

Probus Primary School

Ladock Road, Probus, Truro, Cornwall TR2 4LE

Inspection dates

21–22 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders and trust directors set high expectations of pupils and staff. They have addressed recent instability in staffing well.
- Leaders have established a curriculum that inspires pupils to learn and make progress in a wide variety of subjects.
- Senior leaders have accessed high-quality training to ensure that subject leadership is secure in English and improving strongly in mathematics.
- Senior and subject leaders are improving the quality of teaching securely and rapidly. Teaching is now consistently effective in almost all year groups.
- Effective provision in the early years foundation stage ensures that children are prepared well for Year 1.
- Teaching in key stage 1 successfully promotes equally strong outcomes for pupils across all subjects.
- Pupils achieve average outcomes in the Year 1 national phonics screening check. By the end of Year 2, they achieve above-average standards in reading.
- In key stage 2, teaching has secured high standards in writing over time. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are now also making strong progress in reading and mathematics.
- Most of the disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress in writing and mathematics. However, some are not reading regularly enough to develop good comprehension skills.
- The most able pupils are making good progress in reading and writing. They are not yet making strong progress in mathematics consistently across all year groups.
- Pupils are eager to learn and they take great pride in the presentation of their work. They behave well and are exceptionally considerate of others.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders have created a culture of vigilance with regard to safeguarding children.
- Most parents and carers would recommend the school to others. However, some parents are concerned about the number of changes in class teachers their children have experienced recently.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils who are working at greater depth in mathematics across the year groups, by consistently matching the level of challenge more closely to the needs of the most able pupils.
- Improve disadvantaged pupils' reading comprehension skills, by:
 - inspiring them to read more regularly, particularly in homework
 - enabling them to explore a wide range of books and authors
 - using probing questions to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders and trust directors have successfully created an ethos in which all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and/or with SEND, are inspired to learn. The positive relationships and mutual respect between leaders, staff and pupils support the progress of all pupils in the school.
- Through rigorous evaluation of the school's performance, including tracking pupils' progress, leaders have an accurate and detailed understanding of the quality of education provided.
- This evaluation helps leaders to plan, monitor and refine their actions to improve all areas of the school's work. It is also used effectively to hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress.
- Leaders have successfully developed the monitoring and evaluation skills of subject and other middle leaders. This, together with effective training provided by the trust and national projects in mathematics, inform and support the professional development of teachers and teaching assistants well. Teachers value the training.
- Weak teaching has been tackled successfully and staff absence, including maternity leave, is managed effectively. Teaching is improving rapidly and is now consistently effective in almost all year groups.
- The broad and balanced curriculum provides an extensive range of opportunities for pupils to learn, including through trips and a variety of clubs and other extra-curricular activities.
- Underpinning the curriculum is the effective development of language and literacy. Pupils read and write across subjects, developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used very effectively to engage pupils in an exceptional range of PE, including sailing, surfing, cycling, gymnastics, cross-country and tag rugby. Teaching skills are developed well. The requirements for teaching swimming are met.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the curriculum. For example, pupils across the school were inspired to study hedgerow plants and animals. They presented their findings at the county museum through high-quality art, dance and literature.
- Activities, including trips to London, develop pupils' good understanding of values such as democracy, respect and tolerance of the beliefs and views of others. The impact is evident in the way that pupils value diversity and support their peers, including those with physical disability, exceptionally well.

Governance of the school

- The board of directors holds leaders to account robustly for the standards that pupils reach. Consequently, the previous uneven quality of teaching and learning across the school is being addressed successfully.
- Directors are kept well informed about the school's work through monitoring and evaluation carried out by the hub councillors. Headteachers of the schools within the local hub undertake rigorous peer reviews and share expertise. This has a positive impact on school improvement.
- Directors maintain an accurate overview of leaders' progress in addressing school improvement priorities. They ensure that the performance management of staff is used effectively to raise pupils' achievement.
- Directors make sure that the deployment of resources and staff, including teaching assistants, is effective in promoting the progress of all pupils.
- They challenge leaders to make effective use of SEND funding and the pupil premium to address pupils' specific barriers to learning. As a result, pupils with SEND make strong progress across subjects from their different starting points. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is in line with, or above that, of others in writing and mathematics, though not yet consistently so in reading.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and directors are vigilant in ensuring that their own and staff training is up to date and that procedures are carried out effectively. The policies for safeguarding and for preventing radicalisation and extremism are comprehensive and reviewed annually.
- Staff are confident and competent in identifying and reporting pupils who may be at risk. Leaders work well with parents and external agencies to ensure the pupils are supported effectively.
- Records, including those for identified pupils and for the safer recruitment checks on staff and staff training, are well organised and comprehensive. Training records are monitored extremely well to ensure that everyone's training remains up to date.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now consistently effective in almost all year groups.
- Throughout the school, teachers have established a consistent and inspiring environment for learning. They make very effective use of curricular themes and resources, including wall displays, to engage and support pupils in their learning.
- Teaching assistants are skilful in supporting the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. They check and extend pupils' thinking and learning through probing questions.
- Curriculum planning is carefully sequenced throughout the school to lead pupils from

their prior learning to new knowledge, understanding and skills in all subjects. Clear expectations of pupils' progress and suitable activities result in time being used productively in lessons.

- A particular strength in teaching is the attention given to developing pupils' vocabulary, including subject-specific words. This supports pupils' communication skills and the strong progress they make in writing across subjects.
- The teaching of writing is consistently strong across almost all year groups. This is because teachers have a good understanding of the development of sentence structure and organisational features of writing. This secure subject knowledge enables them to assess how well individual pupils are progressing and what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers set high expectations of what pupils can achieve, based on their prior learning.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and enables pupils to read unfamiliar words and texts accurately and confidently. Improvements in the teaching of reading include the use of probing questions to develop pupils' comprehension skills. Increased use of resources, including books linked to curriculum topics, is motivating most pupils to read widely and regularly. However, some disadvantaged pupils are not inspired to read regularly, particularly for homework.
- Most pupils are keen to read and research information on the curricular themes. They develop stamina in recording their findings in writing. They eagerly edit and improve their work.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving strongly. In particular, teachers are making better use of assessment to identify and address gaps in pupils' prior learning. Pupils' skills in problem solving and reasoning are now being developed effectively. Activities are adapted well to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. However, in some year groups, work is not set at the right level of challenge to promote strong progress for the most able pupils.
- All teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy. Pupils make good use of the feedback to improve their work.
- Teachers set homework in line with the school's policy. Homework consolidates pupils' learning.
- Responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey indicate that a minority of parents do not think that the school provides them with valuable information about their child's progress. The inspection found that school reports provide parents with detailed and accurate information about how well their child is progressing, although this is not linked explicitly to the standards expected nationally.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The positive relationships among pupils and with staff help to develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence in learning. Pupils' work is shared with others and valued

through high-quality displays throughout the school. This motivates the pupils to take exceptional pride in the presentation of their work.

- Pupils enjoy school and demonstrate great enthusiasm for learning. They are keen to talk about their work.
- Pupils work and play together extremely well. They listen attentively and show respect for each other's ideas and views.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and parents and staff agree that the school keeps them safe. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including when using technology or social media.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying in school and school records confirm this. Pupils are confident that staff will deal effectively with any concerns they might have.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep healthy through healthy eating and regular exercise. A large number of pupils participate in extra-curricular sports.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils, parents and staff agree that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day, including at lunchtimes. They respond maturely to the school's behaviour strategies, saying that teachers apply them consistently and fairly.
- The school is an orderly environment. Low-level disruption to lessons is rare. Marked improvements for pupils with behavioural needs are evident in lessons and school records.
- Attendance is improving and is now close to the national average. A very small number of pupils are persistently absent for medical reasons.
- Pupils demonstrate good citizenship. For example, the 'friendship squad' befriends any pupils without friends at break- and lunchtimes. Another group of pupils showed initiative in organising a litter pick. They made certificates and prizes for the best contributors, which they presented in an assembly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across almost all year groups and in a wide range of subjects, including in English and mathematics, most of the current pupils are making consistently strong progress. They are now developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills in reading comprehension and in problem solving and reasoning in mathematics. This is an improvement since last year.
- In a wide range of subjects, including mathematics, and in writing, the progress of pupils with SEND is catching up with that of others with similar starting points. The progress of most disadvantaged pupils is similar to, or better than, the progress made by other pupils in writing and mathematics. However, some disadvantaged pupils have limited knowledge of books and authors. They are not motivated to read regularly to

develop strong skills in reading comprehension.

- Most pupils read widely and often in lessons and at home. They draw on a range of strategies, including phonics, to read fluently and with good comprehension. Outcomes in the Year 1 national phonics screening check are rising year on year in line with national figures.
- Progress in writing in key stage 2 is well above the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. It was in line with the top 10% of schools in 2018.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in reading dipped significantly in 2018, particularly for the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Attainment in reading in key stage 2 had been above average for the previous two years. With the increased focus on developing comprehension skills, most current pupils, including the most able, are again making strong progress in reading.
- Progress in mathematics in key stage 2, particularly for the most able pupils, is below the national average. It is average for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils' attainment over time is average. Current pupils are making better progress in problem solving and reasoning. The most able pupils are now working at greater depth in some, though not yet in all, year groups.
- Pupils' attainment in key stage 1 has been consistently above average across subjects over time.
- Given pupils' above-average attainment in English over time and the recent improvements in mathematics, pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Through rigorous monitoring and evaluation, leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and areas for improvement in early years. They take effective action to improve the quality of provision, including training and development of staff.
- Leaders work closely with the on-site pre-school and with parents to identify and support children's needs as early as possible. They make good use of external agencies when necessary, for example in developing children's speech and language. They ensure that staff are trained effectively to meet the specific needs of the children with SEND.
- Safeguarding is effective. All staff are knowledgeable and confident to deal with any issues that might arise. Child protection policies and procedures are implemented consistently and reviewed annually.
- The curriculum provides an extensive range of interesting and challenging experiences that meet children's needs and help them to make progress towards the early learning goals. For example, children hunt for minibeasts in the outside area and observe with great enthusiasm a chrysalis changing into a butterfly.
- The indoor and outdoor areas are well organised and resourced to promote children's continuous learning.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of all children, based on their accurate assessment of children's skills,

knowledge and understanding when they join the school.

- The staff use their accurate and regular assessments of children's learning and development to plan activities that challenge most children in all areas of learning. They are developing strategies, such as the use of woodwork, to inspire and challenge boys to make better progress in writing.
- Parents make a positive contribution to initial assessments of children's starting points. They are kept well informed about their children's progress and regularly see their work through the use of an online system. This helps them to support their children's learning at home.
- Children are highly motivated and interested in the broad range of activities. They are keen to show their work, including the books they make, to others. They confidently talk about their learning, using a good range of vocabulary. For instance, they can name the minibeasts they find and can describe the lifecycle of a butterfly using technical vocabulary. They listen carefully to the staff and to each other.
- Children's behaviour is good and shows that they feel safe. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep safe when exploring the outside environment.
- Children learn to respect and celebrate each other's differences. They develop their understanding of diversity and people in the wider world through visits and visitors. For instance, the children hosted a visit from a practising Sikh, who interested them in the costumes, cooking and festivals associated with this religion.
- Most children, including those with SEND or whose starting points are below those of other children of their age, make strong progress. They develop the knowledge, skills and understanding, including in phonics, to make a positive start in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	143171
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10088256

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Bex Bowen
Executive Principal	Lyn McNamara
Headteacher	Deanne Carden
Telephone number	01726 882647
Website	www.probusschool.org.uk
Email address	admin@probusschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Probus Primary School became a member of the Aspire Academy Trust in September 2016. The trust's board of directors holds the school to account. It is facilitated by a hub council. The school is part of a hub of five schools in the Truro area. One of these schools is a teaching school providing training for leaders and teachers.
- The previous headteacher is now an executive principal of this and another trust school. She fulfils the role of headteacher at the school on two days a week, sharing the post with the part-time headteacher.
- The school is average in size.
- Children in the early years foundation stage are taught full time in a Reception class.
- The on-site pre-school is managed by the board of directors and is inspected separately.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below

average.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND who are supported by the school is above average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is average.
- Most pupils are of a White British background. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with trust directors, hub councillors, the executive principal, headteacher, other school leaders and pupils. They met informally with some parents.
- Together with the executive principal and headteacher, inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes and examined their progress over time in a sample of books from each year group. Inspectors listened to small groups of pupils reading.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, self-evaluation and documents relating to pupils' progress and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 47 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey. As parents were unable to access the site to record written responses, inspectors met informally with as many parents as possible at the start of each day. They also took into consideration the responses to the online surveys completed by 21 staff and 12 pupils.

Inspection team

Sue Frater, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mark Burgess

Ofsted Inspector

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