

Gatehouse Primary Academy

Secmaton Lane, Dawlish, Devon EX7 0LW

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Inadequate teaching, learning and assessment over time have led to pupils significantly underachieving by the end of key stages 1 and 2. As a result, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been well below average for some years.
- The legacy of underachievement still constrains all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, from achieving the standards of which they are capable.
- New leaders have not been in place long enough to secure good teaching and learning.
- The quality of teaching is still too variable across the school. Not all teachers and teaching assistants have the skills they need to support pupils effectively in their learning.
- Teachers are not developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills well enough across the curriculum.
- Phonics teaching is not consistently effective. Consequently, pupils lack the knowledge and understanding needed to develop their reading skills to the full.
- The strengthened support, guidance and training that leaders now provide for staff have not been in place long enough to fully develop their skills and raise pupils' outcomes.
- Some pupils lose concentration when teaching is not interesting or when staff assist other pupils. This hampers their progress.
- Children make better progress in the early years, but, until recently, teaching, learning and assessment have not been precise enough to help them achieve their potential.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers are demonstrating the capacity to improve the school.
- Leaders and managers are implementing well-focused plans and taking rigorous actions to rectify the weaknesses in provision and outcomes that need to be improved.
- Pupils' behaviour is improving. Consequently, they are starting to make better progress than previously. Pupils' attendance has improved.
- All staff safeguard pupils effectively. Pupils feel secure and, typically, are happy and well cared for at school.

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?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - teachers assessing pupils' progress accurately and gaining a clear understanding of what they need to learn next
 - teachers setting consistently high expectations for what all pupils can achieve
 - providing training for teachers and teaching assistants so they can challenge and improve pupils' contributions to learning and so enable them to achieve high standards
 - improving phonics teaching across early years and Year 1 classes so that it is consistently of the highest quality.
- Secure pupils' rapid progress and raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics across key stages 1 and 2 by:
 - raising pupils' confidence and interest in reading
 - improving pupils' writing skills, especially their spelling, punctuation and use of grammar
 - consistently developing pupils' calculation and reasoning skills in mathematics
 - ensuring that pupils are able to use these skills to develop their thinking across the curriculum.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - applying newly introduced systems for consistently checking, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching, to raise standards as quickly as possible
 - implementing new approaches to using additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, and so enable these pupils to make strong progress from their starting points.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Gatehouse Primary Academy became a member of the First Federation multi-academy trust on 1 July 2017. Leaders of the trust and senior leaders in the school have accurately identified what needs to be done to rectify weaknesses. They are under no illusion about the task of overcoming the legacy of pupils' underachievement. The rigour of the actions they have taken in a short period of time clearly shows their capacity to improve the school.
- Leaders' decisive actions to improve leadership, teaching and learning have already halted the previous trend of decline. They have not yet overcome the legacy of pupils' underachievement, but have established a clear path to improvement.
- The trust has appointed new senior and middle leaders to the school. These changes in leadership at all levels have strengthened the focus on school improvement.
- Most of the changes made by current leaders have not been in place long enough to have full impact. For example, teachers' purposeful efforts to raise pupils' resilience and self-driven learning have not been sustained at a consistently good level over time to raise standards fully. However, steps taken to improve pupils' general behaviour are having a positive effect and pupils' learning in lessons is no longer disrupted by the unacceptable behaviour of other pupils.
- New leaders have introduced a new system for recording pupils' progress, so that staff can identify and rectify underachievement more effectively. This is at an early stage of development and is not yet used consistently across the school.
- Leaders have completed a detailed review of the needs and barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders have identified that additional funds for these pupils have not been used well in the past and are now using these funds more effectively. For example, it has been used to improve pupils' attendance and behaviour as well as to provide specifically targeted teaching in lessons. These measures are closing their gaps in understanding, but, as with other pupils, their previous underachievement has yet to be overcome.
- The curriculum has not supported the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and self-learning skills effectively. Leaders have introduced a new curriculum plan more specifically focused on deepening the full breadth of pupils' skills. It has yet to be embedded, but is already promoting pupils' good behaviour and stimulating their interest in learning.
- The school makes effective provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school widens pupils' understanding of different beliefs and cultures, including in Britain, through religious education lessons and assembly themes such as forgiveness and tolerance. When questioned, pupils were less informed about other British values.
- The school makes good use of the primary physical education and sport funding. These additional funds are used to employ a specialist sports coach who provides training for staff and extra sporting opportunities for the pupils. For example, lunchtime sports

activities and games such as 'dodge-ball' encourage pupils to participate enthusiastically and help improve their health, fitness and behaviour.

- Senior leaders have improved procedures for the management of teachers' performance. Some middle leaders are new to the school, others are new to their roles. They are working supportively with staff to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. This is seen, for example, in the guidance given to teachers and teaching assistants on how to improve their practice. However, it is too soon for these and other improvements to have secured consistently good teaching and pupils' progress across the school.
- Pupils say they are enjoying school and making better progress now than previously. Most parents welcome the improvements being made, especially in pupils' behaviour. They value the way 'the headteacher goes out of his way to help the children'. However, some parents say that it is too early to judge the impact of these developments.

Governance of the school

- The trust has begun its work to improve the school with determination. The trust board recognises that it is too soon to see the full impact of its work. In a short period of time, the trust board has set a well-considered strategic direction. It has acted decisively to appoint new senior leaders.
- The trust board is giving strong support to the new executive headteacher and the head of teaching and learning to establish a realistic and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. It is challenging senior leaders to check rigorously the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes and so improve the school as swiftly as possible.
- The trust board has carefully reviewed the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. They are taking steps to make sure this additional funding is used more effectively than in the past to raise outcomes for these pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders ensure that procedures for checking the suitability of staff and visitors are thorough. They provide good support to the school's administrative staff, who maintain a high standard of record keeping and communication. All the necessary checks and systems are in place to keep pupils safe.
- Staff are regularly trained. They are vigilant in recognising the signs that indicate when pupils may be at risk. They know how to support vulnerable pupils and their families. Senior leaders know how to make referrals and liaise with outside agencies and do so efficiently to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say, 'Staff care about us and look after us well.' Parents who spoke with an inspector, and most who responded to the online questionnaire, support this view. Pupils and their parents also recognise the effective

work of staff this term, in dealing firmly with and reducing unacceptable behaviour, including bullying.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Over time, teachers and teaching assistants have not been supported well enough to develop the skills needed to ensure that pupils learn effectively. Until the current term, inadequate teaching limited pupils' progress and led to a decline in standards which has resulted in a legacy of underachievement. The quality of teaching is now improving, but remains inconsistent across the school. As a result, not all pupils are making the rapid progress needed to overcome shortcomings in their previous learning.
- For too long, teachers' assessments of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding have not been accurate. Consequently, teachers' and teaching assistants' expectations of what pupils should achieve, and the level of challenge in the work they provided for the pupils, have not been high enough. This has restricted the progress of all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils.
- Current leaders have introduced a new structure for assessing pupils' progress. All staff are receiving support and guidance on how to use this system to set challenging work for pupils of different ability. Most teachers are using the system well. However, some staff need further training in using information about pupils' progress to plan teaching that extends pupils' understanding swiftly.
- The teaching of phonics is not consistently effective. Teachers and teaching assistants in some classes across Reception and Year 1 classes do not place enough emphasis on deepening pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters make. At times, adults do not check pupils' pronunciation of sounds sufficiently well. As a result, some pupils lack confidence and continue to voice sounds inaccurately. This restricts their progress in reading.
- Most teachers are now improving the way they question pupils to deepen thinking. Teachers are more frequently encouraging pupils to explain their ideas when answering questions. For example, during mathematics in a Years 3 and 4 class, pupils responded well to the challenge of tackling a two-step word problem. Increasingly, some of the most able pupils are gaining resilience as learners and are less reliant on adult support. However, many other pupils are not developing this ability quickly enough.
- Teachers are not yet extending pupil's reading, writing and numeracy skills well enough across the range of subjects. Consequently, pupils' ability to use and apply these skills and learn for themselves remains underdeveloped and limits their progress.
- Teaching assistants are supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities more effectively than in the past. They provide effective individual guidance for those pupils who still find learning with others difficult at times.
- Teachers have significantly improved the way they manage pupils' behaviour. Consequently, pupils are learning better than previously in lessons. For example, pupils settle more quickly and are beginning to sustain concentration longer in some lessons. Pupils are also responding respectfully to adults and, encouraged by teachers, are reviewing their learning with their classmates.

- Teachers have higher expectations of the presentation of pupils' work. They are displaying pupils' improved work to celebrate and guide pupils' thinking. These actions are being applied with increasing consistency across the school and are helping to quicken progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Staff are supportive and have increased their efforts to develop pupils' understanding of how to be an effective learner. However, this process is at an early stage and is not as strong as it needs to be to help pupils catch up in their learning. For example, at times, especially in key stage 1, some pupils are over-reliant on adult support and disengage from learning activities when teachers move to support other pupils.
- Most pupils in key stage 2 are responding well to higher expectations and are beginning to show more determination to improve their work. For example, they now present their work neatly and carefully.
- When questioned, pupils say they feel safe at school. Pupils know about the different forms that bullying can take, for example, verbal and cyber bullying. They say that incidents of bullying are now far less frequent than in the past and staff deal with them effectively.
- Pupils know how to stay safe, including when using computers. For example, they told inspectors about internet safety lessons and say that they would tell their parents and teachers if they had concerns.
- Pupils talk knowledgeably about assembly themes such as 'joy' and 'getting on together', but, when questioned, they have less understanding of British values.
- Pupils reciprocate the warm relationships promoted by staff and appreciate the guidance they receive. For example, one pupil reflected the views of others in the comment, 'I'm doing a lot better this term because the teacher explains things so well.'
- Most pupils care about each other and are responding with increasing sensitivity to each other's needs. Pupils play amicably at breaktimes and are learning better together than previously, including, for example, in the breakfast and after-school clubs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. School leaders report that pupils' poor behaviour has been a significant barrier to learning in previous school years.
- Some pupils still lose interest in learning and do not work as hard as they could, especially when the work fails to stimulate and motivate them. This is more often the case in key stage 1, where pupils agree that behaviour is better now, but that it is 'a little bit bad and a little bit good'.

- Most pupils are now behaving better in lessons and around the school in response to strong guidance from staff. Pupil members of the school parliament say there are some things to improve further and that 'behaviour is not perfect yet.' Parents also express the view that behaviour is much improved this term. This is borne out by the school's behaviour logs, which indicate a substantial reduction in incidents of misbehaviour, especially those of a more serious nature.
- School leaders, especially the head of teaching and learning, have worked with parents to reduce persistent absence. Most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, attend well. As a result, the rate of pupils' attendance now matches the national average. This is helping pupils to make better progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' performance in national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 in recent years has represented inadequate progress.
- Pupils currently in school are making improved progress, but it is not yet being sustained at the rapid pace need to overcome the legacy of previous underachievement. Consequently, pupils are not yet being well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Across both key stages 1 and 2, pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammatical skills are not developed securely. Pupils' work in their books shows improving skills this term. However, there is some variation across the classes. Not enough pupils are making sufficient progress to acquire the writing skills expected for their age. However, pupils' handwriting and the presentation of work in their books are of a good standard. This improvement is a result of teachers' raised expectations.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are weak because of considerable underachievement in the past. Teachers are now targeting pupils' skills and quickening their progress by planning learning experiences more effectively and encouraging pupils to give reasons for their ideas. Even so, many pupils have not yet developed basic numeracy and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Pupils' reading skills, particularly comprehension, are consistently below those expected for their age. Pupils' phonic skills are not taught and developed consistently through early years and key stage 1 classes. Consequently, over time, the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards in phonic screening checks has remained below average. Pupils' insecure phonic understanding reduces their confidence in reading new words and is constraining their progress in reading.
- The most able pupils' progress is improving, but still varies because the challenge presented to them is not consistently effective. Their past underachievement means that the depth of their mathematical understanding, comprehension and writing skills is not what they are capable of achieving.
- The school's detailed review of the way additional funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils, and the resulting adaptations, are beginning to quicken their progress. This work is at an early stage of development and is not yet enabling pupils to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are responding well to the improved support for their behavioural and emotional needs. Their improved attendance and more focused individual support is helping them to make better progress than previously. However, it still varies too much across the school.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- In recent years, staff have not used assessment information well to plan activities which promote effective learning for all groups of children. Over time, children have not made good enough progress during their time in the Reception classes. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has fluctuated and has been below national levels at times.
- Children have not always been ready for the next stage of education on entering Year 1. Although standards are rising, children are still not developing their speaking and writing skills well enough.
- The quality of teaching and support given to the children is improving. However, some staff do not teach phonics effectively. They do not question children deeply enough and this also slows the development of children's speaking and early reading skills.
- Some children are not yet confident in using equipment to learn for themselves. Even so, all children show good understanding when following well-established class routines such as tidying up and moving between activities.
- When they start school, children demonstrate varying levels of skill, ranging between that typical for their age and below. Skills more frequently underdeveloped include early writing and communication skills.
- The early years leader is now seeking to liaise with pre-school settings more effectively to help children become better prepared for school. This work has yet to have sufficient impact. Nevertheless, staff establish close links with parents, who comment positively about their children's start to school. As one parent wrote, reflecting the views of others: 'Since starting at Gatehouse my child has really come out of her shell, and I really think this is down to the supportive and encouraging atmosphere in her classroom.'
- In response to better teaching, children across the range of needs and abilities in Reception are making better progress than previously in most areas of learning. Children are also behaving well in the Reception classes. All staff support their safety and welfare needs effectively in the well-maintained and well-equipped indoor and outside learning areas.
- All staff in the Reception classes promote the children's enjoyment of learning and their social and cooperative learning skills effectively. For example, children showed good understanding of each other's needs when happily enjoying their snack time together. Children could also tell each other about the 'mud pies' they were making.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 141353 |
| Local authority | Devon |
| Inspection number | 10036960 |

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

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| 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 | 371 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Alexander Walmsley |
| Executive headteacher | Rachael Caunter |
| Head of school | David Batchelor |
| Telephone number | 01626 862 605 |
| Website | www.gatehouse.devon.sch.uk |
| Email address | admin@gatehouse.devon.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school has undergone very recent and significant changes in its governance, leadership and staffing structures.
- The school is now named Gatehouse Primary Academy. It was rebrokered and became a member of the First Federation multi-academy trust on 1 July 2017.
- Previously the school was a member of the ACE academy trust. When the predecessor, Gatehouse Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement.
- Governance is undertaken by directors of the trust and by members of a local 'hub' board.

- The head of teaching and learning was appointed in April 2017. He is supported by an executive headteacher who oversees the school's work along with other schools in the trust's local hub.
- The executive headteacher and several other members of staff commenced their duties at this school at the beginning of this academic year.
- 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.
- Gatehouse Primary Academy is an above-average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- Children experience early years provision in two Reception classes.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2016, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides its own breakfast and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 30 lessons and saw the work of 14 teachers.
- Inspectors were accompanied by the executive headteacher and by the head of teaching and learning during most of these visits to lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation.
- Inspectors examined the school's systems for checking progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors talked to individual pupils and a representative group of pupils about the school and their work. They listened to individual pupils reading and attended two assemblies. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes and also visited breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and other members of the trust board and held a telephone conversation with the trust's chief executive officer. The lead inspector met with the director of the academy teaching school and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the regional schools commissioner.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of teaching and learning and with senior leaders. Inspectors spoke informally with teaching assistants and support staff.
- The views expressed in 37 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and 13 staff questionnaires were considered. Inspectors also examined 26 parents' additional comments and gathered the views of several parents during informal meetings at the school.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Alexander Baxter, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Susan Horsnell | Ofsted Inspector |
| Mark Lees | 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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