

Brixham Church of England Primary School

Higher Ranscombe Road, Brixham, Devon TQ5 9HF

Inspection dates

26 to 27 March 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have not responded quickly enough to prevent a decline in the quality of education.
- Leaders are not sufficiently skilled in monitoring and evaluation to hold teachers firmly to account. As a result, the quality of teaching is not good.
- Leadership roles and responsibilities are not well known or understood. This leads to weaknesses in key strategies, such as phonics and the use of pupil premium.
- Leaders ensure that there is a broad curriculum with a range of experiences for pupils. However, aspects of cultural diversity and other world faiths are not sufficiently prominent in the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough, including for the most able pupils.
- Teachers are sometimes slow to check pupils' mistakes or misconceptions, particularly in spelling. This leads to repeated errors, which reduces the quality of pupils' work.
- Teachers do not use assessment information consistently well to adapt activities to meet pupils' needs. Consequently, work is sometimes either too easy or difficult.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is not strong, particularly in reading and phonics. This prevents some children from getting off to the best start, including in the early years.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors now have an accurate view of the school's position. They are taking the right steps to improve the school.
- Teachers' work for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is usually effective. This meets a range of needs.
- Staff have positive relationships with pupils. This leads to a school where the overwhelming majority of pupils are happy and feel safe.
- Pockets of effective practice, particularly in Year 6, enable pupils to catch up. As a result, pupils' progress is improving.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of all leaders, including governors, by:
 - ensuring that all leaders have the skills and knowledge to undertake rigorous monitoring and make accurate evaluations to hold teachers to account
 - clarifying leadership roles and responsibilities to improve the school's performance in key areas, including the pupil premium strategy
 - overhauling and re-evaluating the school's approach to the teaching and assessment of phonics and early reading.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years foundation stage, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve, particularly of the most able in reaching the highest standards
 - ensuring that teachers check and adapt their teaching to help pupils reduce repeated errors, particularly in spelling
 - using ongoing and accurate assessment information to consistently plan the appropriate next steps for pupils of all abilities
 - ensuring that teachers and other adults have a good understanding of the development and phonics progress to get pupils off to the best possible start.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by increasing the prominence of other cultures and world faiths through the curriculum.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the school's previous inspection in 2012, leaders and governors have been too slow to recognise and respond to signs of decline. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is not good enough.
- Leaders, albeit with some exceptions, do not have the professional expertise to monitor and evaluate their designated areas of responsibility well enough. They are not sufficiently rigorous or precise in their work. Consequently, teachers are not held firmly to account and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not good.
- Leaders do not have a fully agreed understanding of some key leadership roles and responsibilities, for example in delivering coherent phonics or pupil premium strategies. This leads to some poor practice that is not identified or even to confusion about where accountabilities lie.
- There is a particular lack of understanding about the school's rationale and principles for effective phonics teaching. This has led to some weak assessment and poor practice, for example in mismatching the book scheme to pupils' phonics ability.
- Changes to staffing and turbulence in the past few years have had a destabilising effect on the school. There is a small minority of staff and parents who are frustrated and lack confidence in the current leadership. In particular, they feel that poor communication and inconsistent behaviour management are not well dealt with.
- The curriculum promotes a wealth of different learning experiences and activities for pupils. For example, they enjoy music lessons, art and physical education (PE). Pupils are particularly keen and proud of the 'forest school' provision. Pupils learn valuable skills and knowledge through these.
- However, despite some clear links, such as with a partner school in India, pupils do not have a sufficiently deep understanding of other cultures or world faiths. This limits their readiness for life in modern Britain. In addition, some subjects do not have a clear rationale or planned sequence of skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.
- Leaders ensure that there is a full entitlement and range of enrichment activities. This includes high-quality PE through the sports and PE premium. Pupils enjoy physical activity, including swimming. They understand how to keep themselves fit and healthy.
- Leaders ensure that the additional funding for pupils with SEND and the pupil premium grant for those eligible for free-school meals are used appropriately. Pupils are identified and targeted support is in place for those who need it. The use of individual learning support plans (LSPs) are particularly beneficial for pupils with SEND. These provide timely support to enable pupils to overcome barriers.
- However, the pupil premium strategy is not as well coordinated or robust as it could be. For example, the lack of a named 'champion', including on the governing body, reduces the urgency or impetus that this area requires.
- Leaders have appropriate action plans for improvement. The school improvement plan is fit for purpose and identifies accurate priorities. However, it is not sufficiently precise

in terms of timeframes and milestones. These omissions obscure the strategic line of sight for improvement.

- Other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the early years leader, the mathematics leader and the deputy designated safeguarding leader (DDSL), are enthusiastic. They are committed to the school and keen for it to make the necessary improvements.
- Professional training and development for staff are matched to the school's priorities. Training is having some positive impact. For example, well-communicated expectations for the teaching of mathematics are ensuring a consistency of approach, which is strongly supporting pupils' confidence and knowledge in this subject.
- The local authority commissioned a recent review of the school in March 2019. This identified many of the weaknesses in the school. Prior to this, the local authority has brokered training for staff, including visits to other schools and focused training with specialist leaders in education (SLEs). This is helping the school to improve, and this is seen most prominently in the effectiveness of the mathematics training.

Governance of the school

- Governors fully accept that they have been too slow in identifying and tackling weaknesses since the previous inspection. They have not been sufficiently probing or stringent in holding leaders to account. This has contributed to the school's decline. However, they are especially keen to do what is needed to secure the necessary improvements.
- Governors have listened well to the advice of the local authority and diocese to seek external support and intervention. As a result, governors are implementing a management partnership arrangement with a local multi-academy trust with a proven track record. This aims to increase challenge and rapidly raise the quality of teaching and learning.
- Following a restructure in September 2018, governors have a renewed sense of purpose and conviction. They now ask meaningful questions and check the work of leaders. However, they still lack some critical knowledge and have not yet established a strong enough cycle of challenge and review to ensure that issues are routinely followed up.
- Governors have an accurate view of what the school needs. This is informing their strategic decision-making. For example, they are taking a measured approach to the appointment of a new substantive headteacher from September 2019 in order to get the very best appointment for the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a high priority. The designated safeguarding and deputy safeguarding leads know their responsibilities well. They show tenacity and resilience when working with other agencies to get the timely support that vulnerable pupils need. These leaders take timely and effective action to keep pupils safe.

- Staff training and vetting arrangements are compliant with current government requirements. There is a strong culture where staff understand that safeguarding is 'everyone's responsibility'. If staff make confidential referrals to the safeguarding leaders, these are followed up meticulously.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. All pupils who responded to the surveys said that they felt safe. Pupils have a strong awareness of how to stay safe in a diverse range of situations, for example when using the internet and with coastal safety (getting out of a rip tide).
- Staff surveys also unanimously confirm that pupils are kept safe. The school completes mandatory health and safety checks. There is evidence to show that accidents and incidents that occur are taken seriously and followed up accordingly, for example first-aid response forms and provision on location at the forest school provision.
- However, there are dual systems in place, which sometimes leads to administrative weaknesses in record-keeping arrangements for vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not have consistently high enough ambition or expectations of the pupils, particularly the most able. As a result, pupils are not consistently challenged to do their best. Poor-quality work is deemed acceptable and pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable. This is seen, for example, in examples of work in their learning journals, such as recording scientific investigations.
- Teachers do not check pupils work well enough, including in lessons, to identify mistakes or misconceptions. Pupils' errors go unchecked. Therefore, pupils are prone to repeating common mistakes, particularly in spelling. This leads to poor work in writing and across other subjects and classes.
- Teachers' use of formative assessment to make sure that they match work well to the needs of different pupils is not good. This results in episodes of work or lessons which pupils find are either too easy or difficult. This has a demotivating effect on some pupils when this happens.
- Teachers' and other adults' subject knowledge is sometimes not good enough to know when, or how, to successfully move pupils' learning on. This is particularly relevant in the teaching of phonics and the development of early reading. For example, the sequence or progression for teaching phonics is not clearly understood and there are times when pupils are reading books that are not well matched to their phonics knowledge. This holds some pupils back at a fundamental point in their reading development.
- However, there are pockets of strength and good practice in the school. Where this is present, pupils are particularly keen. For example, pupils are making strong progress in Year 6, where teaching is engaging and often suitably tailored to the needs of pupils. Pupils work together to solve problems and demonstrate skills and knowledge which are more in line with their peers.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving well. The focused professional development and training are being consistently applied. As a result, pupils are using images, models and resources to understand some challenging themes, such as improper fractions in

Year 4. However, pupils do not consistently present their work well in mathematics in some classes. This is detrimental to the accuracy, clarity and recording of their mathematical thinking and reasoning.

- Teachers and adults have established positive relationships with pupils. Pupils feel that they can ask questions and are keen to share their learning.
- Teachers use 'Learning Support Plans' (LSPs) to ensure that pupils with SEND benefit from well-directed support. LSPs are agreed with parents and reviewed regularly. This enables pupils to overcome specific barriers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- At those times when teaching is not engaging the pupils well, pupils interest wanes and their attention wanders. This leads to unwanted learning behaviours and disinterested pupils. However, the converse is also true. There are times when pupils are highly motivated, such as when they are learning at the forest school.
- When teachers lack challenge and ambition, this leads to pupils producing poor work. For example, there are scribbles in workbooks and evidence of pupils' poor attempts to do their best. Pupils sometimes lack pride in their learning, which is not addressed consistently in lessons.
- Pupils do not talk confidently or with conviction about other cultures or world faiths. There are opportunities for pupils to learn about the world and different cultures, such as when pupils consider the partner school in India. However, this does not have the prominence in the curriculum to embed this knowledge and understanding for pupils' readiness for life in modern Britain.
- There is a positive ethos in the school. Pupils mix well and show care, respect and tolerance towards each other. Pupils generally conduct themselves well, for example at breaktimes or when moving around the school. They show a good awareness of rules to stay safe at forest school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There are times when behaviour management is not consistent. This leads to some pupils showing unwanted behaviours in lessons or around school. This is unsettling for some pupils and leads to frustration, including from a minority of staff and parents in relation to how poor behaviour is addressed.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. Most pupils say that this is well dealt with and they trust adults to intervene effectively if it happens. There is a significant minority of pupils and parents who feel this is still an aspect that needs further work.
- Behaviour logs and incidents show that incidents are recorded appropriately and

followed up, including racist incidents. However, leaders do not evaluate or scrutinise their records to observe trends or 'trigger points' to help combat issues that may be occurring in the school.

- The overwhelming majority of pupils are happy. Pupils attend well and most look forward to school. Leaders check attendance regularly and engage with parents to ensure that absence does not become a problem. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, however, falls a little behind their peers nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes have declined since the previous inspection. In 2018, the proportion of pupils leaving the school having reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was 40%, which was below the national average of 64%.
- However, the progress that pupils make in each of these subjects improved from the previous years. Published progress measures are similar to the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The achievement of current pupils in key stage 2 remains too variable. There are fluctuations seen in the progress that pupils make in different subjects. For example, the progress of boys in writing remains poor. However, there are classes where this trend is being reversed at pace, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving. Differences are diminishing, particularly in writing and mathematics. However, there is continuing variability for some pupils, including the most able pupils, which prevents them from reaching the standards of which they are capable.
- The quality of writing across the curriculum is not good enough, including when pupils are being challenged to write technically in science. There is also limited work, such as coding in computing.
- Similarly, in key stage 1, progress is not strong in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils do not develop or build on their core skills sufficiently. As a result, some are not well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The achievement of the most able pupils remains a significant challenge. Too few of the pupils reach the highest standards (greater depth) at the end of key stages 1 and 2. This includes insufficient proportions of the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' phonics skills and knowledge are not good enough. This is seen, for example, in the proportion of pupils who do not meet the standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Furthermore, those who do reach the standard are not consistently using and applying this knowledge for reading and writing (spelling).
- Despite clear improvement seen in mathematics, there are still gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils are not confident to use or recall number facts quickly to solve problems, including knowing their multiplication tables.
- Pupils do not consistently make strong progress in reading across the school. So, by the time they leave the school, some pupils still have difficulty with understanding meaning or inferring an author's intent. Lack of these sophisticated skills presents a barrier to learning for the older pupils.

- Pupils with SEND also make variable progress. Teachers use LSPs well to ensure that progress against targets is strong. However, at other times, pupils' progress is too dependent on the quality of teaching and on the level of challenge or ambition provided by the class teacher.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Too few of the most able children make rapid progress in their reading, writing and mathematical development to exceed age-related expectations by the time they leave the Reception Year. The physical environment is not established well enough to enable them to make the best gains in these basic skills or apply these independently through the pre-arranged activities in the classroom or outside.
- The very few disadvantaged children make variable progress. As with other children, too few exceed the early learning goals, particularly in literacy and mathematics.
- Furthermore, children do not consistently make rapid progress in their phonics. Most children can blend phonemes (sounds) to read, or segment them in order to spell, at a broadly age-appropriate level in the Reception.
- However, weaknesses in the phonics strategy prevent some who are able from making consistently strong progress. Teachers do not make good enough use of what they know about the children, which leads to some mismatching parts of lessons or reading books.
- Leaders do not have a robust system in place to ensure that their baseline assessments are accurate. There is a broad estimation that the majority of children enter well below what is typical for their age. However, there is limited evidence to justify this. As a result, the school's view of progress is not fully reliable, particularly in reading, writing and numbers.
- The early years leader and staff are committed and enthusiastic. They have strong relationships with the children and parents. As a result, children are keen to learn and play in a stimulating environment.
- Adults interact well with the children to help guide their learning. In this way, they make timely interjections to support the children's learning, including in the pre-school.
- The strong focus that staff have on children's personal, social and emotional development enables children to settle quickly. Staff model behaviour well. As a result, children in both the Reception and pre-school play well together. They show respect and kindness, for example in taking turns or listening well when a story is being read. The children also understand their 'learning skills', such as empathy, in order to help guide their behaviour.
- The early years leader also ensures that the provision promotes strong physical development. This means that the children are well prepared to handle a range of objects or manipulate apparatus for different reasons.
- Well-established routines and expectations also support the children to make the transition into both the pre-school and Reception.
- The early years leader ensures that there are some effective cross-curricular links. For example, during the inspection, the children were learning about the life-cycle of a

frog. They were making observations of their own frogspawn. They also enjoyed sharing a story about this. The children listen attentively and made sensible points or comments during the session.

- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are well trained and use the common practice and procedures throughout the rest of the school. Staffing ratios and regulations relating to paediatric first-aid training are fully adhered.

School details

Unique reference number	113390
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10052976

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-chairs	Catherine Hayden/Paul Pickett
Headteacher	Kerry Rushton
Telephone number	01803 882 575
Website	www.brixhamcofe.org
Email address	admin@brixhamcofe.org
Date of previous inspection	16 to 17 May 2012

Information about this school

- Brixham Church of England Primary is an average-sized primary school. It is a voluntary controlled (VC) school as part of the Diocese of Exeter.
- The school is mostly comprised of White British pupils. There are few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
- There are approximately 270 pupils on the school's roll.
- Pupils are taught in single classes for each year group, with a separate Reception class and governor-run pre-school class.
- The school shares its provision on a daily basis with a separate pre-school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons in all classes across the school, including in the early years. These were sometimes accompanied by the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, assistant head/SENCo and other leaders, including the EYFS and mathematics leaders.
- Additional discussions were held with the local authority link adviser and the deputy director for education (Torbay local authority).
- The lead inspector also met with representatives of 'The Academy for Character and Excellence', including the chief executive officer, as part of the school's plans to commence a management partnership.
- The lead inspector held a discussion with an education officer for the Diocese of Exeter.
- The inspectors gained the views of pupils throughout the inspection, including discussions at breaktimes.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work in books to establish the current quality of work and standards of current pupils in books.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6, as well as in Reception. They also scrutinised pupils' daily reading records and assessments.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and parents to seek their views of the school. The 11 surveys from Parent View and corresponding free-texts comments were considered by inspectors. Inspectors also met with parents face-to-face. In addition, information from the 15 staff and 76 pupils' surveys were taken into account.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including governor visits and minutes, improvement plans and the school's summary self-evaluation.
- Inspectors triangulated a range of information relating to safeguarding. This included scrutinising the single central record, checking personnel files and reviewing records of multi-agency referrals. Logs of reporting racist incidents, behaviour and health and safety documents were also checked.
- An inspector met with the two co-chairs as representatives of the governing body.

Inspection team

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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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