

Furzeham Primary School

Higher Furzeham Road, Brixham, Devon TQ5 8BL

Inspection dates

2–3 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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 a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a decline in the number of pupils achieving the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some teachers' previous inaccurate assessments have masked gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Consequently, pupils are not achieving the outcomes they should.
- Historically, pupils have not made good progress, particularly middle-ability pupils in writing and mathematics.
- Until recently, too few disadvantaged pupils have made the progress they should.
- Until very recently, there has been a lack of effective leadership in the early years. This has led to inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of behaviour and learning.
- The early years curriculum does not support good progress in developing children's mark-making and early writing skills.
- Inconsistencies of teachers' subject knowledge in phonics is slowing down rates of progress for some pupils and, in particular, the most able.
- Too many pupils are absent from school too often.

The school has the following strengths

- New leaders have recently halted the decline in standards and are driving improvement determinedly.
- Current accurate assessments are helping teachers to identify and fill gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Parents praise the 'excellent leadership team'. They are pleased with the rich curriculum and wide range of clubs and visits the school provides.
- Children say they feel safe. They say that 'the school is a happy environment and everyone is helpful.'

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen pupils' progress and achievement in writing and mathematics to at least the national average by ensuring that teachers:
 - develop pupils' improved mathematical knowledge and skills through reasoning and problem-solving skills
 - set work that is well matched to pupils' needs, particularly the most able in phonics
 - equip pupils with the phonic and spelling strategies they need to write accurately, and have consistently high expectations
 - in the early years, develop provision and opportunities for writing so that children's writing skills are sufficiently advanced and children are well prepared for the next stage in their education, including for the most able
 - make sure that children in the early years are supported to form their letters correctly.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by:
 - leaders routinely checking the attendance of all groups of pupils, and reacting swiftly with parents, carers and external services where it is less than good
 - consistently applying school polices to reduce the occasional off-task behaviour and low-level disruption in the early years.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school has experienced considerable turbulence and changes in staffing in the last few years. The headteacher, new to post in March 2016, has gained the respect of parents, staff and pupils. Together with his new and dynamic leadership team, they are driving the school forward quickly and improving standards.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is reflected in the effective appointment and deployment of staff. Whole staff and bespoke training has resulted in everyone having a clear understanding of leaders' high expectations. The four newly qualified teachers are receiving good support. Consequently, they are contributing to improving outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders have their finger on the pulse of the school. They are continually refining their plans for school improvement. Initially, leaders established a whole-school approach to assessment. This has supported teachers in identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Close monitoring of progress, through lesson observations, book scrutiny and discussions with staff, is helping to sharpen the focus on the attainment and progress of specific groups of pupils.
- The headteacher has not shied away from difficult decisions. In holding teachers to account, he has clearly demonstrated high expectations, and has established an aspirational ethos for others to follow. Teaching is improving rapidly.
- Subject leaders provide effective training, support and challenge for staff. They have an accurate picture of standards in their subject. Subject leaders set aspirational but achievable targets for pupils' outcomes and check progress towards these targets regularly. They refine their plans and direct resources because of these checks. Where leadership is more established the impact is clearly evident. For example, reading was a weakness of the school and is now a strength.
- In the past, governors have been negligent in holding leaders to account for additional funding, and in particular for pupil premium funding. Now they do. Leaders have made effective use of both pupil premium and funding for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The additional sport premium funding has been used effectively to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles. Close partnership with the local secondary school enhances the school's provision.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the curriculum provides pupils with a range of opportunities for learning across different subjects. Pupils' science books clearly reflect a broad experience of investigation and application of writing and mathematical skills. Pupils are particularly proud of their artwork and musical performances. The wide ranging clubs and activities after school are well attended. Pupils and parents are positive about the impact of these clubs in developing pupils' interests and healthy lifestyles.
- The local authority was initially slow to support the school. School leaders' resistance to engage compounded this. Over the past academic year, the relationship has been much stronger. The local authority has commissioned support from the Torbay Teaching School Alliance. This has been effective, and leaders have readily accepted

and engaged with this support.

- Leaders have been slow to tackle pupils' poor attendance. Their recent intervention has had a positive impact. Overall attendance is improving. However, there are still too many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who do not attend school regularly.

Governance of the school

- The chair of the governing body took up post towards the end of the summer term. She quickly audited the skills of the governing body, and recruited and deployed governors according to their skills set. There is a good range of expertise and experience on the governing body. This has led to improvement in the systems used to hold leaders to account.
- Governors accurately identify that their challenge to leaders could be improved. For example, although minutes of governing body meetings reflect challenge on attendance, governors do not delve deeper to find out about the attendance of different groups of pupils.
- Governors are aware that the school's website is non-compliant with regulations and have plans to rectify this immediately. More needs to be done to ensure that all information on the school's website is up to date. However, parents speak positively about the website and find the class pages very helpful.
- Governors have been pro-active in arranging external audits to ensure the effectiveness of their work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have set up rigorous systems for ensuring that any pupils who are experiencing, or likely to face, risks to their safety and well-being are protected. Leaders who hold responsibility for this aspect of the school's work have good links with a range of agencies, and act swiftly to ensure that no child comes to harm.
- Governors and leaders make sure that any staff who are appointed to the school, or who may encounter pupils, go through the necessary checks. The school takes the quality assurance of safeguarding very seriously. For example, the governing body commissioned an external audit to satisfy themselves that the culture of safeguarding is secure. Inspection evidence confirms it is. Leaders equip staff with the skills and knowledge they need so that they are alert to a variety of risks.
- Staff, pupils and parents all agree the school offers a safe, secure and inclusive environment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is improving, and pupils' progress is speeding up. However, this has not been the case for long enough to get pupils back on track to their age-related

expectations, particularly in writing and mathematics. Inconsistencies still exist. Consequently, teaching is not yet good.

- The teaching of mathematics is closing gaps in pupils' knowledge of number facts and calculations. However, the use of reasoning and problem solving is less well developed.
- In the past, teachers' assessment has been inaccurate. This has led to gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in writing. Improvements in teachers' planning and use of assessment are leading to accelerated progress for some pupils. In particular, the focus on grammar and punctuation has resulted in pupils catching up in these areas.
- Leaders have been assiduous in ensuring that the new feedback and marking policy is followed to the letter. This consistency is leading to accelerated progress for some pupils, and in particular those pupils whose need for catch up is greatest, for example those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.
- Previously, there was an inconsistent approach to teaching phonics across classes. Teachers are now following a new and consistent approach in the early years and in Years 1 and 2. However, teachers' subject knowledge varies, and this has led to some disparity across the Reception classes. As a result, progress is stalling for some pupils, and in particular the most able pupils.
- Teachers engender a love of books. The school's approach to reading has led to accelerated progress in pupils' comprehension skills. Weak phonics knowledge for some pupils is a barrier to better progress. However, adults help pupils to learn effective strategies to overcome their difficulties so that pupils catch up.
- Pupils told inspectors that teachers typically make learning fun for them. Pupils enjoy the links teachers make between subjects and, in particular, enjoy their musical performances at the end of a topic.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are very appreciative of the care and support adults give them. However, they say that things have improved greatly over the past year, and that before then they did not always get the help they needed to improve. Now pupils know what they need to do to be a successful learner.
- Until recently, leaders have not kept sufficiently well-organised records to support the care and well-being of pupils.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say that the guidance they receive in personal, social and health education lessons helps them to keep safe and to understand their feelings. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They know who to go to if they have a problem, and say that bullying rarely happens now.
- Leaders foster a nurturing and caring culture in the school. The local authority recognises the school as being particularly inclusive. Pupils who have received support

for their behaviour speak positively about how the school has helped them.

- Leaders ensure that pupils who may face particularly difficult times at home are given good care and attention. Staff work closely with parents and external agencies. Parents say that they appreciate the good communication with the school.
- The school's breakfast club provides pupils with a healthy and relaxed start to the day. Inspectors observed pupils making healthy food choices and cooperating well. Staff are well trained and assiduous in keeping pupils free from harm.
- Parents are almost unanimous in the praise for the school and the way that teachers encourage pupils to be confident and express themselves.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attendance is not good. Although improving, too few pupils attend school regularly. Leaders have been slow to tackle this. Although improving, attendance is still below the national average for all pupils and for those who are disadvantaged. Where leaders have intervened in recent months, there has been a dramatic improvement. However, leaders have not acted swiftly in all cases. There is more to be done.
- Pupils behave well and around the school and at play and lunchtimes. They are polite to visitors, and have respectful relationships with adults in the school. However, inconsistent expectations in the Reception classes results in occasional loss of focus and low-level disruption for a minority of children. When this occurs, learning slows.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes at the end of the Reception year suggest steady improvement since the previous inspection. However, there was a decline in 2016 to below the national average when the local authority checked the school's judgements. Too few children are equipped for learning in Year 1.
- Outcomes in phonics have been broadly in line with the national average since the previous inspection. Those who do not meet the expected standard in Year 1 catch up in Year 2. However, the differences between disadvantaged pupils and their peers grew in 2016. Current outcomes suggest that the differences are diminishing this year. This is because leaders have made effective changes to class structures and improved the teaching staff's skills. However, the most able pupils are not always provided with the challenge they need in phonics. Consequently, their progress slows.
- Pupils who achieved 'average' levels at the end of key stage 1 did not all achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 6, and particularly in writing. In 2016, not all high-attaining pupils identified at key stage 1 achieved a high standard by the end of Year 6.
- Historically, disadvantaged pupils have made poor progress, with too few reaching the expected standards at every key stage in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Leaders have been resolute in tackling this inequality. The decline has been halted. Disadvantaged pupils are catching up quickly and making faster progress than others in

the school.

- 2016 outcomes at the end of Year 2 suggest that pupils do not make good progress over key stage 1. This is, in part, due to inaccurate assessments at the end of the early years. Progress was weakest for both middle-attaining pupils and disadvantaged pupils. Current pupils' work in books reflects a much improved picture this year. Pupils who need to catch up are making accelerated progress across reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2016, pupil outcomes at the end of key stage 2 were in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. More pupils achieved a high standard in reading than those nationally. Reading is a strength of the school.
- Most-able pupils achieve particularly well in reading. Most-able writers are not always provided with the challenge they need to write in depth. This year, books reflect an improving picture. Pupils are responding well to the challenge set by teachers. However, in mathematics, gaps in pupils' reasoning skills are preventing pupils from achieving the high standards.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. The inclusive ethos of the school ensures that these pupils are nurtured and supported. Small steps of progress are celebrated. Pupils blossom emotionally.
- Pupils' books evidence that they apply their skills to write when they learn about science, technology and humanities. Effective teaching in science is ensuring that pupils develop investigative skills.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Outcomes in 2016 were low. Children are not prepared for Year 1.
- The leader of the early years has only been in post for five weeks. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years, and has clear and relevant plans for improvement. However, there has been little time to embed initiatives. Similarly, two out of three of the teachers in the early years are new to the school.
- Over time, teaching, learning and assessment in the early years has been variable. As a result, the progress of the children has also been inconsistent. Not enough focus was given to support the learning of disadvantaged children and those who are potentially most able. Leaders are now tackling this. Improved identification of needs is leading to a better match of activities. Although, the most able children are catered for well in the Nursery, provision for the most able in Reception is patchy.
- Adults now make detailed assessments of what children know and understand. However, these assessments are not used consistently well to plan activities to meet children's needs. In particular, children's mark making and early writing skills are under developed.
- The Nursery provides a good start for children. The welcoming environment supports children in developing confidence so that they settle quickly and make friends.
- Governors have made considerable investment in the early years. The learning

environment is bright, safe and well organised. Children are able to access resources independently to make choices in their learning.

- Teachers liaise well with parents to provide an individualised programme of support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These children are carefully considered and catered for and, as a result, make good progress.
- Leaders are diligent with their risk assessments. They ensure that all aspects of the provision are managed well to keep children safe. Leaders have provided safeguarding training and have made sure that new staff have a thorough induction. Consequently, children are free from harm. Teachers set out clear expectations for children's behaviour. On occasions, teachers do not tackle low-level disruption quickly enough. When this occurs, progress slows for these children and others around them.
- Communication with parents is effective, and parents contribute well to the assessment of their child's progress through learning journals. Parents praise the approachability and accessibility of staff.

School details

Unique reference number	113190
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10024996

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debra Wilson
Headteacher	Paul Adams
Telephone number	01803 853 347
Website	www.furzeham-primary.torbay.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@furzeham-primary.torbay.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about 'pupil premium expenditure and impact' and 'the early years curriculum'.
- The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school runs a breakfast and an after-school club.
- The school has received support from the local authority. This local authority has also

brokered support for the school through the Torbay Teaching School Alliance.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post since February 2016. The early years leader took up post in January 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in short visits to lessons across the school, some of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, senior leadership team and members of the governing body. The lead inspector also conducted a telephone call with a representative of the local education authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including minutes from governors' meetings, school improvement plans and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspection team scrutinised the quality of pupils' work over time.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons and lunchtimes. An inspector listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes, breaktimes and around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of parents, and considered 53 responses to the online survey, Parent View. Questionnaire responses from 18 members of staff and 64 pupils were also analysed.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Non Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Anthony Epps	Ofsted Inspector
Aisha Waziri	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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