupils' writing are inaccurate.
- Too few pupils are prepared well for secondary school. Less than half of Year 6 pupils transferred to secondary school with the reading skills expected for their age in 2018. This represents poor progress and hinders pupils' access to the key stage 3 curriculum. In 2018, the proportion of pupils with skills and knowledge in line with their age dipped considerably in reading, mathematics, and grammar, punctuation and spelling. There is a significant shortfall between unvalidated key stage 2 outcomes in 2018 in reading and mathematics and teachers' internal assessment measures from the same period.
- Pupils' progress in reading in key stage 2 is too slow. Pupils who have previously had average attainment in reading are slipping behind. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not read with the accuracy or understanding they should.
- In 2016 and 2017, just over half of pupils left key stage 1 with below-average skills and knowledge in writing and mathematics. School performance information shows improvements in 2018. However, current workbooks of Year 3 pupils demonstrate that a considerably smaller proportion of these pupils have sustained their skills and knowledge now they are in Year 3.
- Across the last three years, the proportion of pupils who meet the required standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has increased to be broadly in line with that in other schools nationally. Current teaching of phonics varies widely across different groups. It does not make amends for previously identified weaknesses in pupils' understanding in some groups. Some pupils do not use and apply their knowledge of phonics to read and write accurately. As a result, a majority of pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Across several years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development, the standard that is expected at the end of early years, has been consistently below the national average. While there was some improvement evident in 2018, the proportion of disadvantaged children who have the skills and knowledge expected for their age has remained low. Too few children are prepared well for Year 1.

- Pupils who have previously average attainment, the most able, disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make insufficient progress in reading, writing and mathematics, over time. Pupils have gaps in their learning because of previously weak teaching. Current teaching is not enabling these pupils to catch up. As a result, pupils' underachievement persists.
- Conversely, those pupils who benefit from bespoke teaching as part of the additional resource base provision make good, and often rapid, progress, because this teaching meets their needs well.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The school's self-evaluation of early years is inaccurate. Poor strategic leadership means that senior leaders have not ensured that children's well-being and behaviour management are checked and consistently followed.
- For the last four years, children's knowledge, understanding and skills have been below the national average when they complete the early years foundation stage. Few disadvantaged children leave Reception with the skills and knowledge they need to access the Year 1 curriculum. There was some improvement in 2018. However, for some lower attaining children, their skills and knowledge were fragile and have not been sustained.
- Leaders have deployed funding to improve the teaching of speaking skills. Last year, staff were trained, and some improvements made. However, training for new staff is only just starting and so some strategies used in the past are now absent.
- When children are exploring the environment independently, adults do not promote children's early language development well enough. Direct teaching by teaching staff is well focused to particular tasks. However, adults do not have oversight of what other children are doing when they learn independently. As a result, there is insufficient modelling and promotion of speaking and insufficient assessment of children when working alone or with peers.
- Children engage in a variety of activities indoors and out. The inside learning environment is untidy and not well cared for. Children are not encouraged to keep the classroom tidy. Conversely, children use equipment well outside when supervised by additional adults.
- The teaching of phonics is regular and systematic. Children's motivation to learn varies from group to group. Teachers model and correct inaccurate pencil grip. Early writing strategies are closely linked to phonics teaching. This is helping current children to experiment with early reading and writing with increasing success.

School details

Unique reference number	113327
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10052974

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

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	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona MacLachlan-Morris
Headteacher	Cathryn Tompkins
Telephone number	01752 207903
Website	www.torbridge.net
Email address	admin@torbridge.net
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2016

Information about this school

- Tor Bridge Primary School is based on a large campus where pupils share their sports and dining facilities with pupils from a secondary school and a special school. Some communal areas of Tor Bridge Primary School are shared with the special school.
- There is a specialist resource base for speech and language provision.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for special educational needs is above the national average. The proportion of those who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in visits to lessons across the school, and reviewed pupils' work in books and curriculum plans.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. Inspectors also listened to the views of many pupils during lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, middle leaders and three teaching assistants in the school. Inspectors met with representatives of the local authority. An inspector held a telephone conversation with the director of schools in Plymouth. An inspector also met with four members of the governing body and held an additional meeting with the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of school documents including: the school's action plans; the school's view of its own performance; pupils' performance information; minutes of governing body meetings; records relating to behaviour; checks on teaching and learning; pupils' attendance information; and a range of safeguarding records.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at lunchtimes and breaktimes, and around the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Parent View, and free-text message responses. Inspectors also talked to parents during the inspection to seek their views of the school and the education their children receive. Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views and also considered responses from the staff online survey.
- An inspector visited the breakfast club.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matt Middlemore	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen McShane	Her Majesty's Inspector

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