

Liskeard Hillfort Primary School

Old Road, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 6HZ

Inspection dates

10–11 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders are taking too long to ensure good teaching across the school. This limits the amount of progress the pupils make.
- Senior and middle leaders do not check the quality of teaching with sufficient rigour. As a result, they do not identify or deal with weaknesses in teaching quickly enough.
- Middle leaders do not have sufficient skills or knowledge to hold others to account for improving teaching and learning rapidly enough.
- Systems for holding teachers to account are in place but do not have enough impact on pupils' achievement because the monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently focused.
- Pupils do not make good progress consistently during their time at the school and so do not reach the standards they are capable of.
- The governing body is increasing its impact but is still too reliant on others in the Adventure Learning Academy Trust (ALAT) to help drive improvements.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not always high enough or sufficiently ambitious, including for the disadvantaged pupils. This results in a lack of challenge in some year groups which stalls pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not always check or respond to what pupils have learned. As a result, lessons are sometimes too difficult or do not stretch them enough.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils extend the depth of their writing and number skills through applying them in other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal has worked effectively with his team to ensure that safeguarding is effective.
- The appointment of the current principal has had a positive impact on the culture and ethos of the school. As a result pupils' attitudes, behaviour and welfare are now good.
- The early years foundation stage is effective in providing children with a good start and ensuring they are ready for Year 1.
- Systems for identifying and targeting pupils who need to catch up are effective.
- The teaching of phonics is good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers:
 - raise their expectations of what all pupils can achieve, including disadvantaged pupils
 - check and respond to pupils' learning in a timely and effective manner to match work accurately to their different needs
 - extend and deepen pupils' writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievements by ensuring that:
 - local governance is strong enough to hold school leaders to account in improving teaching, learning and assessment
 - middle and senior leaders are effective in checking and improving the quality of teaching in lessons.

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.

An external review of governance 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

- Leaders are taking too long to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. Since the school became an academy and joined ALAT in June 2014, leaders have yet to remedy many continuing weaknesses in teaching. Recently, however, they have acted effectively to improve teaching in important areas, particularly in phonics and in the early years foundation stage.
- Middle and senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently developed. Their evaluations typically reflect teachers' actions rather than the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. As a result, they do not identify or deal with weaknesses in teaching quickly enough.
- Those who have responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure that pupils' emotional and social needs are fully met. They work effectively with pupils who have challenging behaviour. However, their plans and actions to support pupils academically are not sharp enough. As a result, pupils do not make consistently good progress in developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Leaders' and teachers' use of assessment information is not sufficiently developed. As a result, leaders have an overly generous view of the rates of progress across the school.
- School leaders have appropriate systems for holding teachers to account when their performance is particularly weak. As a result, they have successfully eliminated previous inadequate teaching.
- Leaders align professional development appropriately to school priorities. Training for teaching assistants has been effective in enabling them to lead interventions and phonics work with skill and confidence. However, other training has not been effective in raising the quality of teaching.
- School leaders promote a broad and interesting curriculum. In particular, this supports pupils' understanding of both the school's values and British values. For example, pupils recognise how democracy influences their own lives through becoming elected as school councillors and taking other roles, such as head boy or girl.
- The principal has led improvement effectively in many aspects of the school. Since his appointment in November 2015, the overwhelming majority of staff, pupils and parents recognise major improvements, most notably in safeguarding and in pupils' behaviour, attitudes and attendance.

Governance of the school

- Governance is not yet fully effective. A newly formed local team of governors is now in place. However, some key roles and responsibilities have not yet been agreed or assigned, including for special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupil premium. At present, local governors do not have sufficient skills to hold leaders to account. However, this function is fulfilled by other senior members of the trust's board.

- Since the academy conversion in June 2014, governors have been slow to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, despite recent improvements, not enough teaching is good, which slows pupils' progress.
- Governors' strategy for disadvantaged pupils is having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attendance. However, this strategy does not ensure that groups and individuals, including the most able, are effectively supported to make consistently strong progress.
- The spending of the sports grant is effective. This has successfully targeted disadvantaged pupils so that nearly all have taken part in additional physical activity after school.
- Governors undertake monitoring visits. As a result, they have had a direct impact on the work of leaders. They are holding them to account effectively in some areas, such as through checking the school's website to ensure that it complies with requirements.
- Governors' actions have successfully contributed to the elimination of inadequate teaching and improvements to teaching in the early years foundation stage, and in phonics. However, they have been slow to secure good teaching more consistently across the school.
- Local governors, in conjunction with the rapid improvement group (RIG) have ensured that safeguarding is now effective following concerns in the previous year.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff and governors are fully trained to appropriate levels for safeguarding children. This includes four members of staff who fulfil lead safeguarding responsibilities. As a result, staff are keenly aware and observant. They know what to do in the event of concerns and how to escalate them quickly and appropriately.
- There is a strong culture for safeguarding. Leaders respond to concerns efficiently and tenaciously. For example, they alert the local authority to cases where there may be children missing education.
- Staff and governors ensure that safeguarding is at the heart of the school's work. Records and checks for staff recruitment, pre-employment vetting and induction are thorough and comprehensive.
- Leaders monitor behaviour closely and have a 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying. Incidents of bullying and racism are rare and swiftly dealt with. Exclusions for anti-social behaviour or violence are reducing significantly due to the approach staff take and the care they provide.
- Pupils recognise recent improvements in safeguarding. They feel that the school is a safe and happy place to be.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not good enough across the school. As a result, pupils are making inconsistent progress over time, especially in key stage 2.
- Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress to reach the standards of which they are capable by the time they leave in Year 6.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information precisely to ensure that work is well tailored to the needs of different pupils. Consequently, work is either too difficult or too easy and this reduces the rates of pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively, and do not respond in a timely or efficient manner. As a result, teachers do not routinely intervene soon enough or adjust their teaching to support pupils most effectively to make good progress.
- Teaching is not sufficiently well planned to effectively support those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, their progress falters.
- Teachers do not enable pupils to extend, deepen and apply their basic writing and numeracy skills sufficiently in other subjects. As a result, pupils do not refine and practise their skills in a wide-enough variety of contexts and situations. This stifles their enjoyment and limits their progress.
- Targeted interventions for pupils who need to catch up are effective. Teachers and teaching assistants use their subject knowledge effectively to ask probing questions and tackle pupils' misconceptions. Teaching assistants are particularly effective in running programmes providing individual or small-group support in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics. These are a strong feature of teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- Teachers have an effective strategy and are ambitious in their teaching of phonics. As a result, pupils acquire strong knowledge and understanding of phonics to apply to reading and writing by the time they leave key stage 1. Targeted pupils, in particular disadvantaged pupils and lower-attaining boys, are benefiting from phonics teaching and interventions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School staff are highly skilled and effective in helping pupils who require additional emotional, social and behavioural support. They know the pupils well and take effective action to calm and intervene when they recognise that a pupil needs them.
- Pupils show courtesy, respect and kindness to each other. For example, during playtime a group of pupils spontaneously decided to join a girl who was sitting on her own.

- Pupils are well motivated and receive strong encouragement to make positive contributions to the school and those around them. They are given responsibilities, such as head boy or girl or school councillor, which they take seriously and use for the common good.
- School staff ensure a stable, familiar and well-organised start to the school day, including a breakfast club. This supports pupils well to feel settled and start the day in a positive frame of mind.
- School leaders take swift and effective action to tackle anti-social or unwanted behaviour. As a result, incidents of bullying including racism and use of derogatory language are rare. These are monitored rigorously and tracked by school leaders, which has resulted in much-improved behaviour and conduct around the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- School leaders and staff have been effective in raising expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and conduct themselves well around the school.
- School leaders are conscientious and diligent regarding pupils' absence, and monitor this closely. As a result, attendance is above the national average. It is also improving strongly for disadvantaged pupils and for those who previously had high and persistent absence.
- There are times when pupils lose interest in their learning or become demotivated, especially when teaching is not meeting their needs. As a consequence, pupils become distracted and the quality of their work suffers.
- Teachers do not always challenge pupils to do their best, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils do not always take pride in their work or strive to do their best across different subjects. These instances adversely affect the quality and standard of the work they produce.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress of pupils across the school in reading, writing and mathematics is not good enough. Pupils' progress varies as they move from year to year. As a result, there are periods when pupils are not making the progress expected of them.
- Lower- and middle-attaining pupils, especially boys, do not make the progress expected of them.
- Disadvantaged pupils and services pupils, including the most able, are working below the standards of their non-disadvantaged counterparts, including in reading. However, effective interventions are now enabling pupils to start catching up.
- The most able pupils make strong progress when teaching is well matched to their needs. They show skills across the curriculum that demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding. However, this strong progress is not found in all year groups.

- Pupils who have profound and complex needs are showing rapid progress. However, other pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not generally make sufficient progress because plans and provision are not precise enough to meet their needs.
- Pupils' reading skills are good. They develop word building and fluency well as they progress through the school and can read a variety of texts with increasing understanding and comprehension.
- Workbooks show that pupils have a secure understanding of basic numeracy and literacy skills, for example calculation in mathematics and composition and sentence structure in writing. However, these are not used or deepened across the full range of subjects to provide additional or alternative context and meaning.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make at least suitable and sometimes rapid progress.
- Standards at the end of key stage 1 in phonics, including for disadvantaged pupils and boys, are rapidly improving. This is reversing a dip in key stage 1 phonics results in 2016.
- Achievement in a minority of year groups is particularly good. Pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics improve sharply during these years. This enables many of them to meet or approach the standards expected of them.

Early years provision

Good

- Teachers and staff know the children well. They make accurate and rapid assessments of the children when they enter the school, which ensures teaching is swiftly and effectively planned to meet the children's needs.
- Teachers use assessment information effectively to match provision and activities to the children's needs. This includes intervention and support for children needing to catch up in learning and applying their letters and sounds and also to challenge others who enter with more secure skills and understanding.
- Teachers use the environment effectively to promote interest, curiosity and excitement. As a result, children are motivated and keen to learn. For example, a group of boys enthusiastically developed their physical, communication and social skills through constructing a pirate ship together.
- Staff have high expectations of the children. They are determined for all children to do well. Consequently, the children are making good progress from their starting points, including disadvantaged pupils needing to catch up to be ready for Year 1.
- Adults skilfully check the learning of children and make timely and astute interventions to add value to their experiences and learning. They appropriately adjust the support they offer to ensure children take responsibility for their own learning to build their resilience and develop independence.
- Parents value the good communication and relationships with school staff. This supports their transition into Year 1 and enables the children to make a happy and settled start to school life.

- Teachers plan effectively for the children to enjoy their learning both indoors and outside. However, their planning for children to write and engage in early number skills outside is not as good. As a result, the range of contexts and situations where children use these skills is limited.
- Safeguarding in the early years foundation stage is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	140838
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10033104

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	370
Appropriate authority	Adventure Learning Academy Trust
Chief operating officer	Mary McKeeman
Principal	Dr Tim Cook
Telephone number	01579 343443
Website	www.hillfortprimary.co.uk/
Email address	admin@liskeardhillfortprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the government's floor standards.
- The school converted to become an academy as part of the Adventure Learning Academy Trust in June 2014.
- The school is larger than the average primary and has two classes in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classes, mostly accompanied by the principal and/or a senior teacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders to evaluate their work. These included: the principal; the special educational needs coordinator; the chief operating officer and director of primary education of the trust; and a representative of the local governors, as well as pupils.
- The inspectors scrutinised a number of documents including reports of governors' visits, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation, trust monitoring reports, anonymised performance management records and the school development plan.
- Due to technical issues with the website before the inspection, the lead inspector completed a compliance check during the inspection with the principal.
- The inspectors carried out one lesson observation in physical education.
- The inspectors undertook an extensive scrutiny of pupils' books to evaluate the quality of work and check the accuracy of assessment information, including for disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- The inspectors spoke to children through various activities during the inspection and heard pupils read in Years 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6.
- The inspectors observed playtime, lunch and the breakfast club.
- The 62 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspectors considered comments provided alternatively, such as when meeting directly or as a result of the 46 free-text responses received. The online responses of four members of staff were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Lees	Ofsted Inspector
Phil Banks	Ofsted Inspector

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