

Bugle School

Fore Street, Bugle, St Austell, Cornwall PL26 8PD

Inspection dates

14–15 May 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

- Over time, pupils have underachieved significantly in reading, writing and mathematics. Current pupils have a lot of ground to make up.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, have been slow to take effective action. Until very recently, processes to improve teaching have been ineffective.
- The curriculum does not give enough opportunities for pupils to develop their language skills. This impairs pupils' abilities to complete age-related tasks. Consequently, pupils' attainment when they leave the school is well below national averages.
- Teaching is not addressing the gaps in some pupils' mathematical understanding. Misconceptions often go unnoticed or uncorrected because teachers have poor subject knowledge, particularly in key stage 1.
- Teachers' use of assessment is poor. Consequently, too much teaching does not meet the differing needs of pupils, including the most able.
- Teachers' expectations are varied and sometimes too low. They do not plan work that challenges pupils, particularly the most able.
- Pupils' attendance is well below national averages.
- When teaching is not engaging or challenging, pupils struggle to concentrate and quickly lose interest.
- Although improving, the quality of learning in the early years is too variable. Outdoor and indoor learning spaces are not used consistently to build on pupils' interests and abilities.

The school has the following strengths

- Trust leaders have acted effectively to address the decline in standards. Their impact is seen in rising standards in the early years, although not yet on pupils' learning across the school.
- The school caters well for pupils' personal development and well-being.
- The school is calm. Pupils behave well around the school and take good care of resources.
- The school is inclusive, and leaders have been successful at building strong relationships with all parts of the school's community.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - adapting and strengthening the curriculum so that it more consistently meets the needs of pupils and properly prepares them for the next stage of their education
 - implementing rigorous and effective systems for managing staff performance so that teaching improves more rapidly
 - establishing clear expectations for middle leaders so that they all have impact on their areas of responsibility.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it consistently meets the needs of pupils by:
 - raising teachers' expectations for pupils of all abilities so that pupils communicate, read, write and apply mathematics at age-appropriate levels
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment effectively to plan work that helps pupils to build on what they already know and can do
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics
 - making sure that teaching consistently results in good progress for all groups of pupils.
- Further improve pupils' attendance by tackling persistent absence.
- Improve the quality of the early years foundation stage by:
 - securing effective leadership for the whole of the early years
 - ensuring consistency in the quality of learning experiences in indoor and outdoor learning spaces.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Until very recently, leaders' actions have had limited impact on pupils' outcomes. Significant weaknesses in the performance of the school have been allowed to go unchallenged for too long. A legacy of underachievement remains, and so pupils do not leave the school well enough prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The curriculum does not sufficiently meet the needs of pupils. Recent changes to the curriculum to address this are underdeveloped and have not been introduced early enough for most pupils. This means that high proportions of pupils throughout the school are working well below what is typical for their age. Leaders have rightly introduced strategies to improve pupils' acquisition of language to address this in Reception. However, not enough is being done to ensure that older pupils catch up.
- Over time, the leadership of teaching has been weak. Leaders have not identified precisely enough how teaching and learning can be improved. Their evaluations of practice have been overgenerous or focused on the wrong things. They do not take sufficient account of the impact teaching has on pupils' progress. Although this has recently improved significantly, it has not yet led to the improvements needed for pupils to succeed.
- Performance management and other systems to manage staff have been ineffective. Although staff have the potential to provide effective teaching, not enough has been done to ensure that teaching meets the needs of pupils. For example, leaders have not ensured that teachers use assessment effectively to plan lessons that challenge pupils or meet their differing needs.
- Middle leadership is underdeveloped. Subject leaders either do not have the skills they need or have not been enabled to use them effectively. Consequently, they do not have an impact on improving standards in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders from the trust evaluate the effectiveness of the school accurately. Recently, they have taken robust action to bring about improvements to leadership and management. This has led to improvements in leaders' evaluations of teaching but has yet to have the impact needed on pupils' learning. Lines of accountability have much greater strength and are better organised than in the past. This allows the trust to provide regular and timely support to improve provision.
- Following a clear lead from the trust, leaders have made effective use of additional funding. For example, the use of the pupil premium grant has made a positive difference to remove barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. Similarly, leaders' use of the physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools has been effective. For example, pupils access a good range of sporting opportunities and teachers are supported well to deliver good-quality physical education lessons.
- Some aspects to the curriculum are having a positive impact on pupils, such as personal, social and health education and physical education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. For example, pupils are encouraged to consider tolerance and respect and apply them to their own experiences. Well-

planned activities help pupils to explore and appreciate different faiths and cultures, which prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is better than for many other groups. The special educational needs coordinator has a good understanding of the needs of pupils on the register. Together with senior leaders, she ensures that the school is inclusive and delivers the reforms of the new code of practice. However, pupils with SEND make inconsistent progress because of general variability in the effectiveness of teaching.

Governance of the school

- Governance has not been effective in raising standards over time. Although there have been recent improvements to the quality of challenge and support for the headteacher, this was slow to materialise when standards were low. Hub councillors are beginning to widen their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Since September 2016, this has led to better challenge around key areas such as the use of external funds.
- The recent appointment of a new strategic partner by the trust has strengthened the challenge provided to leaders at the school. Minutes of meetings and visit reports, particularly since September 2018, show that leaders are asked increasingly searching questions by hub councillors and leaders from the trust. This has led to improved provision, particularly in the early years, where the decline in standards has been successfully reversed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and managed well. There are clear lines of responsibility relating to safeguarding, so all staff know who to go to if they are concerned about the welfare of a pupil. Leaders deliver useful training for staff so that they know their responsibilities, as well as specific training on current issues such as the 'Prevent' duty agenda. All staff are carefully checked for their suitability to work at the school and records are kept in a way that meets statutory requirements.
- The school's safeguarding policy is compliant and meets the expectations as set out in 'Keeping children safe in education', 2018. Leaders work effectively with the local authority and other agencies. When necessary, they are willing to take tough decisions and follow them up with colleagues if they have concerns.
- There are strong and useful links between the school and the local community. An on-site parent support adviser and the warm and welcoming culture of the school have enabled strong relationships to be fostered with many parents. Strong working relationships with other agencies also allow leaders to robustly keep children safe and support their families effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching across the school does not help pupils to learn quickly enough, including in the vital areas of English and mathematics. Teachers' expectations of what pupils

should achieve are inconsistent and sometimes too low. Too often, work is not set at the right levels to challenge pupils and meet their different needs.

- Teachers' use of assessment is poor and underdeveloped, particularly in the core areas of learning including reading, writing and mathematics. In lessons, work is often too hard for some pupils and too easy for others. When teaching new concepts, teachers do not check well enough to ensure that pupils fully understand new knowledge before moving on. Similarly, teachers' checks on pupils' understanding in lessons are underdeveloped.
- Too often, the needs of different groups of pupils are not adequately met. For example, not enough thought is given by teachers to providing challenge to pupils, particularly the most able. Too often, those who work below age-related expectations are unable to access the learning in lessons.
- The teaching of reading is improving, but still has a long way to go. Leaders have rightly recognised the need to revisit the teaching of phonics, where practice is varied and sometimes poor. Older readers are now receiving better-targeted reading lessons. However, this is too recent to have had much impact.
- Where there is effective practice, teachers ensure that lessons are engaging. These lessons elicit the enthusiasm and interest of pupils well.
- The relationships between adults and children are a strength across the school. Lessons are calm and orderly. Pupils feel able to contribute their thoughts freely because their thoughts are valued.
- The use of adults in lessons is effective. Other adults support pupils' learning well, particularly for those with SEND. Some teaching assistants are very skilled; they support pupils with complex needs very effectively in lessons, including in the early years.
- The teaching of writing is improving. However, pupils' poor language development and lack of enthusiasm for the wider curriculum mean the quality of writing overall is limited.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Leaders have established an open culture where pupils feel able to share concerns. This helps to ensure that everyone looks out for each other.
- Pupils describe several ways they have been taught to keep themselves safe such as road safety, water safety, 'bikeability' and when using the internet.
- Pupils speak positively about the school. They believe teachers really care about them. Pupils report that bullying is exceptionally rare, and this is reflected in the school's logs. Pupils rightly feel safe. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are safe at the school.

- The promotion of healthy lifestyles is strong. School sport is promoted well. Good use is made of the school environment, in which pupils learn and play well together. Leaders ensure that pupils are given extra opportunities to develop gross and fine motor control through physical development using a range of resources.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In lessons, pupils generally demonstrate appropriate attitudes to their learning and listen well to teachers and to each other. Relationships are positive and pupils show respect for the views of others during discussions and in their play. However, sometimes pupils have not developed the skills they need to work on their own. When teachers do not set work that enthruses and captures their interest, pupils become restless. When this happens, pupils are too casual in their approach to their work, waste time and do not achieve as much as they should.
- Pupils' attendance is poor and has been well below national averages for a number of years. Overall attendance is negatively affected by the persistent absence of a minority of pupils. The school is now taking appropriate action to tackle this and rates of persistent absence have started to decline.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is positive. Adults supervise pupils well at break and lunchtimes. Pupils are polite and well-mannered, and enjoy school. Pupils play happily together in the outdoor areas and quiet play spaces. They use a range of games and play equipment appropriately to enrich their experience. The school's behaviour logs demonstrate that this is typical of their behaviour over time. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last three years.
- Parents, carers and pupils are positive about pupils' conduct at the school. The strong sense of community means that pupils enjoy coming to school and participate well. Assemblies celebrate diversity and promote inclusion. For example, inspectors observed an assembly in which pupils considered the challenges of having a disability.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- The standards achieved by pupils are too low in all subjects. Pupils' attainment in national assessments has been well below average since the school opened as an academy. Pupils are not well enough prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The challenge provided for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, remains underdeveloped across the school. Sufficiently challenging work for these pupils is not set, so they do not get the opportunity to reach their potential. Far too few attain greater depth by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils do not adequately learn the skills they need to be successful in mathematics. They do not develop a secure understanding of place value, particularly in key stage 1. Pupils are beginning to get opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems. However, they do not have the basic skills needed to make the most of these tasks. As a result, much of their learning in mathematics is limited and lacks depth.

- Work in books shows that pupils are improving their writing skills more quickly than in other areas. Nevertheless, limitations in pupils' language and low expectations mean that pupils' writing abilities by the time they leave the school remain too low.
- Pupils' reading skills are not as developed as they should be in most year groups. Recent changes to the approach taken to teaching reading to older pupils have not yet had an impact.
- Leaders use the pupil premium effectively to help disadvantaged pupils make progress. Although many disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as they could because of the varied teaching and weaknesses in curriculum design, the impact of interventions has improved the progress they are currently making. Consequently, the gap in their attainment compared to other pupils nationally is diminishing.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Provision in the early years, although now improving, is not as effective as it should be. Assessments of pupils are not used precisely enough to ensure that the learning environments meet the needs of children, or that activities which pupils choose are effective.
- Outdoor and indoor learning environments are not consistently developed to meet the needs and interests of children. For example, in the Reception class, the indoor learning environment is much more engaging for children than what is on offer outside. Conversely, in part of the Nursery provision, the outdoor learning environment is better utilised than inside. Furthermore, these environments are not tailored in response to assessments about the children precisely enough, particularly for the most able. This means that learning is not precise and other adults are not clear about how to help children make rapid progress when they are learning through play.
- Many children enter the Nursery with skills that are less than are typically expected for their age. Leaders have looked to tighten the quality of assessment so that work better meets the needs of pupils overall. This has led to improvements to the quality of the early years provision, particularly during adult-led sessions. Overall, over the last two years, children, including those who are disadvantaged, have made improved progress from their starting points and are, therefore, better prepared to move into Year 1.
- Leaders work well with other agencies, the trust and parents. For example, there are strong links with parents. Parents contribute to their children's assessments and speak positively about the provision on offer. They rightly believe their children are looked after well in Nursery and Reception. Positive relationships are promoted and children's behaviour is good.
- Trust leaders have worked with school leaders to improve provision over the last two years. However, the early years leader has been unable to monitor and evaluate provision in the Nursery, which limits improvements to provision. Staff ensure that children are safe and feel safe. Children interact well with each other and enjoy playing together.

School details

Unique reference number	143165
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10088368

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	233
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jacqueline Swain
Senior Head of School	Tim Wherry
Telephone number	01726 850 420
Website	www.bugleschool.org.uk
Email address	secretary@bugleschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bugle Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Pupils' stability is lower than is typical because the proportion of pupils who join the school later than the normal starting point is well above average. The school has a Nursery which includes provision for two-year-olds.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is also above average.
- The senior head of school was the headteacher when the predecessor school joined the Aspire Academy Trust in September 2016. A new lead teacher was appointed and started at the school following the spring half-term break.
- The work of the trust is overseen by a board of trustees. Local governance is provided by hub councils, although school leaders are accountable to the strategic partner from the trust. The trust is responsible for 27 primary schools across Cornwall.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons across the school, most jointly with senior leaders. They observed pupils' behaviour around the school and during lessons. They analysed records of pupils' achievement, talked with a group of pupils from Years 4 and 6, listened to pupils read and analysed information about pupils' attendance. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' learning by looking at pupils' books in lessons and separately with leaders.
- Meetings were held with leaders from the trust, including the deputy chief executive officer, senior leaders, leaders responsible for special educational needs and the early years, as well as with a group of local governors known as hub councillors.
- Inspectors looked closely at school documentation, including minutes of hub council meetings, the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and assessment information about pupils' achievement.
- The inspector took account of six responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the results of a parents' survey completed by the school the week before the inspection.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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