

Delaware Primary Academy

Drakewalls, Gunnislake, Cornwall PL18 9EN

Inspection dates

25–26 September 2018

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

- Teachers engage pupils well in lessons. Pupils enjoy lessons and willingly participate. Teachers respond to pupils' emerging needs to ensure that activities are suitably challenging.
- In recent years, pupils' outcomes have continued to improve. A greater proportion of pupils are now working at the standard expected for their age and the higher standard.
- The school's ethos, 'Believe, Achieve, Enjoy', permeates the school. Pupils enjoy school, and while in lessons they make learning their sole priority.
- In mathematics, a new approach to how teachers deliver the school's curriculum has ensured that pupils have regular opportunities to reason and problem solve. In some cases, most-able pupils require greater challenge.
- Pupils love to read; they speak passionately about their favourite books and authors.
- Pupils' attainment in phonics by the end of Year 1 and Year 2 is broadly in line with national averages. Too few lower-attaining pupils catch up.
- Across the school, pupils make strong progress in writing. They write across a range of genres and apply what they have been taught. However, the transition between key stages 1 and 2 is where progress is weakest.
- The headteacher, supported by her staff and the trust, has created a nurturing school where aspirations for pupils are high. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the impact the school has had on their children.
- Pupils harbour a love of learning. They are inquisitive and have no fear of failure. When mistakes occur, they tackle them with a positive approach. In lessons, pupils focus and engage.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are steeped in mutual respect. Pupils feel safe and are safe. The school's safeguarding culture is rich.
- Children in the early years make strong progress. Adults design activities to meet the emerging needs of the children. As a result, a greater proportion are working at expectations for their age by the end of the Reception Year.
- Absence and persistent absence were previously high. Efforts to reduce absence are paying dividends and attendance is on an upward trajectory.
- The development of middle leaders is ongoing. Recent appointments to these roles mean that leaders will need support as they undertake leading their areas of responsibility.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management further to ensure that:
 - middle leaders monitor closely the standards in their subjects, tackling weaknesses and sharing best practice
 - the transition between key stage 1 and key stage 2 is improved so that pupils build on prior learning in writing, and apply what they have been taught
 - leaders embed the new approach to the teaching of reading, leading to improved progress and attainment by the end of key stage 2
 - absence and persistent absence continue to fall closer to national averages.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so that:
 - teachers provide challenge in mathematics, particularly for the most able, so that a greater proportion are working at the higher standard
 - lower-attaining pupils in key stage 1 who struggle in their phonics development receive effective and timely support, so that more can accurately decode and meet the standard expected in the phonics screening check and key stage 1 reading assessments.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the trust and her staff team, has created an ambitious, warm and energetic school environment. A 'can do' attitude permeates the school, with learning at the heart of all decision-making. Pupils reflect this. They enjoy lessons and savour learning opportunities, and pupils' outcomes are improving.
- The headteacher knows every pupil across the school, including their specific targets, strengths and weaknesses. Discussions about pupils' progress occur daily on an informal basis as well as regular formal pupil progress meetings. The headteacher and her staff keep a watchful eye over pupils' progress, regardless of whose class they are in.
- The leadership for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. Leaders reflect on pupils' outcomes and emerging needs, actively seeking methods to improve their effectiveness with the clear aim of improving pupils' progress. Leaders can demonstrate how support has resulted in improved pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders make good use of the pupil premium funding. Leaders identify barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils and put in place actions to overcome these. Leaders closely monitor the impact of their actions, keeping a watchful eye on the progress that pupils make across the academic year. A recent change to the school's assessment system has restricted leaders' ability to evaluate long-term progress, but plans are in place to strengthen this part of their work.
- Leaders use sports premium funding effectively, allocating funding to meet the needs of the pupils it serves. For example, Zumba classes were available for children in the Reception Year, with the aim of helping them meet the early learning goals. Furthermore, leaders can evidence how the use of the sports premium has resulted in higher sporting participation and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in physical education.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The most common responses to the online survey, Parent View, stated their satisfaction with staff's efforts and care to meet the needs of pupils and how much their children enjoy attending school. Every parent who completed the online survey would recommend the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils access a broad, rich curriculum. Leaders' aims for pupils to make links across the curriculum are evident across the school. Pupils have opportunities to write purposefully across a range of subjects. Pupils state that they enjoy the range of subjects on offer, with one pupil explaining how much she enjoys conducting investigations in science. Curriculum units such as the 'Shang Dynasty' provide natural opportunities to build on pupils' knowledge of China and apply across a range of subjects such as art and literacy.
- The headteacher has developed a tier of middle leaders across the school. Some leaders are experienced in the role, effectively taking on duties such as monitoring standards across their subject and supporting staff with training. As a result, leaders have overseen changes to the teaching of mathematics and writing, leading to

improved outcomes. However, for others who are relatively new to the role, this is not yet embedded. The headteacher has prioritised strengthening this aspect of leadership.

- The school's approach to the teaching of reading is currently under revision. Leaders have successfully managed to promote a rich appreciation of authors and titles. Through work such as the school's 'Reading agents' and the '1000 book read', leaders have ensured that pupils read widely and often. However, the school's guided reading sessions are not 'tapping in' to the pupils' eagerness to pick up a book. Leaders acknowledge that it is not yet consistent across the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an increased awareness of the school's performance. They ensure that they have all the information they need to enable them to challenge leaders when concerns or questions arise. Thanks to the trust, governors' focus has been solely on teaching, learning, assessment and pupils' outcomes. Governors state that this has been highly beneficial. Governors play an active role in the life of the school, contributing their own time to promote reading across the school and attending pupil progress meetings between staff.
- The trust has played a key role in the school's improvement. It has supported the governing body, enabling governors to have greater impact on pupils' outcomes as well as providing training opportunities. The executive headteacher, chief executive officer and headteacher work closely with one another and share the same vision for the school. Professional development opportunities are provided for staff, with close consideration to the strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders have worked together to improve outcomes for pupils in the school and increase pupil numbers, where previously these had declined. Leaders have created a 'feel good' culture across the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The procedures for appointing staff are robust and checks are thorough. All pre-employment checks are recorded on the school's single central record, ensuring that it is compliant. As a result, leaders ensure that only those who are suitable to work with children are employed.
- The rich culture of safeguarding is visible across the school. The school corridors present reminders for pupils, so that they know who to talk to if they feel sad or have any concerns. Pupils state that they feel safe, and parents agree.
- Leaders ensure that staff keep up to date with statutory frameworks and recent developments regarding the safeguarding of children. As a result, staff know how to recognise potential concerns about pupils' welfare and escalate these concerns to the designated leader for safeguarding in a timely manner. Leaders ensure that when concerns warrant external involvement, referrals are made in a swift yet detailed manner. Leaders can demonstrate their work with external agencies and how, through their work, concerns have de-escalated or attendance has improved.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers engage pupils well in lessons. Pupils are inquisitive, enjoy lessons and willingly participate. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' prior attainment and emerging needs to inform the level of challenge or support that pupils may need. Pupils relish these opportunities and tackle them without fear of failing. When mistakes do occur, pupils are adamant to learn from their experience, put them right and do not dwell on them.
- Teachers deploy support staff effectively. Across the school, teachers are clear about the role support staff have in improving pupils' outcomes. Teachers deploy them with a clear rationale; this results in precise support. In some cases, the deployment of support staff is exceptional. Adults skilfully engage pupils, asking appropriately challenging questions and responding to pupils' emerging needs in a timely, effective manner. Pupils know precisely 'where they are going' and 'how they are going' in these lessons.
- The teaching of mathematics provides pupils with daily opportunities to develop their fluency, reasoning and problem-solving knowledge. Pupils strive to tackle the activities on offer and make strong progress in lessons. Activities particularly benefit lower- and middle-attaining pupils, providing a necessary diet of new learning and application. However, for higher-attaining pupils, some activities lack the stretch and challenge to support them to work at the higher standard.
- The teaching of writing is increasing in quality across the school. Teachers closely consider pupils' starting points and provide activities to meet pupils' emerging needs. Pupils enjoy applying what they have learned in their own writing and do this across a range of genres. However, the expectations between key stages 1 and 2 are not yet consistent. Pupils do not have regular opportunities to apply this, which limits opportunities to demonstrate what they are capable of.
- In the area resource centre (ARC), the school's specialist provision, adults strike positive, nurturing relationships with pupils. Adults work closely with pupils while also promoting independence. Expectations of pupils are high, and activities are appropriately challenging. Pupils are confident to share their learning experiences and enjoy the provision.
- In lessons, relationships between adults and pupils are deep-rooted in mutual respect. Classrooms are a warm, safe place to learn. Adults facilitate meaningful discussions among pupils. This adds to the purposeful learning environment. When pupils undertake activities, they are engaged, busy and focused.
- The approach to the teaching of reading comprehension is not yet consistent across the school. In some classes, teachers skilfully engage pupils with a range of rich questioning which teases out pupils' knowledge and understanding about the text they have read and are familiar with. In these powerful exchanges, pupils develop an increased understanding of ambitious vocabulary which they then successfully apply themselves. In other classrooms, the approach is not yet in place.
- In key stage 1, staff support pupils well as they continue their journey of reading. Adults respond well to the vast majority of pupils' emerging needs and pupils make strong progress in their phonics development. However, for lower-attaining pupils, this support is not as consistent. Adults are not as knowledgeable about how to meet their

specific needs. While some pupils can successfully decode words, this is often very laboured, with much of their effort expended on the reading of individual words without considering the word's meaning. As a result, some lower-attaining pupils are not yet successfully reading or understanding age-appropriate texts.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are advocates for the school's ethos, 'Believe, Achieve, Enjoy'. They state that the school ethos is part of their day-to-day life in school. Pupils demonstrate in lessons and around the school that they enjoy being there and feel safe and happy.
- Pupils tackle their work with a positive mindset and engage well. Classrooms are a hive of activity. Pupils are industrious in their work ethic and seek ways to improve their work. As leaders stated, 'Children are the most important stakeholders in our school.' Pupils love to learn and feel truly valued at Delaware Primary Academy.
- Pupils at Delaware are given a voice. The school council and learning council offer opportunities for pupils to have a strong say about the school and its direction. The learning council visits lessons and offers support for younger pupils, while the school council contributes towards charitable donations and fundraising events.
- Pupils have a strong understanding about British values. Across the school, visual prompts remind pupils about these, and on a weekly basis certificates reward those pupils who demonstrate these values well. 'Being kind', 'having a choice' and 'showing respect' are the values that pupils speak passionately about. Pupils also understand the term 'democracy' and its importance, making links with the pupils voted into the school council.
- Pupils have a firm understanding about how to stay safe online. They can state the key 'rules' for doing this and can give examples about the importance of online safety.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well across the school. Pupils transition seamlessly from one part of the school to another, holding doors for others as they do so. The school's 'Diamond Rules' of 'show good manners at all times, care for everything and everyone, and follow instructions with thought and care' underpin the strong behaviour demonstrated throughout the school.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. They tackle challenges in a defiant and determined manner, not fazed by fear of failure. When work is 'tricky' or pupils have made mistakes, they seek help and take advice in the manner it is given in order to improve. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy the learning opportunities. They agree that the school ethos of 'Believe, Achieve, Enjoy' is an accurate description of life at Delaware Primary Academy.
- During lessons, pupils are focused and engaged in their learning. Classrooms are busy, industrious environments. As a result, low-level disruption is rare. Pupils state that

behaviour in lessons and across the school is a strength, bullying is rare and adults swiftly deal with it, should it occur.

- Historically, absence and persistent absence rates have been high. However, improvements are evident and attendance rates are now closer to the national average. There is still more to do to ensure that these improvements are sustained.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In recent years, pupils' outcomes have continued to rise across the school. An increased proportion of pupils are now working at the expectations for their age and the higher standard. Pupils' progress continues to improve in all year groups, highlighted in the school's end of key stage 1 outcomes. In 2018, a greater proportion of pupils met and exceeded expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- For current pupils, in-school assessment information, supported by the work in pupils' books, shows pupils' progress to be a strength across the school.
- Pupils develop their reasoning and problem-solving knowledge in mathematics well, resulting in strong progress for most pupils. However, at times, the challenge for the most able is not consistent in quality. As a result, there are occasions where these pupils find the work less challenging and progress slows.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress. In most subjects and across most year groups, the gap between them and other pupils nationally is closing. This results in an increasing proportion of disadvantaged pupils working at the expectations for their age and the higher standard.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make strong progress. In the ARC, adults plan activities to closely meet the needs of the pupils. The curriculum is finely tuned and strikes a balance between developing pupils' academic knowledge and their social and emotional development. Adults provide quality opportunities for pupils to develop life skills which will enable them to understand the world around them, outside of the school.
- Pupils read frequently and speak passionately about their favourite authors and books. They hold meaningful discussions about authors' techniques. One pupil stated that she enjoyed reading 'The Hobbit' by JRR Tolkien, due to the minor detail the author pays attention to and how it allows her imagination to run wild. Pupils regularly read in class during guided reading sessions. While pupils enjoy these opportunities, progress in reading by the end of key stage 2 remains lower than seen in writing and mathematics.
- Phonics outcomes have been in line with national averages in recent years. However, although lower-attaining pupils can segment words according to their sounds, they find it taxing to blend these sounds together, which prevents them from reading the word in full. This hinders their reading progress.
- Pupils' progress in writing is strong and improving. Pupils develop their knowledge of a wide range of genres within fiction and non-fiction. In some classes, pupils' progress accelerates, particularly in Years 1, 5 and 6. Regardless of starting points, pupils' books demonstrate a marked improvement. In lower key stage 2, while progress is evident, it

is not as strong as seen in other year groups. Pupils do not apply the techniques they have learned.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make strong progress in the Reception class. From the time children start their Reception Year to the time they leave, the proportion of children working at the expectations for their age increases. Over time, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been in line with national averages.
- Adults set children challenging activities. In recent years, few children have exceeded the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. Leaders put plans in place to rectify this, and in 2018 attainment improved. The current cohort of children are benefiting from this work. In the early stages of the academic year, children are set challenging activities to extend their thinking.
- Children are confident and self-assured. They are eager to share their learning experiences and immerse themselves fully in the well-planned activities that adults provide.
- Adults plan activities carefully to meet the emerging needs of children. Adults use assessment information effectively to ensure that activities support children's progress. Whether children are measuring each other's height, comparing greater than or less than, fishing out phonetically decodable words from the pond or exchanging money in the shop, learning is at the heart of all decision-making. As a result, the early years is an exciting hive of learning.
- The new Nursery class within the school is providing children with a good start. This year, a greater proportion began the Reception class working with skills typical for their stage of development.
- In the Nursery class, the curriculum offer closely reflects what children need to learn. Adults considered how road safety was a necessity for children to learn, due to the school's proximity to a busy road. Children designed traffic lights for their road, learned about how zebra crossings work and paid close consideration to pedestrians needing to cross. All of this was set up in the safe, imaginative space in the Nursery outdoor area. Consequently, at a young age, children are aware of the dangers that a busy road presents.
- Children in the early years are safe and feel safe. Adults supervise children well and are suitably trained to carry out their statutory duties, including paediatric first aid.
- Parents are positive about the early years. They comment on the school's effective transition arrangements and how the caring provision results in children settling well and enjoying school.

School details

Unique reference number	142038
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10053425

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Kate Latham
Headteacher	Lynn Nash
Telephone number	01822 832550
Website	www.delawareprimary.co.uk/
Email address	secretary@delawareprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school was sponsored by the Bridge Academy Trust in December 2015 after the predecessor school was judged to be inadequate in March 2014.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly lower than the national average.
- The school has a specialist provision named 'the ARC' for up to five pupils who have autism spectrum disorders. Three pupils currently attend this provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classes across the school, jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, the executive headteacher and the chief executive officer of the Bridge Academy Trust. The inspector also met with the subject leaders for reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, the inspector met with the school's special educational needs coordinator, the leader of physical education and the early years leader.
- The inspector scrutinised several documents, including minutes from governance meetings, the school's self-evaluation framework, the current school development plans and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Furthermore, the inspector considered plans to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the strategies for use of the pupil premium and sports premium funding.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work in their books from the current and previous academic years, to establish the current quality of pupils' work and progress over time.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to groups of pupils to seek their views about the school, reading, behaviour and their awareness of British values and keeping safe online.
- The inspector considered 28 responses to the online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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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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