

# Charlestown Primary School

Crinnis Road, Carlyon Bay, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 3PB

## Inspection dates

4–5 October 2016

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	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have been too slow to tackle inconsistencies in teaching. This has led to slower progress for some groups of pupils in some year groups.
- Historically, governors have not held senior leaders to account with sufficient rigour. They have relied too heavily on information from the headteacher.
- Leaders' plans for school improvement are not precise enough to support rapid progress.
- Teaching is inconsistent across year groups and between subjects, including in the early years.
- Not all teachers provide the most able pupils with enough challenge. This hampers the progress for some of these pupils in some year groups, including children in the early years.
- The few disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not always receive the support they need. Consequently, their progress stalls.
- Leaders have not been swift enough in dealing with pupils' poor attendance.
- Some parents do not have confidence in the school's leadership. They express some well-founded concerns about communication.

### The school has the following strengths

- Actions taken since joining the Atlantic Centre of Excellence Multi-Academy Trust have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Pupils' writing across different subjects in the curriculum is good.
- The curriculum provides a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve above national average outcomes. This represents good progress for low- and middle-ability pupils in particular.
- The well-planned sports curriculum develops pupils' agility, strength and skills effectively. As a result, pupils experience success in sport.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that they know whom to go to in school if they have worries.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders' plans for improvements include measurable actions that increase the urgency with which leaders tackle pupils' attainment and progress in writing and mathematics
  - senior leaders regularly provide the governing body with information on the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - leaders provide training, clear guidance and support for all staff so that pupils, particularly those receiving additional support, make accelerated progress
  - the governing body strengthens the rigour of its challenge to check the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' achievement and progress
  - leaders respond promptly to parents' concerns.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
  - all teachers provide the most able pupils with the challenge and support they need to make consistently good progress in writing and in mathematics, including in the early years
  - teachers receive training to deliver high-quality questions which encourage pupils to think more deeply and extend their learning
  - teachers use information about what pupils know, can do and understand to be sure that those disadvantaged pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make accelerated progress.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by leaders working effectively to improve pupils' attendance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

### Requires improvement

- Efforts to secure good teaching and learning during a period of transition, as the school grows from one-form entry to two, have not been effective enough. This, together with a significant building project in the school, has distracted senior leaders from the school's main business. As a result, the culture where all pupils flourish academically has been eroded.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their plans for improvement tackle the immediate priorities. Leaders have been successful in improving outcomes in spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, plans do not reflect the urgency needed to accelerate some groups of pupils' progress in some subjects. For example, the most able pupils are not making the strides of progress they need to in writing, particularly in key stage 1.
- Most recently, leaders' actions have led to improvements. Leaders now have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching in the school. This together with the recent recruitment of new middle leaders has increased the capacity for leadership. This is not having a consistently strong impact in bringing about substantial improvement. For example, although work in books reflects that the majority of pupils make good progress in mathematics, where teachers' subject knowledge is weaker, the most able pupils make less progress.
- Leaders have effective systems in place to check pupils' learning and track their progress. Nonetheless, they have not always used this information to tackle gaps in pupils' skills or understanding quickly enough. Leaders' meetings with teachers identify where progress is slow but until recently, they have not been rigorous in checking whether the agreed actions have generated improvement.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive additional funding to support them, but its effectiveness is variable. Leaders do not evaluate the success of interventions rigorously. Consequently, not all disadvantaged pupils make consistently good progress. Leaders do not provide governors with sufficient information for them to make well-informed decisions around the allocation of these funds.
- The systems for accurately recording and measuring progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not yet in place. Consequently, their progress is variable because the support they receive is inconsistent across the school. Many pupils develop positive attitudes and build on small steps of success when working with teaching assistants in small groups. However, this information does not always feed into the work that teachers do in the classroom.
- Until recently, the systems in place to manage staff performance have not brought about the required improvement. Since joining the trust, expectations have increased. Where leaders identify weaker performance, they implement suitable plans. Improved induction of new staff, for example, has led to greater consistency in teachers following the school's marking policy. However, inconsistencies still exist in key stage 1 in particular. Induction arrangements for safeguarding are thorough. However, the support that new staff receive on joining the school is still too variable.

- The school successfully promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils develop respect for other cultures. Displays throughout the school support pupils' understanding of British values. One pupil told an inspector, 'I love being British because I have responsibilities and choices. I can just be me.' The curriculum helps pupils to be responsible for their actions as good citizens. Forest school displays demonstrate the promotion of resilience and teamwork.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is planned to include a broad range of subjects. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities, trips and residential visits. For example, Year 6 took part in a dance workshop at Pineapple studios in London and went on to see 'The Lion King'. Leaders have ensured that the teaching of subjects such as science develops pupils' skills as they move through the school. However, the curriculum does not support successful learning for all pupils. For example, inconsistencies remain in the challenge teachers provide for the most able pupils in some subjects.
- Leaders deploy the primary sport funding well to provide a wide range of sporting activities and clubs. Sport has a high profile in the school with impressive and improving participation rates. The majority of pupils in key stage 2 take part in at least one club. Key stage 1 rates of participation are increasing. Key stage 2 sport leaders support physical education and games at lunch and playtimes. Sports such as grass-track cycling and golf enable pupils to develop their personal talents in individual sports as well as in the usual team sports played on the school's all-weather pitch.

## **Governance**

- Historically, governors have relied too heavily on the information provided by the senior leaders. The headteacher's reports have not provided governors with the precise information they need to gauge the success of decisions made. Evaluation of the impact of funding for disadvantaged pupils is weak. However, the governing body is able to demonstrate how the additional funding for sport has generated more activities and enjoyment.
- Training and close work with other governing bodies within the trust have increased governors' confidence to ask leaders questions. Recent minutes of governing body meetings clearly reflect more challenge. Actions such as the recruitment of the early years leader reflect governors' good understanding of school priorities. However, it is too soon to see the impact of all decisions on outcomes for pupils.
- The governing body made the strategic decision in September 2015 to join the Atlantic Centre of Excellence Multi-Academy Trust (the ACE Trust). This has enhanced the processes it uses to hold school leaders to account. Governors now have specific responsibilities, for example for safeguarding and pupils' achievement. Governors now understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work. However, they do not hold leaders to account with sufficient rigour.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff and governors are fully up to date about keeping children safe. Staff speak knowledgeably about the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child's well-being. Staff training ensures that everyone who works at the school is alert to the signs of risk, which might lead to abuse or exploitation. Records kept demonstrate the school's proactive approach to preventing harm. The school is a safe environment. Conscientious staff who work with the most vulnerable pupils help them to be free from harm.
- Leaders have engaged the support of a local educational welfare officer this academic year to be confident that everything possible is done to improve pupils' attendance. The school has effective systems in place to check if pupils are safe when they are absent from school. Leaders work closely with the police and other external agencies where they have concerns. Records contain the required information but are not always well organised.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable across the school and between different subjects. Teaching does not deepen and extend pupils' learning for them to achieve as well as they can. The work set is not well matched to what pupils already know, understand and can do. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils. Leaders have taken steps to increase teachers' expectations of all groups of pupils. While this work is showing some positive signs, it is too early to assess the full impact of these actions.
- Not all teachers are equally adept at managing pupils' behaviour. On occasions, when activities are not closely matched to their needs, pupils lose concentration and their learning stalls.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years has provided some pupils with a slower start in their phonics achievement. On occasions, teachers do not check pupils' understanding or articulation of sounds. This slows down the progress that some pupils make as their mistakes are not noticed or corrected.
- The teaching of reading is helping pupils to make good progress in key stages 1 and 2. Close work with families ensures that pupils read widely and often. The well-resourced library provides pupils with a quiet yet stimulating place to read.
- The teaching of writing is well structured, particularly in exploring spelling, punctuation and grammar. This is helping pupils to write accurately. Teachers provide enough opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces of writing across the curriculum to embed their writing skills. However, teachers do not provide the most able writers with the guidance they need to improve and excel in their writing.

- Historically, the teaching of mathematics has been weak, particularly in key stage 1. Staff training and guidance have ensured that more teachers are teaching the relevant skills at the right time. However, challenge for the most able is not consistent across the school. Work in books shows that progress for these pupils is strongest in Year 3. Here, pupils develop their recall of number facts and apply their understanding of concepts to problem-solving situations, whereas in other year groups pupils practise skills but are less able to apply them.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are all aware of the few disadvantaged pupils in their classes. The support pupils receive is variable. Some teachers do not plan suitable work to support these pupils to make good progress. When this happens, pupils' progress stalls, in particular, for those disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 who also have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils have not all caught up quickly enough from their weak start in the early years.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are safe in school and say that they feel safe. They receive good guidance in lessons and assemblies in developing skills that will keep them safe, for example keeping safe using social media. They know that they can trust staff to listen to them and they are encouraged to speak out when they have any concerns. During the inspection, a fire alarm went off. Pupils calmly left the building to move to their safe place in the playground where they stood sensibly until it was safe to return to classes.
- Some parents expressed concerns in Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, about the school's management of bullying. However, pupils say that bullying is rare and that adults deal with unsafe behaviour quickly and effectively. 'Stay safe' mentors help pupils in the playground. The school's records show that incidents of bullying are rare. Staff agree. However, parents express concerns that, when poor behaviour or bullying does occur, leaders do not always communicate and reassure them about the actions they took.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders' work to tackle poor attendance has not been undertaken with rigour. Attendance has improved for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the school's overall attendance and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils are below the national average. Poor attendance is hindering pupils' progress.
- Some parents who used the free-text Parent View response option expressed concerns around how leaders manage poor behaviour. Inspectors found the majority of pupils to be well behaved. However, leaders' increased vigilance and higher expectations have led to a greater number of incidents of poor behaviour being identified this term. Leaders plan to tackle the current inconsistencies in behaviour management and to improve communication with the teachers and families involved.

- Well-established routines help the majority of the pupils to behave well. Pupils are proud to receive school rewards and most of them agree that the rewards and sanctions are implemented fairly.
- Relationships throughout the school are positive. Adults know the pupils well.
- Pupils say they are proud of their school and enjoy the activities on offer. They play happily alongside each other at playtimes and lunchtimes, and settle quickly to work on their return to the classroom.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- From their different starting points, too few children make good progress. In the past, not enough children have achieved a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception class.
- Children who did not achieve a good level of development do not always catch up in phonics by the end of Year 1. Attainment is variable when compared with the national average. Although pupils achieved in line with the national average in 2015, outcomes in 2016 were slightly below the national average. This does not represent good progress from starting points.
- Historically, pupils in Year 2 have achieved well in reading and writing but less well in mathematics. The school's records and work in books show that for 2016, outcomes in mathematics were stronger than in previous years. Outcomes in mathematics at key stage 2 reflect a similar strong picture. Leaders' actions have led to improvements in mathematics for some pupils but not all. Lower- and middle-ability pupils have made better progress than the most able pupils have.
- By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, they are consistently achieving above national averages. In 2015, there was a decline in the rates of progress pupils made in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils. Progress in writing was weakest. Work in current books reflects a similar picture. Tasks do not always build on pupils' previous learning or challenge the most able pupils to do even better.
- The progress of current pupils is too inconsistent because the quality of teaching is not yet good in all classes. Although still variable in different classes and year groups, the school's records confirm that spelling, punctuation and grammar are stronger than other areas of learning.
- The school has very few disadvantaged pupils. Although erratic, work in books shows that disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to others in writing and particularly good progress in mathematics. However, for pupils who are disadvantaged and also have special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress is not good. Leaders do not check the effectiveness of interventions to support them. Work is sometimes not well matched to these pupils' complex needs. As a result, their progress stalls.
- The school has a string of achievements in sport, which include first place in kwik cricket for boys in Cornwall and second place in tennis in mid-Cornwall. Pupils told inspectors that they particularly like their sport because it helps them to stay healthy.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Historically, children have not made enough progress in the Reception class. A high proportion enter the early years with good skills in both communication and language and in personal and social skills. However, the proportions meeting a good level by the end of the Reception class have been lower than the national average for two out of the last three years. Consequently, too few children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Senior leaders report that in the past, teachers' assessments have not always been secure. There is little evidence to demonstrate improvement in the differences between boys', girls' and disadvantaged pupils' achievement. For example, over the past two years, girls have continued to outperform boys, particularly in writing, with girls achieving above the national average and boys achieving below the national average.
- Leaders appointed a new leader in September 2016. Her plans for improvement reflect a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the provision. The early years team is developing a rich and stimulating environment. Adults' observations are informing the activities that children do. Activities planned encourage children's mark-making and early writing skills. This is helping teachers to develop children's skills systematically.
- Adults are well trained about the procedures and expectation that all children must be safe at school. Both indoor and outdoor learning environments are well organised. Teachers have quickly established good routines to ensure that children behave well and are good at tidying up in order to keep spaces clear and safe.
- Inconsistencies still exist in the quality of interactions with children. Staff induction has not tackled this issue. Where adults' skills are less developed, the work and questions they offer children do not extend their thinking or develop their vocabulary. However, some adults are particularly adept at posing good questions. For example, while making salt dough, the adult asked children questions about the shapes they were making and the texture and smell of the dough, which extended children's thinking.
- Teachers encourage a love of books. Inspectors observed children sitting together sharing books, talking about the pictures and discussing what might happen next. In a whole-class story session, all pupils were absorbed and eager to talk about the story. The teacher provided effective challenge by asking questions which developed children's thinking and extended their knowledge of rhyming words. The children responded well and were able to do this easily. They demonstrated a good understanding of the story and were keen to discuss what might happen next.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors reported that they are very happy with their child's start to school. They say that they are well informed about their child's progress and particularly like the online communication that takes place between the school and home recording and celebrating children's achievements.

## School details

Unique reference number	136760
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10001020

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	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Innes Dowlen
Headteacher	Stephen Gibson
Telephone number	01726 812 831
Website	<a href="http://www.charlestown.cornwall.sch.uk">www.charlestown.cornwall.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@charlestown.cornwall.sch.uk">head@charlestown.cornwall.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Charlestown Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Charlestown Primary School converted to be an academy in 2011 as a standalone academy and later joined the ACE Trust in September 2015. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted in July 2012, it was judged to be a good school.
- In 2014, the school increased in size and moved from a one-form to a two-form entry school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Children in the early years (Reception class) attend full time.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupil premium and sports premium additional funding on its website.
- The school does not comply with the Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about schemes of delegation, or the governors' annual statement of impact on the school's website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes. All observations on day 1 were carried out with a senior leader.
- Discussions took place with senior leaders and the executive principal of the ACE Trust.
- A meeting was held with three governing body representatives on day 1 and another meeting took place with the chair of the governing body and the executive principal of the ACE Trust on day 2.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including minutes from governors' meetings, school improvement plans, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- An inspector gained the views of pupils throughout the inspection, including at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books together with the senior leaders, to establish the current quality of pupils' work and progress over time.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also took into account the 10 pupil responses to the online questionnaire.
- An inspector heard pupils of different ages and abilities read, and led a discussion to explore pupils' views about reading.
- An inspector conducted a walk around the school to look at curriculum displays and the promotion of British values.
- An inspector held a meeting with newly qualified members of staff.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of parents, and considered 84 responses to Parent View. An inspector had a telephone conversation with a parent. In addition, responses to the Parent View free-text service were analysed.

## Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mike Brady	Ofsted Inspector
Matt Middlemore	Ofsted Inspector

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