

# Brunel Primary & Nursery Academy

Callington Road, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 6DX

## Inspection dates

13–14 November 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have not acted decisively or quickly enough to prevent the school's performance from declining significantly. Leaders' capacity to ensure sustainable improvement is weak.
- Leaders do not check actions sufficiently to ensure that recent initiatives to improve learning are being implemented consistently and are having an impact.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress and their attainment is too low.
- Pupils do not learn basic skills in reading and mathematics well. This means that they cannot make good progress across the wider curriculum and are ill equipped for the next stage in their education.
- Teaching is poorly planned. It does not meet pupils' needs. Too often, work is too hard or too easy.
- Leaders' and teachers' assessment of pupils' current performance and progress is inaccurate. As a result, teaching is not securely based on what pupils need to learn next.
- Leaders do not ensure that the work of teaching assistants is sufficiently focused on improving the learning of pupils.
- Children do not make enough progress in the early years as there is not enough priority given to developing key skills in the activities on offer.
- Governors do not have the skills or the necessary information to challenge leaders and hold them to account.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils generally conduct themselves well around the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong.
- Staff morale has improved recently. There is an emerging willingness to work as a team to bring about change.

## 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?

- Strengthen leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
  - assessment information is accurate and gives a true picture of pupils' attainment and progress
  - the trust board of the multi-academy trust and the local governing body regularly and systematically hold all leaders, including middle leaders, to account for the speed of improvement, the quality of education and the progress of pupils
  - changes that are agreed to improve teaching are implemented consistently and systematically monitored to ensure that they are having the intended impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- Improve pupils' progress through the development of teaching, learning and assessment in all key stages, including early years, by ensuring that:
  - teachers have high expectations for the progress of all pupils
  - teachers' subject and curriculum knowledge is strengthened
  - teachers use assessment information to plan teaching activities so that pupils fill gaps in their understanding and are challenged to learn and apply new knowledge and skills
  - teachers expect high-quality work and remedy pupils' errors quickly
  - pupils acquire phonics knowledge systematically and develop strong skills in grammar, spelling and presentation
  - pupils use their literacy skills to read high-quality and challenging texts, and when writing across the curriculum
  - pupils develop confidence in basic number skills so that they can apply these to well-designed problem-solving and reasoning activities
  - teaching assistants are effectively deployed and focused on improving the learning and progress of pupils.

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

An external review of governance 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 know that the school's performance has declined but their actions have not brought about sustained improvement.
- Leaders' judgements of the current effectiveness of the school and the impact of the recent changes are too generous. At the beginning of this school year, leaders launched a renewed focus on improving learning. Basic expectations about teaching have been set and staff have access to improved professional development. Staff say morale is better and there is now less resistance to change. However, teaching and progress are still inadequate because recent initiatives have had too little impact.
- Leaders' lack of experience, knowledge and skills and the absence of strong monitoring mean that improvement is too slow. Leaders have lacked urgency. The interim headteacher is determined to make things better. Staff value her focus. She values the support and the new initiatives that come from being a part of the multi-academy trust. However, as checking and evaluation are weak, the school does not demonstrate the capacity to show that more recent changes will have any more impact than the changes made previously.
- Some middle leaders do not have the experience or knowledge to support and challenge others to improve. They have an inaccurate view of the quality of education in their areas of responsibility. They do not bring about sustainable improvements.
- Overall, the pupil premium funding is not having the impact it should. Leaders have allocated the pupil premium to establish an additional class and a parental support worker to help with complex family issues, which has had an impact on a few pupils. However, the academic outcomes of disadvantaged pupils remain well below those of other pupils nationally. The lack of clear success criteria for this year's funding means that leaders cannot accurately track the impact of the pupil premium.
- Leaders' use of the physical education and sport premium has encouraged more pupils to engage in sport and other physical activity.
- Most parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire would recommend the school. Parents with whom inspectors spoke confirmed this. A few parents highlighted concerns with leadership, teaching and learning that the inspection confirmed. A few are not satisfied with the quality of communication from the school. Governors and leaders recognise this is a weakness and are committed to tackling it.
- The current curriculum and its delivery are not strong. While pupils enjoy different topic work and activities as they go through the school, they are not developing knowledge and skills in different subjects well.
- Discussions with pupils – and displays around the school – show that pupils use the opportunities the school gives them to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Recently, there has been a school focus on the First World War and remembrance. The school makes efforts to enrich pupils' experiences, for example by hosting theatre groups and arranging trips and residential visits. Pupils take on responsibilities in the school and demonstrate tolerance and understanding of each

other.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are aware that the school's performance has declined, and that their follow-up of actions has been weak. The governing body is too dependent on its own knowledge from visits, without complementing these with systematic data collection and scrutiny. This blunts its focus and challenge.
- The lack of clear strategies for pupil premium funding and additional funding for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) means that governors are unable to evaluate the effectiveness of leaders' use of this funding.
- The multi-academy trust has had complex issues to resolve in the school. These issues have taken a great deal of time and energy. As a result, the school's performance has not improved.
- The multi-academy trust has revised its scheme of delegation recently. It lays out clearly the local governing body's responsibilities. As a result, communication with the board of trustees is stronger. However, current reports are insufficiently evaluative and precise and so do not give a clear picture of the school and its next steps.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders take safeguarding seriously. Several of them have received training at a higher level. They work as a team and follow procedures through effectively. Recent improvements introduced by the multi-academy trust mean that record-keeping is now more effective. The school's parent support adviser works effectively with other agencies to support pupils and families.
- Leaders have had to respond to concerns about the safety of the site. These caused a great deal of disruption in the summer term, some negative press coverage and a great deal of speculation that was extremely unsettling for parents and staff. Documents and discussions with staff demonstrate that the school acted in line with advice at the time and that it has commissioned detailed expert opinion to assure themselves that the site is safe.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They are confident that staff will help them if they are worried or concerned.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Inadequate**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment does not meet the needs of pupils.
- Teachers do not consider the prior learning of pupils adequately. Too frequently, they plan inappropriate activities. This means that some children struggle and rely too much on adult support because they have gaps in their knowledge. Others become bored because the work is too easy.
- Teachers place too much emphasis on covering the content of the curriculum – such as

different styles of writing or different aspects of mathematics – rather than considering whether pupils have mastered the knowledge they require. This means that pupils cover different areas and are busy in lessons but there is little coherence to their work. They are not able to talk about their learning or demonstrate that they have learned to use and apply their knowledge in any meaningful way.

- Too many teachers have weak subject knowledge. As a result, activities are poorly designed, for example teaching grammatical conventions in inappropriate contexts or imprecise reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics. This means that learning is disjointed and does not enable pupils to develop into confident writers and mathematicians.
- Many pupils are not confident with basic numeracy and reading. The activities planned do not take this into account. In some books, there is evidence that pupils struggle, but teachers move them on regardless. Consequently, these pupils are not building on their knowledge and skills effectively.
- Teachers' ongoing assessment during lessons is weak. Too frequently, teachers do not notice that pupils are making the same mistakes repeatedly or completing unnecessary tasks that they can already do.
- Pupils are too dependent on adults to keep them on-task or improve their learning. They are not developing the self-reliance and resilience of effective learners.
- Too often, teaching assistants are not deployed effectively to support learning. On many occasions in class sessions, it is unclear what adults are doing. When teaching assistants are leading groups, they encourage pupils to complete the work, rather than helping them to learn. This allows misconceptions and misunderstandings to remain. They are not skilled in supporting the lower-attaining groups and pupils with SEND, with whom they are frequently asked to work. As a result, too many pupils with SEND – and pupils of lower ability – are not learning effectively.
- Teaching is not challenging the most able pupils. Too often, these pupils must wait while the teacher works with others. Where teachers attempt to offer more challenge, this is often inappropriate. For example, they make pupils practise work they already know or talk about their work to their neighbour, instead of challenging them to deepen their knowledge and apply it.
- Teachers' expectations are too low. Pupils' standard of presentation in their books has slipped since the beginning of term and there is evidence of poor work in writing. In mathematics, pupils are not recording efficiently, and they become confused.
- When work is interesting or teaching is engaging, pupils will listen and participate. However, too often, the activity is inappropriate, and learning is not checked effectively, so pupils opt out and do little.
- In lessons, there are strong relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils are usually cooperative and want to please.

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils comply with adult instruction and complete the work asked of them. There is little evidence, however, of pride in their work or self-motivation to improve.
- Pupils say they feel safe. Adult and pupil relationships are strong, and this is a caring community where everyone looks after each other. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and have a range of strategies for responding to unwanted material. They talk about how to keep themselves safe when out and about in the area.
- Pupils say there is little bullying and adults resolve any concerns they have. Discussions with leaders confirm this. A few parents stated that the response to bullying is not good enough. As leaders do not have any systematic way of formally reporting allegations or trends to governors, this weakens overall confidence in the school's procedures.
- Pupils are unclear about the school values but can discuss the components of British values and are proud of the tolerance that their school shows.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Most pupils conduct themselves appropriately around the school. In lessons, they appear attentive but, frequently, they lose focus and disengage. There is some low-level disruption that requires the intervention of staff.
- Pupils show respect for each other and cooperate and talk together in lessons.
- Pupils are adamant that there are no homophobic or racist incidents, and the school records confirm this.
- The attendance of pupils is close to the national average. The school works hard to motivate pupils to attend school every day, using rewards that are incentives for pupils.
- The school works well with those pupils who are persistently absent and uses formal systems – and the input of other professionals – as well as creative solutions, to tackle issues so that attendance improves.
- The school supports effectively those who have difficulties managing their behaviour or who might be anxious. The establishment of an additional class and alternative playtimes helps these pupils develop the skills of working and playing together.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Inadequate

- Current pupils are making inadequate progress from their starting points. Too many pupils are poorly equipped for the next stage in their schooling.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is poor. It has declined over the last three years to well below the national average. Pupils have significant gaps in basic understanding and

operations, for example place value. These gaps mean that they are unable to calculate confidently or to reason and solve problems effectively.

- Pupils do not develop confidence in phonics because the teaching is inconsistent. Progress in reading is further hampered by pupils reading books that do not match their current ability. For some, books are too hard. For others, they are too easy. Pupils do not develop a knowledge of different authors and high-quality literature. Standards in reading at key stage 2 are lower than the national average. The progress pupils make in the reading tests at the end of key stage 2 has been weak for the last three years.
- Pupils do not develop into confident writers. They have too few opportunities to write independently. They make too many spelling errors. Too often, sentence structure is inaccurate and pupils' writing does not make sense.
- The most able pupils are not challenged and must wait in lessons for the teacher, so these pupils lose valuable learning time.
- Lower-attaining pupils and pupils with SEND do not make enough progress in lessons as activities are ill matched to their needs. Adults supporting their learning are not sufficiently skilled to help them.
- Disadvantaged pupils make poor progress. They achieve less well than their peers. Classroom teaching and additional support are not effective in recognising and building on these pupils' potential.
- Pupils' progress across the wider curriculum is weak. Teachers plan interesting activities, but pupils do not develop key skills and knowledge systematically across different subjects.
- The small number of pupils who have access to the new class that the school has set up are beginning to make progress in their engagement with others and with the curriculum.

## Early years provision

## Inadequate

- Children in the early years are not making enough progress and do not develop the necessary skills to be ready for Year 1. Over time, outcomes have been low.
- Most children enter Reception with knowledge, skills and understanding below those typical for children of their age. The provision does not make effective use of ongoing assessment to ensure that teaching is matched to children's needs. This means that teaching is not effective in ensuring progress.
- At times, activities are poorly planned and not supervised well to ensure good learning. Many children, especially boys, opt out of activities and this is not picked up by staff.
- Teachers' assessment is weak. Staff's ongoing assessment of individual children does not evaluate their progress adequately. Consequently, teachers do not know what children do and do not know.
- Leadership is not effective. Despite recognising that reading, mathematics and writing are key areas of weakness, the provision is not emphasising these enough. Monitoring and evaluation are not effective. Leaders are not sufficiently aware of the quality of

different aspects of the provision and have not implemented recent changes. Assessment information is not used effectively. Senior leaders and governors are not given information to help them assess the quality of the provision.

- There are warm relationships between adults and children. Children are safe and develop confidence and independence in the environment. They learn to play and work alongside each other. When supervision is not strong, some play can become boisterous. From the youngest age, children develop self-help skills, such as dressing and eating and drinking together appropriately.
- Parental involvement in learning is improving, with staff sharing more information through online assessment.



## School details

Unique reference number	136957
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10042708

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	352
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Cheryl Hill
Acting Headteacher	Suzanne Cooper
Telephone number	01752 848 900
Website	<a href="http://www.brunelprimaryschool.co.uk/">www.brunelprimaryschool.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:scooper@brunelprimary.co.uk">scooper@brunelprimary.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	12 November 2013

## Information about this school

- Since April 2018, the school has been led by an interim headteacher supported by an acting deputy headteacher. Prior to this, there had been a term when the interim headteacher had led the school, due to the substantive headteacher's absence. The interim headteacher is supported one day a fortnight by an executive headteacher employed by the trust.
- In the last academic year, a significant number of key staff had extended periods of absence.
- In the last academic year, the school had to respond to concerns about asbestos on the site. This was covered in the local press and on social media.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school joined the Bridge Trust in 2016. This trust has 14 primary schools.

Governance is carried out by the board of trustees, although certain functions are delegated to the management and local governing bodies, as set out in the trust's scheme of delegated authority. The trust is led and managed by a chief executive officer (CEO). It has a school improvement team and a centralised business team.

- The school has recently begun working with a local school to provide additional professional development.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors, together with the interim headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher, observed learning in all classes.
- Inspectors met with middle leaders. The English lead was accompanied by the English lead from the Bridge Trust.
- Inspectors looked at a range of books, some of which included topic work.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors, the executive headteacher, the CEO of the Bridge Trust and the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the staff survey, the 55 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the six written comments that were submitted.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. They examined information on pupils' current progress and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about school life.

## Inspection team

Stephen McShane, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Nathan Kemp	Her Majesty's Inspector

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