

# Pebsham Primary Academy

School Place, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN40 2PU

## Inspection dates

13–14 December 2016

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, although much improved, is not yet consistently good across the school.
- Teachers' questioning skills and the learning activities they provide do not routinely stretch and challenge the most able pupils.
- At the end of key stage 2, too few pupils reached the standards expected of them in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing and mathematics is not yet consistently good.
- School self-evaluation and strategic planning documents lack precision and contain some omissions. Consequently, governors are not able to use these plans to hold leaders and teachers to account for improvements.
- The school's target-setting and tracking systems have improved. However, they do not focus sufficiently on ensuring that disadvantaged pupils in all year groups make the accelerated progress needed to catch up with their peers.
- Leaders have not yet implemented a clear assessment and feedback policy for the wider curriculum. As a result, pupils do not know what they have to do to improve their work in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- There is a lack of challenge in the wider curriculum. Teachers' expectations are not always high enough and pupils are not challenged to apply their writing and/or mathematics skills across different subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors are dedicated and determined to make Pebsham a good school. Their new systems and actions are rapidly improving the quality of teaching and outcomes for current pupils.
- Teachers follow the school's feedback policy in English and mathematics, and pupils know how to improve their work in these subjects.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the Reception class and make good progress.
- New systems have been introduced to support teachers and teaching assistants to make better use of assessment information. As a result, they target specific learning activities to meet the pupils' needs.
- Attendance and behaviour have significantly improved since the school became an academy. Pupils behave well, feel safe and enjoy taking on responsibility.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - pupils apply their literacy and mathematics skills across a range of subjects to deepen their levels of learning across the wider curriculum
  - teachers raise their levels of expectation and challenge for all pupils, particularly the most able
  - all teaching meets the same high standards as the best currently in the school.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that rigorous self-evaluation informs precise school development plans with suitably aspirational targets for continued improvement, particularly for:
  - the most able pupils
  - disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The caring and approachable headteacher knows the pupils well and is passionate about securing the very best outcomes for all of them. A warm and welcoming atmosphere with a shared drive for continual improvement is evident from the top down. Pupils and parents value the recent improvements made to the school buildings and appreciate the nurturing community that Pebsham offers.
- The quality of leadership and management is good. Following a period of staffing turbulence and the conversion to academy status, The Kernnal Academies Trust (TKAT), governors and the headteacher have strengthened and developed leadership at all levels. Working together, they have secured the support of the staff, pupils and parents to create a positive and purposeful culture within the school.
- Senior leaders work in partnership with a range of other schools belonging to TKAT and, more locally, through the Bexhill alliance of eight schools. This has provided opportunities for staff to engage in improving their practice, learn from best practice in other schools and moderate their assessments of pupils' work.
- The academy trust provides effective training to leaders at all levels, including middle leaders who are responsible for subjects, which has helped senior leaders improve the quality of teaching. Monitoring and review visits from the academy trust take place, which usefully affirm the quality and impact of this improvement work.
- Effective systems are used to evaluate the quality of teaching. For example, through their regular observations of teaching, senior leaders are able to offer advice to teachers on how they can improve their practice. Middle leaders responsible for reading, writing and mathematics play their part too, and are increasingly involved in assessing the quality of teaching in their subject area.
- Middle leaders have forged an enthusiastic and cohesive team. They have begun to engage in a range of strategies to collect useful information on the quality of pupils' learning. This includes attending training, short visits to lessons and playing a part in the more detailed scrutiny of pupils' work. Leaders use the information obtained to model and share good ideas. This has supported recent improvements in English and mathematics. However, there is still some work to do to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good in these subjects and across the curriculum.
- Leaders' plans ensure that the needs of pupils entitled to support through pupil premium funding are met. The additional funding is allocated appropriately to ensure that the academic, social and emotional needs of these pupils are provided for. As a result, where teaching is strongest, disadvantaged pupils make progress at similar levels to other pupils in the school. However, leaders' targets for this group are not yet ambitious enough to ensure that these pupils make rapid progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.

- Sports funding is used appropriately and has impacted on pupils' engagement and participation. As part of a local partnership, the school participates in regular tournaments which promote teamwork, collaboration, fitness and skills in a range of sports. The pupils whom inspectors spoke to enthused about sports, with combat, football and badminton being particularly popular.
- Senior leaders introduced, and have recently refined, new assessment and tracking systems which now monitor the progress of pupils well in English and mathematics. As a result, although outcomes are not yet consistently good, staff now ensure that bespoke 'next steps' sessions are offered to pupils who fall behind, supporting improved progress.
- Leaders' assessment systems in science and the wider curriculum are not yet as well developed as they are in English and mathematics. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work identified that the quality of teaching in science and humanities subjects is variable. Consequently, the progress that pupils make, particularly that of the disadvantaged pupils and the most able, is not as strong in other subjects as it is in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven throughout the curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants promote spiritual and social development well through their questioning and encouragement of a reflective approach. A range of extra-curricular sporting, singing and cheerleading clubs, together with school visits and trips, enrich and extend these opportunities. However, pupils are less confident to discuss different faiths and cultures. Leaders are aware that the school can do more to ensure that pupils' cultural development is as strong as the other aspects of provision.
- British values underpin the curriculum as a result of the school's four 'curriculum drivers' – diversity, citizenship, communication and enterprise – being integrated into the termly 'learning journeys'. Pupils understand and value the class and school rules, and consider the consequences of their own behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy taking on responsibilities, for example as school councillors and playground buddies, which provide opportunities to learn about democracy and the rule of law.
- The school's breakfast club and after-school club are well led and managed. Good relationships together with clear routines and procedures ensure that pupils engage in meaningful activities and are well looked after.
- The school offers a welcoming and friendly place for parents and visitors. However, during the inspection, a small number of parents expressed concerns related to provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or issues relating to behaviour. Responding to these concerns, inspectors scrutinised records, met with leaders, observed behaviour and conduct around the school, and interviewed pupils both formally and informally. Inspectors judge that leadership of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective and behaviour is good. Bullying is rare and pupils told inspectors that when it does occur they trust staff to act quickly and decisively to resolve any issues.

- School self-evaluation and improvement plans lack precision and contain some omissions. Current plans do not focus sharply enough on how teaching needs to be improved to secure sustained improvements to outcomes in mathematics and the wider curriculum. However, inspectors judged that practice in school is stronger than this paperwork suggests. The academy trust, leaders and governors agree that further improvements to self-evaluation and planning are needed to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better. Particular focus needs to be given to the rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils.

## **Governance**

- The governors and trustees discharge their statutory duties well. They share leaders' vision for the future of the school, and support and challenge leaders effectively. The layers of accountability within governance are robust.
- Regular visits enable governors to know the school well. The chair of the governing body in particular has an accurate view on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. Governors ensure the fair and consistent application of policies and that only the best teaching is rewarded with pay increases.
- Governors have successfully challenged leaders to raise the quality of teaching and learning, and hold them to account for further improvements. However, the lack of precision in the school's self-evaluation and development planning restricts the ability of governors to be able to challenge leaders and teachers to ensure that all groups make rapid progress.
- The regional director of TKAT has used his experience and expertise in education to challenge and support the school. He works in partnership with school leaders to drive school improvement. This adds to the capacity of the school to develop further.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff and governors receive appropriate, regular up-to-date training and are well informed about how to keep pupils safe. This means that they are able to carry out the school's procedures well and ensure a culture of vigilance.
- The school deals sensitively with parents and families who may need extra support and advice. Leaders work diligently to engage wider expertise to offer timely support for vulnerable pupils. Clear records of regular communications with outside agencies are maintained.
- Staff, parents and pupils agree that the school offers a safe, secure and inclusive environment. Several parents commented on the happy, family ethos of the school.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because they are not consistently good in all classes. Consequently, pupils' progress is inconsistent across the school.

- Improvements to the quality of teaching and assessment have not yet had a sufficient impact in every classroom. As a result of variations in the quality of teaching, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make strong enough progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers consistently apply the school's policy for feedback and assessment in English and mathematics. Pupils respond well to regular praise and constructive feedback to consolidate and improve their skills in these subjects. Assessment and feedback are less precise in other areas of the curriculum, including art and science. This means that pupils are not always aware of how to improve their work. Consequently, they make less progress in these subjects than they do in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' work over time identifies that too often the learning tasks set for the most able pupils are too easy. This is particularly the case in science and the wider curriculum, where learning activities do not challenge pupils to think deeply by applying their literacy and/or mathematical skills in new contexts. Some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what these pupils can achieve and this is slowing their progress.
- Most teachers apply their strong subject knowledge and assessment skills to design engaging activities and use probing questions to challenge pupils' understanding. However, the impact of teachers' questioning is variable. Occasionally, teachers' subject knowledge appears less secure and their questioning is less effective. Where this is the case, not all pupils are stretched sufficiently.
- Teachers' expectations of the presentation of work are inconsistent, and pupils do not always use their developing handwriting and spelling skills in their everyday written work. Some teachers ensure opportunities for extended creative writing, such as were seen in the 'war games' display and learning journey folders produced by Year 5. However, elsewhere, pupils' English books identify that pupils do not consistently improve their writing through drafting and redrafting their work.
- There is a drive to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics this year. Refined assessment and monitoring systems have enabled teachers and teaching assistants to begin to use assessment information to refine and improve learning. For example, in Year 6 mathematics lessons, the teacher and teaching assistant have worked well together to ensure bespoke 'next steps' provision for a small group of pupils who have fallen behind. As a result, these target pupils have made accelerated progress to catch up with their arithmetic skills.
- There is still variability in the quality of teaching, leading to gaps in some pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary and skills across the school. Leaders are aware of this and their drive to improve learning in mathematics is ongoing.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. In the best examples, good relationships, high teacher expectations together with appropriate levels of challenge ensure that pupils develop skills in segmenting and blending. As a result, pupils develop the confidence to read unknown words in key stage 1.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Supporting the personal development of the pupils is at the heart of the school's work, and very positive working relationships exist between staff and pupils. Pupils and parents told inspectors that they value the support that staff willingly provide. As one parent said, 'Pebsham has a strong sense of community and provides a warm and caring environment for its pupils.'
- Pupils are safe and secure in the school and they feel happy here. Nurture group staff provide effective help and guidance to pupils who feel vulnerable, supporting them to develop emotional resilience and improved social skills. An overwhelming majority of pupils affirmed that they feel happy and well looked after at school.
- Learning about e-safety is given an appropriately high priority. Pupils value the opportunities that they have to learn about keeping themselves safe, in and around the school, as well as online.
- Pupils understand the importance of staying healthy through regular exercise, eating healthily and keeping hydrated through regular drinks of water. Pupils at breaktime could explain the importance of eating fruit and engaging in a range of active games. They spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about their enjoyment of sport and physical education.
- All year groups are represented on the school council and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility to look after each other in other ways, such as by becoming playground buddies to support younger pupils in the playground.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have devised clear policies and procedures which are understood by the pupils. These help the pupils manage their own behaviour well and make the right choices. All pupils, and children in the Reception class, are focused on performing well in class and respond well to the praise and rewards that their teachers offer.
- Pupils are courteous, polite and confident to talk to visitors. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and play sensibly on the playground at break and lunchtime. Pupils care for each other. They report that they feel that it is their duty to quickly spot if another pupil is upset or hurt and make sure that this brought to the attention of staff.
- Attendance has significantly improved over the past three years and is now in line with the national average. The headteacher has worked hard to support families and ensure that persistent absence figures have improved.
- Pupils appreciate the improvements to the school buildings and grounds and they treat the school with respect. This means that the school offers an attractive and well-kept learning environment indoors and out.

- Pupils have a good understanding of most forms of prejudice-based bullying and are quite clear in their views of tolerance and equality. They are confident that bullying only rarely happens in school. As one pupil explained, 'Our golden rule is to treat others the way you wish to be treated.'
- Nearly all staff and the large majority of parents who spoke to inspectors, or responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are of the view that behaviour is good. Although a small minority of parents expressed reservations, the school's own records indicate that significant improvements to behaviour have been made during the last two years, and demonstrate that behaviour is typically good over time.
- In most lessons, pupils show an enthusiasm for their learning and engage well in the tasks they are given. In a very small minority of lessons, behaviour is less impressive. In these lessons, not all pupils receive the challenge they need to maintain their interest or keep them fully engaged in their work. Where this happens, a small number of pupils can disrupt learning with chatter or off-task behaviour.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because the progress that they make across the school is not consistently good. In 2015, pupils made good progress in reading and writing by the end of key stage 2. However, girls did not perform as well as boys in mathematics. In 2016, published data indicates that pupils' progress from key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 was significantly below average in both reading and mathematics.
- Most pupils make good progress in key stage 1 in reading and mathematics. However, in 2016, too few of the lower-ability pupils attained the expected standard and too few middle-ability pupils achieved greater depth in writing.
- School assessment and tracking systems are not used effectively enough to eliminate differences in the progress made by different classes. Work in pupils' books shows that in mathematics, although there is evidence of recent stronger progress in Year 6, there are inconsistencies across the school. The overall rate of progress in mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils, is too slow. Similarly, in writing, although there have been recent improvements, there is a variable picture of progress across key stage 2 and the most able pupils are not always being stretched sufficiently.
- Pupil's books evidence that they do not regularly apply their skills to write in depth when they learn about science or the humanities. Consequently, progress over time in the wider curriculum is too slow, particularly for the most able pupils.
- A comparison with national progress information demonstrates that in 2016 the progress made by disadvantaged pupils was significantly below average in reading and mathematics. This picture is changing because targeted interventions are ensuring that these pupils are currently making progress in line with their peers. However, more ambitious targets need to be set to accelerate the progress made by this group still further. This is particularly true for the most able disadvantaged pupils, so that differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminished.

- Effective teaching of phonics in the Reception class and Year 1 has ensured that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been above the national averages for the last three years.
- Through regular pupils' progress meetings, leaders monitor the progress of individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and coordinate bespoke interventions. Training opportunities have been provided for teaching assistants, which have resulted in a skilled workforce. Good relationships and the effective support during intervention sessions underpin the improved progress that these pupils make from their starting points.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Good relationships with parents and Nursery providers ensure smooth transitions and children make a very strong start to school life in the Reception class. They make good progress from their starting points and leave well prepared for Year 1.
- The proportion of children who reached a good level of development in the early years foundation stage profile exceeded the national figure in 2015 and it has done so again this year.
- School leaders have worked with TKAT recently to completely refurbish and re-invigorate the learning environment in the early years. Children now benefit from a bright and stimulating environment which offers a wealth of easily accessible interesting activities that promote child-centred learning. In the indoor environment, a wide range of materials encourage children to independently access mathematical or literacy-based learning. The well-resourced outdoor area encourages investigation and exploration, and provides rich opportunities for children to learn through collaborative play.
- Leadership is strong and good relationships with other schools in the area enables sharing of best practice and support for staff. Teachers have a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the early years provision. They have high aspirations and are determined that all children should make good or better progress. Staff are sharply focused on providing high-quality teaching and rich learning experiences for children. All safeguarding arrangements are sound.
- Teaching in the early years foundation stage is among the strongest in the school. Good relationships and effective questioning ensure purposeful activity and that all children are challenged.
- Children make a good start in learning to read because all staff are clearly focused on developing their use of phonics. Reception Year children have mastered sounds and are blending them together to make words that they then link to form sentences. Leaders are aware that improved liaison with key stage 1 teachers is needed to improve the teaching of phonics and ensure that pupils continue to make progress at the same rate during Years 1 and 2.
- Well-planned teaching and learning opportunities underpin the strong progress that children make. Staff discussions with children help them develop their communication skills and extend their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team to assess children's progress, then identify and plan suitable next steps.

- Children have well-developed social skills for their age. They interact calmly, show respect for staff and each other and work together sensibly. During the inspection, children were seen confidently working collaboratively and independently on tasks including role play, drawing and mathematics number and pattern matching.
- Staff know each of the children really well and liaise well with parents. The needs of disadvantaged children and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are carefully considered. Leaders ensure that additional funding is used wisely to meet the needs of these groups. This highly personalised focus, together with stimulating teaching, ensures that these pupils make strong progress from typically low starting points.
- Communication with parents is effective. Parents contribute well to assessment of their children's progress and celebration of achievement. They are very positive about the provision.

## School details

Unique reference number	140411
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10019857

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Morgan
Headteacher	Rachel Martin
Telephone number	01424 215 175
Website	<a href="http://www.pebsham-tkat.org">www.pebsham-tkat.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@pebsham-tkat.org">office@pebsham-tkat.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The predecessor school, Pebsham Community Primary School closed in December 2013 and Pebsham Primary Academy opened in January 2014 sponsored by The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT). This was the first inspection of this new school.
- TKAT has overseen the restructuring of leadership and the organisation of the governing body.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the content of the curriculum for each year group.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the content of the curriculum the school follows in each academic year for every subject on its website.
- Pebsham Primary Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.

- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club which offer childcare before and after school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than average. Very few of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those who are supported by the pupil premium funding, is slightly above the national figure.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- Published progress information for 2016 indicates that the school did not meet the government's current floor standards. These standards set the minimum expectations for pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.
- Inspectors visited 20 lessons and an assembly in order to gather evidence to contribute to inspectors' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from TKAT.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books across a range of subjects. They spoke to pupils on the playground and during lessons, and met with a group of pupils to gather their views.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about reading and heard some of the pupils read.
- Conversations were held with a number of parents at the end of the school day. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in the 62 responses to Parent View, which included 18 written comments.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including that relating to policies, strategic planning documents, safety, self-evaluation documents, pupils' achievement, and behaviour and attendance information.

## Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Theresa Phillips

Her Majesty's Inspector

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