

Pelynt Primary Academy

Pelynt, Cornwall PL13 2LG

Inspection dates

25–26 June 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' actions have not been sharp enough to secure consistent teaching. Consequently, pupils' progress varies.
- When leaders analyse the impact of their work they do not look closely enough at the difference they make to pupils' progress.
- Some leaders are developing in their roles. For example, subject leaders often rely heavily on the trust to improve in their areas of responsibility.
- Teaching is inconsistent. Teachers sometimes do not expect enough of pupils. Teachers' explanations can be confusing and lack precision.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is disjointed. Pupils do not have a consistent understanding of basic concepts because of a legacy of weaker teaching.
- The teaching of phonics is not as precise or systematic as it should be. Pupils do not consistently secure the skills they need to read fluently.
- At times, other adults in the class support pupils' learning effectively, but often this is not the case.
- Provision in the early years is inconsistent. Children in the pre-school are not as challenged as they could be because of the varied use of assessment.
- Pupils' progress varies in different subjects and across year groups. Too few reach their potential by the time they leave the school, particularly the most able.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently good. Pupils behave well, but lack resilience in lessons. Some pupils do not attend well.

The school has the following strengths

- Governance is effective. The trust challenges and supports leaders well. Consequently, leaders are increasingly effective.
- The curriculum has a number of strengths. British values are promoted well. Links with the community and outdoor learning are utilised well to capture pupils' interests.
- Leaders evaluate the school accurately. Recent strategies to improve teaching have led to pupils making better progress than in the past.
- A strong safeguarding culture helps to ensure that pupils are well looked after. Pupils are right to say that they feel safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make the progress they are capable of, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils of all abilities, particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring that the teaching of early reading is more precise and systematic
 - effectively modelling new concepts and ideas through clear explanations
 - supporting teaching assistants to have a consistently strong impact on pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - further strengthening monitoring arrangements to accelerate the improvements needed to teachers' practice
 - sharpening leaders' evaluations so that they focus more on the difference their actions are having on pupils' progress
 - improving the consistency of subject leadership.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - embedding improvements to pupils' attendance
 - promoting stronger attitudes to learning.
- Improve the quality of the early years foundation stage by embedding improvements to the pre-school so that provision is consistently good across both settings.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement because leaders have not secured good teaching or strong enough outcomes for pupils over time. For a number of years, standards have been low and there have been wide fluctuations in results. Historical weaknesses in teaching and learning took too long to be resolved. Consequently, despite improvements in teaching over the last 12 months, pupils' outcomes remain variable because of a legacy of underachievement and some remaining inconsistencies in teaching.
- Subject leadership is not secure. Recent turbulence in staffing means that many teachers with leadership responsibility are very new to their roles, particularly in English and mathematics. Consequently, their knowledge of subject leadership remains underdeveloped or they have not had time to fully understand what is needed to improve provision. Where subject leaders have had an impact, it has typically been because of the support that has been delivered by the trust.
- Leaders' checks on teachers' performance are not fully effective. Leaders evaluate the progress staff make against their targets regularly. This cycle of evaluation links well with other monitoring activities, such as learning walks and book scrutiny. As a result, teachers are working diligently to apply strategies that leaders have introduced, for example to the teaching of reading in groups. However, too little focus is given to the individual needs of teachers. This means that improvements to teaching are slowed, particularly where practice is weaker.
- Leadership and management have grown significantly in their effectiveness, particularly over the last 12 months. Support from the trust has helped the head of school introduce more rigorous monitoring systems. As a result, leaders evaluate the effectiveness of the school accurately. Plans for improvement are focused well on where improvements are needed. However, leaders' strategies tend to focus on whole-school initiatives and not enough on how to improve individual practice.
- Leaders have made effective use of external support. For example, leaders have utilised local authority reports into the quality of the early years to improve how learning is promoted in the outdoor environments. Similarly, leaders have worked hard to improve the quality of writing across the school with success. Staff are pulling together behind the leadership team and so the school is now moving in the right direction.
- The headteacher has rightly introduced new assessment systems. These systems are used effectively by some teachers to plan work for pupils that is at the right level. However, although assessment information is used well to support learning, it is not yet effective in helping leaders to evaluate the impact of their actions.
- Much of the curriculum is taught through topics, which pupils particularly enjoy. Enrichment activities, such as visits to Bristol and outdoor learning, are used to make learning accessible and interesting. There are strong links with other schools within the trust and the wider community through which pupils experience competitive sport, and staff benefit from joint ventures. Well-planned experiences and assemblies help pupils

to explore and appreciate different faiths and cultures, which prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Some subjects are taught well. For example, pupils' skills are well developed in science and art.

- Leaders have made good use of the primary sport premium. Pupils have access to high-quality physical education lessons. Teachers receive useful training opportunities to develop their own practice. Senior leaders analyse the use of the fund diligently by looking at the difference they make to pupils' participation in lessons and in clubs. Plans for using the funding in the future are secure and appropriately focused on further developing the quality of pupils' experience of sports.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. The special educational needs coordinator has a very good understanding of the needs of these pupils. Together with senior leaders, she works hard to ensure that the school is inclusive. Leaders' actions are particularly effective in supporting pupils who receive a bespoke, individual curriculum. Leaders analyse carefully the difference that interventions have on progress and change the support these pupils receive if necessary. However, pupils with SEND typically do better where teaching is more effective, and so inconsistencies remain in their progress. Additional funding is used well.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium is effective. Improvements in how the funding is used this year have resulted in successful and targeted strategies to support disadvantaged pupils. Many are making stronger progress than their peers and are catching up with other pupils nationally.

Governance of the school

- The school is part of the Bridge Schools multi-academy trust. The trust's scheme of delegation places the line management of the head of school with an executive headteacher. Together, they have accurately evaluated the school's effectiveness. Initiatives to support subject leadership have been effective. For example, the trust's English lead has worked alongside the school's subject leader effectively. They have brought about improvements, for example to the teaching of writing.
- The executive headteacher is a member of the local governing board. This helps to ensure that local governors also have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. Members of the board are skilled and highly committed to supporting leaders to bring about improvement. Consequently, although the executive headteacher provides the line management of the head of school, governors provide a robust extra layer of accountability.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leadership arrangements for safeguarding are appropriate and clearly understood by staff. There are clear lines of responsibility at the school. All staff know who to go to if they are concerned about the welfare of a pupil. Leaders deliver timely and targeted training for staff so that they know their responsibilities, as well as specific training on current issues such as the 'Prevent' duty agenda.

- 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 appropriately with child support professional colleagues if they have concerns. Staff are carefully checked for their suitability to work at the school and records are kept in a way that meets statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school is not yet consistently good. It requires improvement because teachers' expectations are variable in some classes and in certain subjects. As a result, some pupils are not sufficiently challenged to do their best and so do not learn as quickly as they could over time, particularly the most able.
- Some teachers' explanations are not clear or precise enough to help pupils grasp new concepts. Where this is the case, teachers' strategies to show pupils what they need to know are underdeveloped. As a result, pupils sometimes find the work they have been asked to do confusing or cannot build on what they already know well enough. Teachers and teaching assistants then spend long parts of the lessons explaining to pupils how to tackle the activities, rather than focus on what they are learning. Pupils themselves report that they find some explanations difficult to follow, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers' deployment of teaching assistants and other adults is not always as effective as it could be. For example, teaching assistants' time is not used well enough and some are not clear about what they are expected to do. Too often, teaching assistants over prompt pupils and give too much support to solve problems. Consequently, some pupils are overly reliant on support to complete work they should be doing independently.
- The teaching of mathematics is variable. Leaders' actions to improve the teaching of mathematics are less robust than those seen in English. Where teaching is less effective, teachers lack the subject knowledge needed to plan lessons that help pupils apply skills and use their reasoning when investigating mathematical concepts. Many pupils lack the foundations in their learning to understand some of the most challenging concepts. This means that pupils' ability to make use of what they are being taught remains limited.
- Leaders have been successful in improving the teaching of writing. Teachers ensure that there are links between what pupils are learning about in their topic work and what they are asked to write about. As a result, pupils' enjoyment of writing has increased and they are achieving more success. Teachers consistently apply the school's feedback policy. Consequently, pupils, particularly in key stage 2, are now clearer about what they need to do to write effectively. Leaders have rightly identified that expectations in writing remain too low for the most able.
- Leaders' strategies to improve the teaching of reading have had varied success. Lessons where pupils study texts in groups or as a whole class are now more effective. Pupils report that they enjoy the texts they study and that these sessions have helped them to enjoy reading more. However, the teaching of early reading is not as precise as it needs to be. Although pupils benefit from learning in small groups, teachers are

not thorough enough when checking how well pupils have grasped sounds before moving on to new ones. This means that learning is not systematic enough and pupils do not learn their sounds with enough precision as they progress through the school.

- When expectations are higher, pupils make much better progress. For example, in lower key stage 2, when solving mathematical problems using formal written methods, pupils were expected to utilise what they already knew to solve problems of varying complexity. The teacher regularly checked pupils' understanding and asked them to discuss and share their ideas in small groups and then as a class. The high expectations and engagement elicited by the teacher ensured that pupils' understanding and application of knowledge improved as a result.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Despite there being many strengths in the school's work in this area, pupils are not consistently encouraged to lead active and healthy lifestyles. Pupils are keen to have access to better play equipment for their breaktimes and have fed this back to leaders. However, the resources available do not enthuse and interest pupils.
- Too little is expected of pupils throughout their time at the school. As a result, pupils lack the skills of independence you would normally expect of children of the same age. Consequently, pupils have developed a need for adult support and encouragement. Pupils lack the resilience needed when they are challenged to do more complex tasks.
- Some elements of the curriculum promote pupils' personal development well. For example, outdoor learning is a central element to all topics delivered as part of the school's curriculum. Pupils speak positively about how this supports them to keep safe. Pupils also value opportunities to learn from the police, from the RNLI and when visiting the beach.
- Pupils are taught well how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Leaders have established an open culture and family feel. Pupils speak confidently about who they could go to if they have a concern.
- Pupils speak positively about the school. They believe their teachers and friends really care about them. Pupils report that bullying doesn't happen, as reflected in the school's well-recorded logs. Pupils rightly feel safe. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are safe at the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In lessons, pupils lack the confidence and clarity to demonstrate appropriate attitudes to their learning. Nevertheless, relationships are positive and pupils show respect for the views of others during discussions and in their play. Conduct in lessons is good. Pupils respond well to their teachers and follow instructions carefully.

- Pupils' overall attendance is poor and has been below national averages for a number of years. Recent initiatives to improve attendance by leaders have been positive. For example, work with the education welfare officer has improved the attendance of some pupils who were persistently absent in the past. As a result, pupils' attendance is now improving. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that this remains a priority for improvement until pupils' attendance is at least in line with national averages.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good. Adults supervise pupils well at break and lunchtimes. There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions in the last three years.
- Parents, carers and pupils are rightly positive about standards of behaviour at the school. The strong sense of community means that pupils often enjoy coming to school and participate well. Opportunities to participate in community events are abundant. Pupils speak about these events enthusiastically. For example, visits from authors inspired pupils to want to do better in their writing.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable from their different starting points. Historic outcomes show that pupils' achievement has been poor for some time. However, recently leaders have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching so that pupils are beginning to make much stronger progress.
- Pupils have attained levels that have been below average in the past, particularly in 2018. Small cohorts and high mobility mean that results have fluctuated widely for different year groups. For example, in 2017, pupils in key stage 2 attained results that were broadly in line with national averages, before the sharp drop in results in 2018. Despite these variances, leaders have rightly identified that too few pupils make the progress they should from their starting points.
- Pupils are currently achieving better in reading and writing than in mathematics. This is because work to improve achievement in English has had greater impact than the improvements put in place for mathematics. For example, the new approach to teaching reading has led to current pupils making better progress in key stage 2. However, pupils lack a strong enough understanding of the basic skills in mathematics to allow them to problem-solve effectively. In some classes, this gap is being successfully addressed but overall this is not consistently the case.
- Work seen in pupils' books shows that pupils are now making strong gains in their literacy skills and improving gains in their numeracy skills overall. The standard of work is better in some classes where teachers' expectations of pupils are higher than in others. Pupils are given useful opportunities to apply their skills in writing across other parts of the curriculum. However, they do not apply their mathematics skills often enough.
- The majority of different groups of pupils, including those with SEND, make similar progress. Where teaching is stronger, all groups make better progress. Conversely, where expectations remain low, all groups do not do as well. However, the challenge for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, remains underdeveloped across the school.

- The progress of the small number of disadvantaged pupils currently at the school is consistently better than their peers. This is because leaders have ensured that the pupil premium has added value to pupils' learning where it is needed. Nevertheless, the overall picture for disadvantaged pupils is the same for all other groups. Where teaching is stronger, they make the best progress.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Provision in the early years is not consistently good. In particular, despite improvements being made, assessments of children's learning are not used well enough in the pre-school to ensure that children make as much progress as they should. As a result, the outdoor environment and lessons when children choose activities do not build on what children know and can do in the pre-school as well as in the Reception class.
- The teaching of early reading across the early years is not as systematic as it should be. There are not strong enough links made between what children learn when they start the pre-school and what they will learn in Reception. Furthermore, the teaching of reading in the early years is not precise enough. Some children are expected to move on to new sounds before they are ready to do so. This contributes to the overall weaker performance of pupils when they take the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Activities led by adults are sometimes very effective and help children to make strong progress. For example, a whole-class writing session in Reception helped children to understand how to compose their own writing with accuracy.
- Due to the very small size of cohorts, the proportion of children who enter the pre-school with the skills expected for their age can vary widely. As a result, outcomes by the end of Reception can also vary widely. However, leaders have rightly looked to tighten the quality of assessment so that work better meets the needs of children. This has led to improvements to the quality of provision. Overall, over the last three years, children have made better progress from their starting points and are, therefore, well prepared to move into Year 1.
- The leadership and management of the early years are effective. The early years leader evaluates the quality of provision accurately. She has improved the quality of provision in the pre-school and established strong practice in the Reception class. Staff work hard and well together to ensure that children are safe and feel safe. Children interact well with each other and enjoy playing and learning together. However, the quality of learning remains stronger in the Reception class and so there is more work to do to ensure greater consistency between the two parts of the early years setting.

School details

Unique reference number	142955
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10088352

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	118
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr John Mason
Head of School	Miss Kelly Edwards
Telephone number	01503 220 262
Website	www.pelyntprimary.co.uk
Email address	secretary@pelyntprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Pelynt Primary Academy is a smaller than average-sized primary school. There are four classes from Reception to Year 6 and a pre-school. Very small cohorts mean that results can fluctuate widely for different year groups.
- The majority of pupils are White British and approximately one in 10 pupils comes from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- There are very few pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is less than half the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school joined the Bridge Schools multi-academy trust in September 2016. The trust has 14 academies, all primary schools. Governance is provided by the board of trustees. The trust board takes full responsibility for challenging and supporting leaders

to ensure that pupils' outcomes improve. The trust is led and managed by a chief executive officer. Since the school joined the trust, there have been several changes to the leadership structure. The school also shares executive leadership arrangements with Polruan Primary Academy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons across the school, all jointly with the head of school. He observed pupils' behaviour around the school and during lessons. He analysed records of pupils' achievement, talked with a group of pupils from Years 4 and 6 and scrutinised information about pupils' attendance.
- Meetings were held with the head of school, the executive headteacher, leaders responsible for special educational needs, English and the early years, as well as two members of the local governing board. The inspector also met with a representative from the trust who has a leadership role for English.
- The inspector looked closely at school documentation, including reports provided by leaders from the trust, external moderation and visits from the local authority, 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 17 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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