

Peasedown St John Primary School

Bath Road, Peasedown St John, Bath, Somerset BA2 8DH

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have been too slow to react to the decline in pupils' progress. For the past three years, pupils have made much weaker progress by the end of key stage 2 than their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders do not use information about pupils' progress strategically to identify and address underachievement, particularly for the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged.
- Leaders lack clarity about the impact of their plans for the pupil premium. Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, do not make the progress that they should.
- Leaders' checks on the work of the school are not evaluated. They do not have a clear picture of the impact of their actions.
- Inaccurate assessment undermines the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers do not use assessment information effectively to plan work in writing and mathematics that supports or challenges pupils sufficiently.
- Leaders' very recent changes to the curriculum to improve teaching are not used effectively or are not fully implemented.
- Governors have not held leaders to account for pupils' outcomes until very recently. Governors and leaders of the multi-academy trust have not secured sufficient support for the school during periods of leadership instability.
- Middle leaders are ambitious for the phase of the school they lead. However, they have not developed good teaching, learning and assessment.
- A significant proportion of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey Parent View have lost confidence in the school.
- Leaders and teachers have not promoted pupils' confidence as learners. This has been recognised, but not tackled effectively.
- Leadership, teaching and learning in early years do not help the most able children to progress well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have established a culture of vigilance for pupils' safety. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress.
- Pupils behave well and the school is calm and orderly. Pupils attend regularly.
- Standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check are above average.

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?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the monitoring of the quality of teaching and making sure that teachers' assessment information is accurate
 - ensuring that planned improvements in teaching are fully implemented and used effectively to promote pupils' progress
 - evaluating information on pupils' progress and standards so the effectiveness of planned improvements can be more accurately judged
 - developing the skills of all leaders so that they promote consistently good teaching, learning and assessment in their phases and year groups
 - rigorously evaluating the impact of pupil premium funding to ensure that actions taken to secure the progress of disadvantaged pupils are effective
 - improving communication with parents and carers to raise their confidence in the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and raise pupils' achievements across the school, including in early years, by:
 - developing teachers' skills of assessing pupils' achievement, particularly of the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics
 - teachers using assessment effectively to plan work which enthuses pupils and matches their needs, particularly for the most able and those who are disadvantaged
 - staff intervening with support when pupils are finding learning too challenging and identifying when the most able pupils are ready to move on
 - deepening pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics so that more reach the higher standard
 - developing pupils' ability to review and improve their writing so that more reach the higher standard.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by using consistently effective approaches which develop pupils' confidence.

An external review of the school's use of the 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, including leaders of the Dragonfly Education Trust, have not taken effective action to end the three-year decline in pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Underachievement still exists. Leaders have adopted a more strategic approach since September 2018 and have responded to better guidance and challenge from governors. However, currently, leaders' actions are not robust enough to ensure that teaching improves across the school. The steps taken to improve teaching and outcomes are too recent to show any significant impact.
- Last year, the strength of the leadership team was diminished by unavoidable circumstances, including the deputy headteachers having to assume class teaching roles. Their time for leadership activities was consequently limited. The trust itself lacked the resources necessary to strengthen the school's leadership during this time.
- Senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning has not been strategic enough to identify what is and isn't working well. Leaders are now undertaking a range of monitoring activities but have not reviewed them or evaluated them.
- Recently, leaders became aware that teachers are not accurate or confident in assessing pupils' work, particularly for those pupils working at the higher standard. The assessment of work at the higher standard remains a key weakness. Consequently, the information leaders hold on pupils' progress is not accurate.
- Leaders plan programmes of professional development to improve teachers' skills but these have not been effective in implementing changes to the curriculum or strengthening teachers' assessment skills.
- The school's evaluation of pupils' progress is over-generous. Senior leaders do not take sufficient account of pupils' starting points to identify when pupils have not made the progress that they should. Leaders have not made sufficiently clear links between a lack of progress and the quality of teaching.
- The leadership skills of new and emerging phase leaders across this large primary school are not sufficiently developed. They are not equipped to effect the rapid improvement the school needs to make in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. However, leaders show ambition for their teams and are starting to bring about improvement.
- Pupils' progress and their experiences of teaching and learning are too variable and do not provide equality of opportunity for all pupils. Leaders cannot demonstrate what impact pupil premium funding has had on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. This group of pupils has underachieved. However, leaders have sustained the achievement of pupils with SEND and they are included well in the life of the school.
- The curriculum for mathematics and English has undergone too many changes that have not been sustained or worked well. In recent months, there have been further and more changes. However, learning in these subjects is still not planned well enough to ensure more consistently effective teaching and learning. Not all teachers fully understand the expectations or adapt their practice effectively. It is too soon to see if

the most recent revision to the mathematics and English curriculum is having a clear impact on raising pupils' achievement.

- The wider curriculum is more securely planned. Teaching and pupils' achievement are, therefore, stronger in subjects other than English and mathematics. Leaders and teachers add to learning opportunities through clubs, events and extended learning which interest and engage pupils. Pupils develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally through these activities. For example, the school's project on the Great War developed pupils' empathy. Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values is fostered well through taking part in democratic events such as electing the school council.
- Just over a third of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, showed general dissatisfaction with what the school is providing for their children. Their concerns about the behaviour and safety of pupils were not borne out by inspection evidence. However, other concerns, for example about pupils' progress and the way it is reported, are justified.
- The school makes effective use of the sport premium. An increasing number of pupils engage in competitive sport and benefit from having access to new activities. They value the guidance from teachers on how to stay healthy. They recognise how regular exercise contributes to their well-being.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governors and leaders of the Dragonfly Education Trust have been too slow to respond to the decline in pupils' standards and progress. However, very recently, the governing body has been strengthened. During the past term, governors have highlighted the need for urgent action. They have used their expertise to set the strategic direction that the school has recently adopted. They now challenge leaders directly about the impact of recent changes to the curriculum.
- Over time, governors and the trust have been aware of issues which have reduced the strength of the leadership group. Even so, the trust did not take the necessary steps to ensure that the school had the support it needed.
- This year, local governors and the trust implemented a review of the school's effectiveness. In addition, governors reviewed the school's process for managing teachers' performance to try to ensure that there is challenge for all leaders and teachers. These actions have been too recent to have had effect yet, but leaders now have a renewed awareness that accountability is necessary to bring about improvement.
- Reliant as they are on leaders' monitoring and reports, governors do not have a reliable picture of the effectiveness of the school's use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Policies and procedures are fit for purpose and staff training is up to date. All checks are carried out to ensure that adults

are suitable to work with pupils. Governors make regular checks to support leaders in their monitoring of safeguarding procedures.

- Despite the fact that this is a large school, staff know the pupils well and pupils feel well cared for. Staff are vigilant and use their training and knowledge of pupils to quickly report any concerns that a pupil is at risk of harm. The school has recently introduced a new system to record concerns and the actions taken. Leaders promptly refer to and work with agencies who can offer families support.
- Pupils are confident they are safe in school but a significant proportion of parents who responded to the Parent View online survey did not have confidence in the school to be vigilant for pupils' welfare or safety. Inspectors found no evidence to support that view. The site is secure, leaders respond well to health and safety matters and the school's procedures for first aid are effective. Systems of recording and responding to parental concerns have varied in the past, but the introduction of a new central system is strengthening the quality of record-keeping.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The accuracy and use of teachers' assessment are inadequate and do not promote the progress of pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics. This undermines the quality of teaching overall. In 2018, no Year 6 pupils were assessed by teachers as working at the higher standard in reading, writing or mathematics. Pupils' outcomes in national tests at the higher standard showed that a small proportion did attain at that level despite their teachers' lower expectations.
- Teachers do not have a clear understanding of what pupils should know and understand by the end of Year 6. Current assessments and pupils' work show that teachers' assessment is still inconsistent. Teachers do not demonstrate a clear understanding of what can be expected of pupils based on their starting points.
- In mathematics, teachers have not built pupils' skills to solve problems and the ability to explain their mathematical thinking. Leaders have recently emphasised the need for pupils to use mathematical language when explaining problem-solving tasks. Currently, though, too few pupils do this and not all teachers expect them to do so. Consequently, pupils' work shows that they are not getting the challenge necessary for them to work at the higher standard.
- Teachers now give pupils more frequent opportunities to revise previous learning in mathematics. However, teachers are not planning these sessions to take account of what they know pupils can or cannot do. Consequently, the most able pupils may know all the answers and learn little that is new. At the same time, some pupils who have still to catch up have not made sufficient progress.
- There is too much variability in teachers' expectations of pupils' writing. Some do not challenge pupils to do their best. Teachers in key stage 1 do not plan tasks that take sufficient account of pupils' basic skills. Consequently, the school's recently introduced programme to improve pupils' writing does not make a difference to what these pupils can do. This limits the progress of disadvantaged pupils, in particular, who are struggling to reach the expected standard for their age.

- The most able pupils in key stage 2 are not developing the skills of improving their writing in ways which would deepen their learning and enable them to work at the higher standard.
- There is inconsistency in how teachers check that pupils know what to do or have sufficient challenge in their learning. In a few classes, teachers and teaching assistants work together to make sure that all pupils' needs are met. In too many classes, the tasks were set and staff did not check to see if pupils could complete them or if pupils had finished quickly.
- Weaknesses in teaching over time mean that pupils have gaps in basic knowledge such as multiplication tables or they have weak spelling. Consequently, when pupils are required to take on new learning, they struggle to overcome these deficiencies. Pupils try hard and behave well. When left to get on with their work, pupils do not often interrupt or ask for help, but rather persist with the variable tasks they are given. Ultimately, though, some lose interest and learning weakens.
- The school's recently introduced programme to improve reading is not used consistently well. Where it is used well, for example in Year 6, pupils tackled challenging comprehension tasks relating to a 'Harry Potter' text. Teaching was pitched at least at the expected level for this age group. Workbooks showed this had been the case over the past term. The teachers gave pupils precise guidance and checks were made to ensure that all understood the work. Additional teaching is helping the most able pupils to develop this work towards the higher standard in reading.
- In key stage 1, however, assessment is not used well to ensure that teaching meets all pupils' needs in reading. On occasions, pupils are given tasks which are too challenging. Adults are not guiding pupils sufficiently to ensure that they are building skills of decoding and comprehension systematically. Staff do not check pupils' understanding sufficiently well and so some get left behind.
- Skilled teaching assistants support pupils with SEND both in intervention programmes and in class. Teaching assistants explain tasks clearly and identify where pupils need additional explanations or support. They use equipment well in, for example, mathematics lessons so that concepts are confirmed. Pupils concentrate well in these sessions.
- Pupils acquire phonic skills well across early years and key stage 1. As a result, they can spell phonetically and most can tackle new words when they read if the text is appropriately matched to their stage of development.
- Teachers encourage pupils to practise learning at home and the new, more effective, way of doing this is now viewed positively by parents and pupils.
- The school has a specialist music teacher and music is taught well. Pupils have subject knowledge above that usually found for their age. Teachers ensure that pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and some careful work was seen in key stage 2 workbooks in geography and religious education.
- Teachers expose pupils to a wide range of experiences in 'enrichment days', which inspire pupils' interest and expand their knowledge of the world.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Leaders' and teachers' approaches do not develop pupils' confidence in themselves as learners.
- Many pupils are hesitant in answering questions. Too few are willing to explain their thinking or expand their ideas. The school has a long-standing approach to developing attributes such as determination, drive and exploration. Pupils are chosen and rewarded for showing these personal attributes. However, teachers do not sufficiently guide pupils or promote the school's programme in learning activities. Leaders recognise the need to promote pupils' learning skills more securely but changes are too recent to have had an impact.
- Pupils' welfare is promoted effectively by teaching about how to stay safe. Pupils learn how to use the internet safely. Older pupils learn well through 'life skills' sessions, which promote their safety and welfare. Recent assemblies have been used to remind pupils about road safety.
- Pupils are proud of many aspects of the school. They participate well in school choirs and support the school enthusiastically in sporting and musical events.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and has improved over time. Classrooms are calm and pupils work without distraction. Pupils move around the school sensibly. They follow the guidance of adults if they are reminded to slow down. They play together in the playground energetically but in a good-humoured way.
- Pupils are courteous. The school's expectation of politeness to adults is met when pupils stand back and hold doors open for visitors. They speak respectfully when asked for information and are keen to talk about the school.
- Pupils have confidence in the behaviour of their friends. They are realistic that, at times, there will be some 'falling out' and even, on rare occasions, incidents of bullying. However, pupils spoken to in a group, in the playground and around school, felt safe and trusted adults to respond effectively to any concerns they may raise.
- A significant proportion of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, did not hold the same positive opinion of the behaviour of pupils in school. In the past, some behaviour has been more challenging and has necessitated the use of exclusion. This is no longer the case. The school has well-established procedures now for supporting and nurturing those pupils who need further guidance about their behaviour.
- Pupils attend school regularly and attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Leaders are tackling the higher levels of persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and, where robust action has been taken, the attendance of individual pupils has improved.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- A trend of weak progress across key stage 2 has persisted for three years. Pupils' progress in mathematics was significantly below national average for all groups of pupils for every year. In reading, although progress rose a little in 2017, it fell back again in 2018. The progress pupils made in writing was a little stronger in 2018 after two years when it was significantly below the national average.
- The proportions of pupils reaching expected standards and the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics have also been below the national average for three years. Over time, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard has been low in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of both key stage 1 and 2.
- School assessments show that pupils currently in Year 6 have also made weak progress in all three subjects since the end of Year 2. A significant proportion of pupils, particularly the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils, have fallen behind. Consequently, pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teachers' difficulty with assessing pupils at the higher standard continues to have a negative impact on the progress of the most able pupils in both key stages. Pupils' current work, particularly in mathematics and writing, shows that the most able pupils in both key stages do not make sufficient progress. This includes those who are most able and disadvantaged. These pupils have not been taught the skills needed to deepen their learning.
- Pupils' progress has been hindered by weaknesses in basic skills of spelling, handwriting and knowledge of multiplication tables. The current school development plan indicates a renewed focus on these skills. However, pupils' work still shows that weaknesses in basic skills are a barrier to progress. This is particularly so for pupils who are disadvantaged and not working at the expected level for their age.
- Following the weak outcomes in 2018, leaders have strengthened the teaching of comprehension skills in reading. The most able pupils in Year 6 now have additional intervention to enable them to deepen their understanding of what they read. However, the teaching of reading is not supporting the progress of all pupils in key stage 1 because of the inconsistent use of the school's programme for teaching reading. Pupils choose their reading matter from the well-stocked library. However, teachers do not guide pupils to choose books that are suitably demanding.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress. Although these pupils may not meet age-related expectations, they progress against their targets through the extra help they are given. In class-based learning, they continue to build on and consolidate their skills with well-pitched support.
- Pupils acquire early phonic skills well, beginning their learning in early years and then across key stage 1. Standards have been above the national average for two years. Pupils' current work shows that in the early years and key stage 1 pupils use their phonic knowledge effectively in reading and writing.
- Pupils make strong progress in music with the specialist teaching support in school. Their work in geography and religious education shows that they acquire the knowledge in line with expectations for their age.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leadership and teaching in the early years requires improvement. Leaders do not analyse information on children's starting points sharply enough to set targets and ensure that all children, particularly the most able, achieve as well as they can. Consequently, leaders are not ensuring that teachers consistently provide challenge across the curriculum for this group of children.
- The majority of children join the Reception classes with at least typical personal, social and emotional development. They are ready to learn. Children's skills and knowledge of reading, writing and number on entry to the school are in line with those usually found for their age. In the past two years, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end the Reception Year has been just above the national average. However, the proportion of children exceeding the early learning goals in reading, writing and number has been lower than the national average in recent years.
- Without a clear understanding of children's next steps in learning, teachers do not plan sufficiently clearly to address the needs of the most able children. There are aspects of good practice. For example, children learn to combine two numbers to reach correct totals beyond ten and record this accurately. Aspects of children's writing and phonic knowledge are developed well. However, overall the practice is inconsistent. Some tasks are too mundane to engage children for long or do not stretch their imagination in their independent play.
- Leaders have grasped the challenge of raising the achievement of disadvantaged children. This is a current priority for the setting and their efforts to fully involve parents in their children's learning have been successful. Parents of disadvantaged children are now supporting their children's reading and so children's confidence and progress have been improved.
- Teachers tie together areas of learning into meaningful contexts for children. Currently, children are learning traditional tales and were seen building houses similar to those of the characters in their stories. Leaders have promoted a strong culture of learning in the outdoors to broaden children's knowledge of the world.
- Children in Nursery get off to a good start in their education. The nursery setting is well run and provision for the welfare of children, particularly those who are still two years old, is good. Facilities for changing, sleeping and feeding are clean and well maintained.
- Nursery staff maintain good records of children's progress and thus can plan well for their next steps. Staff have established good routines to promote children's safety and independence. Children were seen outside exploring with water and pipes to deepen their knowledge of the world around them.
- The early years setting in both the Nursery and the Reception classes is characterised by good relationships. As a result, children in all classes behave well and keep themselves safe.

School details

Unique reference number	142720
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10058323

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	571
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Richard Akers
Headteacher	Damian Knollys
Telephone number	01761 432 311
Website	www.psjprimary.co.uk
Email address	office@psjprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in January 2015. The two deputy headteachers took up their roles in September 2016. When the school converted to an academy in 2016, governors chose to join the Dragonfly Education Trust.
- The school is much larger than the average primary school. Many children join the school by entering the Nursery, some from the age of two years old. Most then go into one of the three Reception classes. Almost all pupils are then in single-aged classes. There is one mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class in key stage 1.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium varies year on year but currently is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is a little higher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons and many of these were joint observations with leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' work in classrooms. They reviewed extensive samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics with leaders. They read with pupils during lessons and a group of pupils read with an inspector and discussed their reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and phase leaders. They met with the leaders who had responsibility for the progress of pupils with SEND. They met with members of the governing body and had an additional meeting with the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke to a member of the trust on the telephone and the trust representative attended meetings with inspectors. An inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority. Inspectors reviewed and discussed the current assessment information held by the school.
- Inspectors discussed views of the school with pupils during the inspection including visits to the playground to observe pupils' well-being and safety. They spoke to a group of pupils separately to gain their views of well-being and learning.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed including the school's policies, procedures and records of safeguarding. Safeguarding was discussed with a number of members of staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's self-evaluation, the current school improvement plan and the recent external review of the school's effectiveness.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views at the start of the day and two letters from parents. They considered the 107 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, together with other written comments made.
- Views of the staff were gathered during a meeting with newly qualified teachers and also from the 53 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Wendy Marriott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Wendy D'Arcy	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Springett	Ofsted Inspector

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