

Luxulyan School

Luxulyan, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 5EE

Inspection dates

15 to 16 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have recognised the need for rapid improvement. However, recently introduced approaches to the teaching of mathematics and reading are not firmly established. They are having little impact on academic standards.
- Standards across the school are too low. Pupils' achievement in mathematics lags behind that in other subjects. Pupils do not solve deeper mathematical problems using their reasoning skills.
- Pupils' reading skills remain low due to past weaknesses in the teaching of phonics. Pupils in key stage 2 do not consistently read challenging texts, which slows the progress that they make.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils. Consequently, pupils do not produce the standard of work of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not consistently check pupils' learning in order to support and challenge them. At times, pupils struggle to keep up, while some of the most able pupils are not stretched effectively.
- Leaders and governors have not dealt with underperformance in teaching quickly enough. Recently appointed middle leaders have had insufficient time to monitor the quality of teaching. When evaluating the quality of teaching, leaders place too little emphasis on pupils' learning and on the progress they make across the school.
- Governors have not evaluated the impact of teachers' actions with sufficient rigour to ensure that all groups of pupils are achieving well.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make a successful start in the early years as a result of effective teaching, a high level of support and stimulating experiences.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders have increased security of the school site. Pupils' attendance is improving as a result of close working with families.
- The teaching of writing is consistently strong. As a result, many pupils, including the most able, make good progress as they move through the school.
- The personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils are good. Adults know and care for pupils well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the role of middle leaders develops further so that they have a bigger impact on school improvement
 - governors develop their skills in monitoring and evaluation in order to check on the impact of leaders more thoroughly
 - expectations of what pupils can achieve are high so that teachers challenge them more effectively to work at higher levels.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - the teaching of mathematics is consistently effective so that pupils across the school make good progress
 - pupils develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills well in mathematics in order to reach the standards of which they are capable
 - teachers raise expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading, particularly by providing pupils with more challenging texts in key stage 2
 - pupils receive consistently effective phonics teaching
 - teachers match activities closely to pupils' different needs in order to provide more effective challenge and support.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have high aspirations for the school and clear priorities for improvement for the year ahead. The school's action plan clearly identifies the school's priorities. However, leaders' actions to implement their plans are too slow.
- Governors are not sufficiently rigorous in holding senior leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Consequently, aspects previously identified for improvement persist as concerns. For example, weaknesses in pupils applying their reasoning skills to solve mathematical problems are still evident.
- Leaders are using the strengths of newly appointed experienced staff to build effective leadership capacity, managing the high turnover of staff well. There is now a clear focus on teaching and learning and improving outcomes for all pupils. However, middle leaders do not check learning comprehensively enough to help them promote improvement in the subjects for which they are responsible.
- Leaders have been too slow in introducing the current phonics scheme. Poor teaching of phonics in recent years resulted in low outcomes for pupils in the phonics check in 2018, as well as in pupils' reading skills across the school. Phonics teaching has improved recently but it is too soon to assess fully the impact of this improvement.
- Leaders' own evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses has been inaccurate. This is partly due to changes in staffing as well as fluctuating outcomes for pupils. Weaknesses in teaching over time have continued without leaders intervening to bring about improvements. As a result, outcomes for pupils in reading and mathematics have been poor for the last two years.
- Significant changes in leadership and teaching have been disruptive. Teachers have experienced many changes in mathematics and literacy strategies in a short period of time. While underperformance has begun to be tackled in phonics teaching and writing, there is still much to address.
- Leaders' strategies to ensure that teaching is consistently good are not yet fully effective. Leaders have ensured that a range of support from teaching assistants is in place to help pupils catch up when they are falling behind. Nevertheless, some pupils still do not achieve their potential in lessons. Too much weak teaching limits pupils' achievement as expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding is effective in raising achievement for disadvantaged pupils. The pupil-premium leader has a clear strategy in place to encourage pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities and thus raise their aspirations. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is in line with that of their peers.
- Leaders use the sports premium effectively. Leaders have successfully raised the profile of physical education across the school. Pupils now take part in a range of competitive sports against other schools in the Peninsula Learning Trust.
- The use of additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Leaders ensure that targeted support is provided to

secure pupils' good achievement.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, the school has strong links with the local community, working closely with the pre-school and the local church when performing the Christmas nativity. Pupils enjoy the interesting curriculum. It utilises the Luxulyan valley and the Eden Project education service effectively to ensure that pupils gain an understanding of the local and wider environment.
- Most parents are positive about the school and particularly value the school's caring and nurturing atmosphere. Pupils enjoy school and speak enthusiastically about what they learn and how teachers help them.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has changed significantly quite recently. A new chair took up post in September 2018. Governors acknowledge that they were previously not holding leaders to account sufficiently. Governors did not receive adequate information about standards across the school and, as a result, were not in a position to evaluate leadership effectively.
- The new chair of governors, with support from the trust, is ensuring that governors have an improving understanding of their roles and responsibilities. For example, governors understand that they need to challenge leaders more rigorously on the standards pupils achieve.
- Training is in place to support governors in fulfilling their statutory duties and in understanding how to interpret school achievement data effectively. As a result, governors are starting to question leaders and hold them to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. This work, however, is still in its infancy.
- The governing body have a growing understanding of the school's priorities and are increasingly keeping themselves up to date with the school's performance. They acknowledge that governors, while enthusiastic, are still learning how to adequately fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a high priority for the school. Leaders have developed a strong culture by securing robust systems for the safe recruitment of staff and also to record safeguarding concerns. Staff are well trained. They know what to do if they have any worries about a child or member of staff. Leaders follow up any concerns tenaciously and refer them on to the appropriate agencies where necessary.
- Since her appointment, the head of school has significantly increased the safety of the school site. Secure boundaries and entry arrangements, as well as a system for locking gates during school opening hours, ensure that pupils are safe always.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not consistently plan activities that challenge pupils to produce the work of which they are capable. This limits pupils' progress. Pupils often find their work too easy, particularly the most able pupils in mathematics.
- Teachers' focus in mathematics has been on times tables and speed of computation. This has been at the cost of pupils developing their reasoning and problem-solving skills, particularly in key stage 2. Teaching does not enable pupils to use and apply their knowledge in different contexts sufficiently well. This limits pupils' ability to think for themselves when considering new challenges. Some pupils are too dependent on help from teaching assistants to complete the tasks that teachers set. Work is often not matched well to lower-achieving pupils in order for them to understand and complete it.
- Reading is a current focus for the school. Leaders have introduced a new reading scheme in order to improve outcomes across the school. Pupils read a range of different texts, although many are not challenging enough. The school promotes reading well through activities such as reading challenges. Pupils like and respond well to these initiatives and now read on a regular basis both at school and at home.
- Pupils read with enthusiasm, using their developing understanding of phonics to sound out and explain unfamiliar words. However, when pupils choose their own reading books, some pick books which are too easy. Teachers do not monitor the level of challenge in reading texts effectively enough and, as a result, pupils' progress in reading suffers.
- Teachers are not effective enough in helping pupils understand what they do well and how to improve their work, especially in key stage 1.
- Support staff play a full part in lessons, often teaching phonics, reading and mathematics to both small and larger groups of pupils. This is typically successful. However, on occasions, support staff do not have sufficient subject knowledge in order to ensure that all pupils understand what they have to do, particularly in mathematics. As a result, pupils' progress is hindered.
- Teachers are successfully focusing on improving pupils' writing skills. Teachers ask skilful questions to develop pupils' vocabulary. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in this subject. They encourage pupils to improve their written work by writing more meaningful, descriptive and imaginative sentences. Pupils' enjoyment and progress in writing are clearly evident.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident to contribute in lessons because they have strong relationships with staff and each other. They readily share ideas when working together and support each other well in their learning.
- Pupils are increasingly taking on more responsibilities through roles as playtime leaders, school councillors and forest school monitors. They enjoy taking responsibility and do this with pride.
- Pupils show good, and at times very positive, attitudes to learning. The vast majority of pupils concentrate well and show a real love of learning. They willingly help each other with their learning. On occasion, however, a small number of pupils are over-reliant on adult help. At other times, some pupils have difficulty in sustaining concentration on tasks, such as handwriting exercises, and their learning falters.
- Nearly all the parents believe their children are very well looked after at school and most would recommend the school to others. Parents' typical comments in the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire included, 'My child has settled in brilliantly into this school,' and 'It has a lovely feel and sense of community.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils move carefully and considerately around the school. At times, their behaviour is impeccable, for example during phonics lessons and when listening to teachers' instructions in lessons.
- Pupils are confident that there is no bullying in the school and that if it did take place then it would be dealt with quickly. Parents agree that this is mostly the case. The school's own records confirm this.
- At breaktime, pupils play happily. There is a good range of activities to take part in, including football and a traversing wall.
- All staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils always conduct themselves well.
- Pupils enjoy school. Leaders set aspirational targets to improve pupils' attendance and work effectively with vulnerable families. As a result, attendance rates are in line with, or above those seen in similar schools nationally. Rates of persistent absence are below those nationally. However, the poor attendance of some vulnerable pupils slows their progress, but leaders are taking effective action to address this.
- Parents highly value the work of the parent support adviser, whose work is a strength of the school. Parental involvement with the school has increased, particularly in terms of efforts to reduce the number of pupils who arrive late. These efforts have been

successful. The number of pupils who arrive late has decreased.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In recent years, standards have been too low in some subjects. While new leaders have set aspirational targets and have raised expectations, standards are not improving rapidly enough.
- Children join the Reception class with knowledge skills and understanding below those typically expected for their age. They make strong progress and achieve a good level of development that has been above the national average for that last 3 years.
- The proportion of pupils passing the phonics screening check in 2018 was too low, and well below the national average. In response, leaders have significantly improved the teaching of phonics, including checking pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, it is too soon to be able to fully assess the impact of the recent improvements.
- Pupils' progress in key stage 1, from their strong starting points, is too variable. While many make good progress, others do not maintain the good start that they had in the Reception class. Consequently, some pupils require catch-up programmes to get them back on track.
- The proportion of pupils achieving higher standards in writing is increasing because progress in some year groups is good. However, the proportion of pupils working at the higher standards in reading remains stubbornly low. Standards in mathematics are also too variable across year groups.
- Too few pupils in key stage 2 have the knowledge and skills to reason and solve problems in mathematics. While pupils are able to complete number and times tables exercises quickly, teachers do not set pupils work to challenge them, particularly in applying their knowledge to other mathematical problems.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. It is not meaningful to compare their achievement with the performance of others nationally. Carefully planned, targeted activities for these pupils increase their confidence and ensure that many make strong progress.
- Pupils are encouraged to read frequently across the school. A new reading system has been introduced which engages and excites pupils to read daily. Staff closely match books to pupils' reading abilities in key stage 1. However, when some pupils in key stage 2 select their own books they either choose ones that are easy or familiar. This reduces the level of challenge and results in some pupils reading books which are far too easy. This impairs the development of key reading skills and results in weak progress.

Early years provision

Good

- Staff ensure that children make good progress in their early reading, writing and mathematical development. There is a strong emphasis on developing communication and language. Leaders know this is the area of greatest need. There is a good level of

adult support to promote high-quality talk in lessons. This aids the children's development of key language and communication skills.

- Staff have high expectations and encourage children to write sentences accurately and independently. Children learn quickly to use capital letters, full stops and finger spaces correctly, using resources around the room to help them. Children use their phonics skills well to write adventurous words with adult support. For example, children made good attempts to write words such as 'purple' and 'Saturday' in a phonics lesson.
- The proportion of children working at the level expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics has been historically above national benchmarks. However, the proportion of children exceeding expectations by the end of Reception has been too low.
- Children play well together and take turns. They are fully engaged and remain focused on activities. For example, children make rockets out of bottles, boxes and aluminium foil. They persevere with the tricky task of taping boxes together to construct a tall rocket structure. Throughout the classroom and outside area there are 'challenges' to ensure that children are focused on their learning. Children develop good skills and attitudes to learning which ensure that they are more than ready to start Year 1.
- Routines are well established, and pupils understand completely what they have to do. For example, children understand that at fruit time they 'pay' for snacks with plastic pennies. This extends the children's understanding through real-life experiences.
- Teachers and teaching assistants assess what children know and can do as soon as they begin school to ensure that no time is wasted. Leaders accurately pin-point children's next steps and provide appropriately challenging activities across all areas of learning. Children who have additional needs are supported sensitively so that they take a full part in lessons and make good progress.
- Children are safe in the Reception class. Staff supervise children well during activities; children move well through the provision, showing interest and enthusiasm for all the activities that are available to them inside and outside. Staff have received appropriate training. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.
- The transition from local pre-schools into Reception is carefully and collaboratively planned. Visits, parent workshops and newsletters show parents how they can help their children with their learning. Parents value the support that they receive from the school.

School details

Unique reference number	142712
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10058285

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Katie Fitzsimmons
Headteacher	Stewart Gynn (executive headteacher), Suzanne Le-Doux-Lucas (head of school)
Telephone number	01726 850 397
Website	www.luxulyan.eschools.co.uk
Email address	head@luxulyansch.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- A new executive headteacher joined the school in December 2017. The head of school was appointed in September 2016. The current chair of governors took up post in September 2018. Middle leaders for English, mathematics, phonics and early years took up their posts in September 2018.
- Luxulyan is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is part of the Peninsula Learning Trust. The executive headteacher leads both Luxulyan and Mevagissey schools within the trust.
- The majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is similarly below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes as well as other areas around the school and looked at pupils' work. Senior leaders joined the inspector for all observations.
- The inspector observed pupils in the playground and talked to them formally and informally. She listened to pupils read and observed individual pupils reading to a teaching assistant.
- The inspector held discussions with the head of school and SEND lead, the executive headteacher, the chief executive officer of the Peninsula Trust, the Reception teacher and phonics lead, the pupil premium lead, the literacy coordinator, the mathematics coordinator and the School Administrator.
- The inspector met with the vice-chair of the governing body and conducted a telephone conversation with the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the end of the school day and considered 30 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including nine written comments.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation; the school's improvement plan; information on pupils' progress and attainment; records of behaviour and attainment; monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning; minutes of governing body meetings, the single central record; and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Julie Jane, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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