

Bude Infant School

Broadclose Hill, Bude, Cornwall EX23 8EA

Inspection dates

20–21 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have not had a sufficient impact on improving the school since the formation of Bude Primary Federation in 2016. Currently, leaders are too reliant on external support.
- Governors have not held leaders to account for not halting the decline in the school's performance quickly enough. Across the last two years pupils' achievement has been too low in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not use assessment information about what pupils know, can do and understand precisely enough to fill gaps in pupils' learning. This slows pupils' progress, including the most able, boys, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The teaching of writing is too variable. Too few pupils spell or use punctuation and grammar with the accuracy expected for their age.
- The current teaching of phonics is not good enough, including in the early years. Weaknesses in assessment practices persist, so some pupils do not receive the right level of work or support. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who met the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check declined considerably to well below the national average.
- The teaching of mathematics is too inconsistent. It does not develop pupils' calculation and number skills well. As a result, pupils do not apply number skills reliably to solve problems or deepen their understanding.
- Subject leaders did not receive the training and support they needed to carry out their roles effectively in the past. Their current roles and responsibilities are not defined well enough. This limits the impact they have on improving pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- In just a few weeks, the temporary executive headteacher is already adding further capacity to improve the school. She is prioritising the right aspects of improvement. However, it is too early to see widespread impact.
- The deputy headteachers and their team have worked determinedly to address the school's widespread weaknesses this year. As a result, there has been steady improvement.

Full report

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - securing leadership capacity so it is not reliant on external support
 - ensuring that all leaders have clearly defined roles and accountabilities
 - ensuring that middle leaders receive training and support so that their actions have a strong impact on raising pupils' achievements in their subjects
 - ensuring that governors fully understand their roles and responsibilities in holding school leaders to account
 - ensuring that the remaining inconsistencies in the school's assessment strategies are eliminated
 - implementing a consistent and rigorous approach to the teaching and assessment of phonics across the school
 - governors holding leaders to account so that all groups of pupils make good progress, and any pupils who have previously underachieved or have gaps in their learning catch up quickly.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers use all the information they have to make precise assessments of what pupils know, can do and understand so that they plan work which is closely matched to pupils' needs, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - teaching is sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils
 - the teaching of literacy skills, especially spelling, punctuation and grammar, is effective and so raises pupils' achievement in reading and writing to be good
 - any differences between boys' and girls' progress and achievement are diminished
 - the teaching of mathematics develops pupils' calculation and number skills well, and enables them to use and apply these skills to solve problems and deepen their mathematical understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Weak leadership and decision making over time has hampered school improvement. Leaders, including governors, took too long to address the issues that the school faced when it first federated with the junior school. Leaders' actions have not had sufficient impact. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- There is no substantive executive headteacher. The temporary acting executive headteacher, who has been in post for a few weeks, is working determinedly to address the school's weaknesses. She is facilitating immediate changes. However, there has not yet been enough time to fully eradicate the school's weaknesses.
- Significant changes in the school's leadership since September 2017, including new appointments, have already resulted in concerted action. As a result, inadequate teaching has been eliminated. Parents recognise the positive changes that leaders are making to improve the school.
- The deputy headteachers and their team have been united in their efforts to address stubborn issues. Importantly, they have challenged low standards and mediocre teaching this year. This is beginning to remedy previous weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge and assessment practices. While leaders now have a good grip on the main weaknesses, there is still much left to do. Leaders recognise that their remedial action has not yet brought about pupils' progress and achievement that is good enough.
- The school's action plan is too generic. It does not focus sufficiently on the improvements required at key stage 1 and early years. Leaders are working to short-term targets for improvement but these have not been translated into sharply focused improvement plans with timely milestones. This makes it difficult for governors to hold leaders to account for meeting improvement targets which relate to the infant school.
- Weak decision-making and poor staff management has stalled leaders' impact in the past. For example, middle leaders have not been provided with the training or time to carry out their roles effectively, nor do they have clear job descriptions. Consequently, some subject leaders do not have a clear understanding of how their work contributes to the wider monitoring and evaluation of the school. This hinders the impact of their work to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders and governors are using external support effectively. In particular, the deployment of the acting executive headteacher from ASPIRE multi-academy trust is bolstering leadership capacity. However, this support is very recent and it is too early to see the impact of this work on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' training and support is beginning to make a positive difference to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics. However, it is not yet ensuring that teachers can confidently plan work that builds on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Leaders' actions have not ensured that pupils can use and apply their number skills well enough to solve problems in mathematics. As a result, too many pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Very recently, leaders have taken action to improve the whole-school assessment systems to track pupils' progress. However, this is not yet embedded and some

inaccuracies in teachers' assessment remain, for example in phonics. As a result, some teaching is not closely matched to pupils' needs.

- Leaders have not been sharply focused on deploying and measuring the impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils in the past. Leaders have used funding to provide a range of pastoral support. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from individualised targeted learning support. In recent weeks, pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate, particularly in reading. However, leaders' actions are not yet enabling disadvantaged pupils, who have previously underachieved, to catch up in writing and mathematics quickly enough.
- Leaders have ensured that the funding available to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used to provide an appropriate level of care and learning support. Leaders track the progress of pupils increasingly well. However, while there is an improving picture, this group of pupils does not make consistently good progress because teaching does not meet these pupils' needs consistently well.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. A good range of visits and visitors helps them to be prepared for the world around them and different situations or circumstances others face. School leaders are developing a range of interesting activities, including outdoor learning and trips, to engage pupils.
- Leadership changes to the additional resource base (ARB) have brought about greater focus on pupils' learning. Leaders ensure that the teaching and provision on offer is effective. As a result, these pupils now achieve well.
- Leaders spend the sport premium funding on additional coaching to enhance pupils' enjoyment of physical activity. It is increasing pupils' motivation and interest in sport.

Governance of the school

- Governors did not identify the decline in pupils' achievement or take action quickly enough. While committed to the success of the school since its federation, they have been too accepting of the extended period of time it has taken to stabilise the new arrangement. Although governors challenge leaders when poor performance is reported to them, they do not take swift enough action to follow this up. For example, governors do not hold leaders to account effectively for the impact of the pupil premium funding in raising pupils' achievement.
- Governors are responding quickly to external support and advice, such as pupil premium and governance reviews, in a bid to learn more about how the school can improve. As a result, governors are increasingly successful in ensuring that the right priorities for improvement are being identified and tackled.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders are fastidious and uncompromising about pupils' safety and well-being. Leaders who are responsible for safeguarding are tenacious in their work alongside external partners and agencies to ensure that pupils and families get the support they need.

- Leaders ensure pre-employment staff vetting checks are completed in line with requirements. Mandatory training is kept up to date. As a result, staff know what to do should they be concerned about a pupil's welfare. They apply their training well and take timely and appropriate action to protect pupils.
- Leaders check patterns of pupils' behaviour and attendance closely. Leaders use a strong network of support to ensure that pupils stay safe. For example, the behaviour support adviser and parent family support adviser work well with pupils and their families.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They can explain how to keep themselves stay safe in a range of different situations. This includes when working on the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The leadership of teaching has been weak in the past. Senior leaders did not identify and remedy weaknesses in teaching quickly enough. Current leaders are working on the right aspects for improvement. Consequently, teaching is beginning to improve and any inadequate teaching has been eradicated. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are still not high enough. Teaching is not yet enabling pupils to make good progress over time. As a result, for too many pupils underachievement persists.
- Teachers do not assess what pupils know, can do and understand with sufficient accuracy. Consequently, teaching is not yet remedying weaknesses in pupils' skills and knowledge quickly enough and, at times, pupils do not get work at the right level. As a result, the most able pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make the progress that they are capable of.
- Most recently, teachers' assessments are being used with greater precision to pinpoint where pupils have gaps in their learning. These pupils are then supported to catch up and teachers and leaders can see the difference that is being made.
- The teaching of phonics is too inconsistent. Teachers do not use all the information they have about what pupils know, can do and understand to plan teaching that is closely matched to their needs. As a result, phonics teaching does not build on pupils' next steps consistently well or pupils do not to apply their phonics skills to their writing proficiently. This hinders the progress that pupils make over time.
- Teaching is not sufficiently focused on improving the accuracy of writing in some classes. Too many pupils continue to make basic errors in simple word and sentence construction which hamper their ability to write with the accuracy and complexity that is expected for their age. Some teachers are not adept at picking up errors, so pupils do not receive the timely guidance they need to improve their understanding and use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Very recent actions have been put into place to improve the teaching of writing. The focus on creative writing is motivating pupils to write for specific purposes and there are early signs of improvement.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting. Consequently, pupils continue to form their handwriting poorly. This prevents these pupils, including the most able, from reaching the highest standards in writing of which they are capable.

- The teaching of mathematics is too variable across classes and requires improvement. Recent changes to teaching provide more opportunities for pupils to investigate in mathematics. Teachers' subject knowledge is improving but it is not yet good. Some teaching does not challenge the middle-attaining and most able pupils to deepen their understanding of mathematics concepts. At times, pupils repeat or overlearn skills or knowledge they have already mastered. As a result, pupils' progress slows.
- The impact of additional adults is too inconsistent. On occasions, adults provide too much structure and support. This does not assist pupils to gain independence in their learning. Conversely, where targeted support for pupils is well planned, this additional intervention work is paying dividends and helping pupils to catch up.
- Teaching strategies have been effective in ensuring a smooth transition from Reception classes to Year 1 this year. Teachers and additional adults build good relationships with pupils. Well-established and effective routines enable pupils to settle and enjoy their learning.
- Leaders' guidance and staff training is resulting in greater consistency of teaching strategies and a shared understanding of school policies. Consequently, teachers' subject knowledge is improving and inconsistencies in teaching are reducing steadily.
- Teachers in the ARB are using new assessment information well. As a result, pupils' learning needs are met.
- Increasingly, the teaching of reading provides pupils with the wider support they need to gain an understanding of the texts they read. As a result, increasingly, more pupils are demonstrating the skills and knowledge expected for their age in reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Most pupils are keen and willing to learn. However, when learning is not closely matched to their needs, pupils become distracted or disengaged.
- Some pupils have gaps in their learning. The curriculum does not enable pupils to become determined learners and apply their skills and knowledge readily enough. Pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage in their learning as they could be.
- Pupils' transition from Reception to Year 1 is effective. Pupils collaborate and support each other well. This enables them to learn important personal and social skills which they use across the school day.
- At lunchtime, sports leaders support younger pupils well. Pupils use a range of equipment safely and demonstrate ownership of the school rules. As a result, pupils understand right and wrong and show tolerance to one another.
- Pupils enjoy attending breakfast club and the range of activities on offer. The atmosphere is calm and purposeful. It prepares pupils well for the day ahead.
- Staff 'go the extra mile' to ensure that pupils are happy and settled. Staff work effectively with pupils who have a range of complex emotional and mental needs. The care and nurture that staff provide enables vulnerable pupils from all backgrounds and

abilities to feel appreciated, valued and welcome. Pupils and parents agree that this is a strength of the school's work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attendance is below the national average. Disadvantaged pupils do not attend regularly enough. Leaders are working closely with families and other professionals to improve pupils' attendance. This decisive action is paying off and some improvement is evident.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school has improved swiftly since September 2017. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's new behaviour policy and the consequences of poor behaviour. They have found the revised approach helpful and supportive. As a result, occasions when pupils present challenging behaviour are reducing quickly.
- Pupils enjoy the range of activities which enable them to make positive contributions to the lives of those around them and the school community. For example, pupils interact well through the variety of sports clubs, outdoor activities such as a forest school, and assemblies.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress and achievement has declined since the school's previous inspection. Across the last two years, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has been low. This is not reflective of good progress. Current pupils' progress remains too inconsistent across key stage 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils and boys do not make enough progress across key stage 1. Current performance information shows that there is a wide difference between their progress and achievement in mathematics and writing compared to standards that are expected nationally. Current teaching is not remedying gaps in pupils' learning quickly enough. As a result, a legacy of pupils' poor achievement still persists for disadvantaged pupils and boys.
- This year, pupils who need to catch up have been identified accurately. Targeted learning support is beginning to make a positive difference. Current leaders are strengthening their actions to track pupils' progress since January 2018. As a result, more pupils are starting to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding expected for their age.
- In 2017 the proportion of pupils who met the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check declined steeply to well below the national average. This year leaders' actions are bringing about some improvement. However, teachers do not use their assessments well enough and so pupils' phonics skills remain too inconsistent. Pupils' reading books are not matched well enough to pupils' reading ability. These aspects restrict the progress that pupils make over time.
- The proportion of children who reach a good level of development, the standard that is expected at the end of early years, has been broadly in line with the national average for the last three years. However, boys do less well than girls. Targeted support for

children who have knowledge and skills lower than their age is in place this year. As a result, these children are beginning to catch up.

- The most able pupils do not make consistently good progress in mathematics and writing over time. More precise checking is beginning to ensure that this group of pupils are making better progress in the last few months. However, their progress across key stage 1 has been too slow overall.
- Pupils' progress in writing is too variable and requires improvement. Weaknesses in spelling, grammar and punctuation remain. Pupils' handwriting skills are not developed well enough. Too many pupils do not gain the strength and fluency to write at length. As a result, too few pupils write with the accuracy and detail expected for their age.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in mathematics. Recent initiatives and improvements to the way mathematics is taught paying off. However, pupils do not use and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems well enough in some classes.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make consistently good progress. Current leaders have prioritised targeted support for individuals. This is helping to ensure that these pupils receive the support they need so their learning needs are met. The few pupils in the ARB make strong progress because teaching meets their needs well.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years leader has already made tangible improvements to the setting. She is working on the right aspects of improvement. As a result, the quality of teaching in early years is strengthening quickly. However, leaders recognise that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and boys need to improve quickly. Plans are being implemented successfully, and these are already making a positive difference.
- The teaching of phonics is too variable. Teaching enables children to practise and rehearse their letters and sounds. However, teachers do not use their assessments precisely enough. This hinders the progress that some children make because teaching is not consistently matched to their needs.
- The learning environments, including the outside space, have been improved this year. Children benefit from a range of learning opportunities inside and out. Current children use the resources on offer flexibly and independently to develop their early learning skills well. Staff also prioritise a wide range of activities that encourage pupils to read and write from the start.
- The staff in the early years promote a positive and welcoming ethos. This includes a well-planned and considered induction that helps children and their families to settle quickly when they first arrive.
- Parents welcome the opportunity to contribute to their child's assessments through an online assessment facility. This helps to provide a smooth link between home and school. Parents are very positive about the start their children receive.

School details

Unique reference number	111945
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10042674

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Candi Hulley
Acting Executive Headteacher	Dominique Dyer
Telephone number	01288 353798
Website	www.bude-inf.cornwall.sch.uk
Email address	admin@bude-inf.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 November 2013

Information about this school

- The infant school federated with the junior school in September 2016. It shares a single governing body and senior leadership with the juniors.
- There has been significant change in the school's leadership this year, including changes to middle leadership. There is a temporary, acting executive headteacher who has been in post since January 2018. She is seconded from ASPIRE multi-academy trust.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend an ARB for pupils who have complex needs. This is located on the junior site.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes and the early years foundation stage to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included an inspector visiting the ARB.
- Inspectors held meetings with the range of leaders. These included: the executive headteacher and both deputy headteachers; representatives of the governing body; a local authority adviser; other leaders such as the SENCO and pupil premium leader; the mathematics and English subject leaders; and the school's safeguarding leader.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including safeguarding documentation, minutes of governors' meetings, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation, anonymised performance management records and the school's development plan.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books to evaluate the quality of pupils' work and their progress over time.
- Inspectors spoke to children through various activities during the inspection and heard a sample of pupils read. An inspector also met with pupils to seek their views of key aspects of the work of the school.
- The 79 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. The lead inspector also considered other comments, including those through free-text comments and the views of 20 staff.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Ackers

Ofsted 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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