

Beacon ACE Academy

38 Robartes Road, Bodmin, Cornwall PL31 1JQ

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This school is improving rapidly. The headteacher has raised the expectations of staff and pupils alike. Under her leadership, the school community is united in its drive to improve the life chances of its pupils.
- Leaders have shown great tenacity in addressing the significant problems the school has faced since it opened. They are now seeing the fruits of their work.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They know what they need to do next to improve teaching further.
- The multi-academy trust's leaders monitor the school's progress closely. They provide appropriate resources and expertise to support the school's development.
- Pupils behave well. The atmosphere is calm and purposeful. Pupils respond well to teachers' instructions. They are friendly and tolerant of each other and respectful of adults.
- Pupils are keen to do well. They are proud of their work and are keen to answer questions in class. Pupils also respond well to teachers' feedback on how to improve their work.
- There is a strong network of support for pupils who face extra challenges in their lives and need additional support. Staff work closely with external agencies to ensure that every pupil is safe.
- Pupils do increasingly well because teachers now set higher expectations. Leaders are addressing the remaining weaker teaching.
- Pupils are now making good progress, but levels of attainment remain low. This is because many have low starting points and because the quality of teaching was weaker in the past.
- Leaders have put a challenging and well-structured curriculum in place. It has lifted expectations and ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' ability to write is improving rapidly. Teachers make sure there is an emphasis on using rich vocabulary every day. They also ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to write long passages. Consequently, pupils express themselves well.
- Progress in mathematics is not as strong as in writing. This is because not all teachers are as confident in their teaching of this subject.
- Children get a good start in the nursery and reception classes. Many join the school with low starting points but are catching up as a result of good teaching.
- Attendance is rising. However, it is still a little below the national average. Too many pupils still miss school too often.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise standards by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have the mathematical expertise they need so that teaching in mathematics is as good as it is in writing
 - ensuring that all teaching is as effective as the best.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by raising attendance overall and reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent to no more than the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school is improving rapidly because of the committed and insightful leadership of the headteacher, supported by her senior team. The school and its predecessors had a history of low standards and poor behaviour. The headteacher has shown resilience and skill in addressing the deep-seated issues the school faced. While there is more to do, the leadership team has shown they have the capacity to continue to improve the school.
- Leaders understand the school's context and are committed to improving the life chances of their pupils. They understand that many of the pupils face significant challenges, but they continue to have high expectations of them. Leaders then provide the necessary support for pupils to meet those expectations. This balance of challenge and support is at the heart of the school's improvement.
- The momentum for improvement is building because staff have been galvanised by the leadership team's approach. The headteacher and her team apply the same approach of high expectations and support to staff that they do to pupils.
- Leaders monitor the life of the school closely. They have an accurate understanding of where teaching is strong and where it needs further development. This allows them to support teachers where necessary. It also gives them the opportunity to ensure that teachers get the training they need. There is a comprehensive, high-quality training programme. This has led to significant improvements in classroom practice, particularly in teaching reading and writing. The result has been a substantial improvement in standards of literacy across the school.
- Middle leaders are responsible for monitoring progress in the areas they lead. They work with senior staff to provide the training teachers need. They know their subjects well and play a key role in implementing the school's priorities.
- Pupils benefit from a curriculum that develops their understanding of themselves and of the world around them. Leaders ensure that there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary and ability to express their ideas. The curriculum is setting significantly higher expectations than in the past. The literacy curriculum is successfully building pupils' confidence and skills. Pupils are now taking their skills and applying them in other subjects, such as geography and history. Teachers also ensure that pupils develop the knowledge and understanding necessary to live in modern Britain. As a result, pupils are able and willing to debate such topics as the environment and recycling as well as the suffragette movement and the changing role of women.
- Leaders lay an emphasis on enriching pupils' experiences by providing opportunities for visits to interesting places. They also provide a broad range of clubs before and after school. Pupils have access to a cycling club, a gardening club and many more. Parents and pupils value these opportunities.
- Leaders and teachers know what each pupil needs to learn next because the quality of assessment is high. Leaders monitor pupils' progress regularly and ensure that pupils are given the help they need to keep up. Teachers' own assessments are supported by

regular external tests. Teachers also work with their colleagues in other schools in the trust to ensure that their assessments are accurate.

- Leaders use the additional funding they have to support disadvantaged pupils well. They monitor these pupils closely and additional support is provided where necessary. As a result of this work, this group of pupils now attends more regularly and makes substantially better progress. Leaders also make effective use of the PE and sport premium to increase the range of opportunities open to pupils and to develop teachers' skills. A large proportion of pupils regularly take part in a broad range of physical activities.
- Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Each pupil is tracked closely, and leaders make sure that they are given tasks that challenge them and allow them to make progress from their starting points. Parents and pupils are consulted appropriately. This helps to make sure that each pupil has the right provision. The additional funding the school receives to support pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is used wisely.
- The local resource base, a unit for pupils in the area with a higher level of SEND, is managed effectively. Staff know each pupil well and plan a programme that meets their needs and allows them to make progress. As a result of the level of support they receive, pupils in the base are making good progress.

Governance of the school

- The directors and leaders of the multi-academy trust have acted with determination to first stabilise and then improve the school since they took over. They have worked steadily to put leaders and resources in place over a three-year period. As a result of their strategic vision, the school is significantly improved and there is a good capacity for further improvement.
- Trust leaders have made the school's success a priority. They monitor its performance closely and act to address any emerging issues. This has led to additional resources and expertise being made available. This has made a significant contribution to the quality of provision in, for example, early years.
- The local advisory board (local governing body) is active in monitoring the life of the school. Members receive detailed reports from school leaders and ask pertinent questions. They also visit the school regularly and talk with leaders, visit classrooms and look at pupils' work. This makes them well placed to challenge school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and teachers make sure that there is a culture of vigilance throughout the school. Teachers and other staff are well trained. There are regular reminders and additional training meetings. Staff know what to look for and how to react should they have a concern about a pupil. Pupils feel safe. They feel confident that there is someone they can turn to if they are worried or need help.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who face additional challenges in their lives outside of school are supported so that they can thrive. There is a skilled team of staff who

support pupils. Teachers and other staff know these pupils well and give them the extra time and attention they need.

- The school's record-keeping systems are effective and kept up to date. Appropriate checks are made on those adults who work with pupils, and risk assessments are carried out appropriately.
- A member of the local advisory board checks the safeguarding work of the school regularly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They plan lessons that stimulate and challenge pupils to think. Teachers know their pupils well and set work that builds on what they have previously learned. As a result, pupils respond well and are making good progress.
- There are good routines in place that help pupils to feel confident and able to participate. Pupils expect to learn new vocabulary about each topic they meet. They expect to be asked to talk and listen to others' ideas regularly. This helps them to develop their ability to come up with ideas and solutions to problems.
- Teachers question pupils skilfully. They don't settle for easy answers and encourage pupils to think through their ideas. This helps to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Pupils with SEND are supported effectively in their classes. Teachers and teaching assistants work together to ensure that pupils are getting the work they need to help them progress. Teaching assistants support them by skilful questioning and by encouraging pupils to be independent learners where possible. Pupils in the resource base benefit from the calm and supportive environment and so make good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers have a good subject knowledge, particularly of literacy. They are well trained. This enables them to target key themes and pick up on pupils' misunderstandings. Pupils enjoy the challenges they are set. They respond well to the feedback teachers give them, correcting and improving their writing enthusiastically.
- The teaching of writing is a strength of the school. In the past pupils have not learned to write well. This is changing because teachers now focus on giving pupils the vocabulary and technical skills necessary. As a result, pupils in all year groups are making good progress. Many started from a low standard, but they are now catching up.
- Pupils are also now making good progress in reading. In early years and key stage 1, pupils get a good start in learning to read because teachers concentrate on ensuring that pupils understand how to use phonics to sound out words. As pupils progress, they are given plenty of opportunities to interpret texts and so develop the skill to understand what the author means and why she has used a particular phrase.
- Pupils are making better progress in mathematics than in the past. However, some teaching is less effective because teachers are not confident in addressing pupils' gaps in learning and misconceptions. The effect is that while pupils' fluency with arithmetic is good, their ability to reason and to solve problems is weaker.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning from early years through to Year 6. Classroom routines are well established, and this helps them to feel secure and confident in their lessons. Pupils are keen to answer questions and are proud of the work in their books. Most pupils respond well to the teacher's feedback and try to improve their work. This is having a particularly significant impact on their writing.
- Pupils treat each other well. They are friendly and listen to each other's views patiently. In early years, they learn to take turns and share equipment. Pupils learn to respect those with different backgrounds and beliefs.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and in the real world.
- Teachers provide a broad range of activities beyond the classroom to catch the interest of pupils. From rock musicians to dance to yoga, pupils are engaged and positive about their time in school.
- There is an experienced team of staff who support the pastoral care of pupils. Pupils feel confident in seeking help if they need it. Staff work with vulnerable pupils to ensure that they feel safe and are able to make the same progress as their peers. Staff liaise well with the local authority's social care team and other external agencies to provide a safety net for these pupils where necessary.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well as they move around the school site. They play together well. They are polite and courteous. They are respectful to their teachers and to other adults.
- In previous years, a larger than usual number of pupils were given fixed-term exclusions. This no longer happens because the headteacher has ensured that the pupils who were struggling to thrive in a large classroom setting have been given the support they need. As a result, these pupils are now much more settled. The number of exclusions is now broadly similar to other schools. There is now an emphasis on earning rewards for positive behaviour. This is having a strong impact on behaviour and attitudes in lessons and across the school.
- Attendance is improving and is now just below the national average. The number of pupils who are regularly absent has also improved. Nonetheless, it is still too high.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are now making good progress overall. This is a significant improvement on last year, the first year of results for the new school. As a result of improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils are now catching up with pupils in other schools.

- Standards are rising most quickly in writing. High expectations, skilful delivery by well-trained teachers and a focus on rich vocabulary are paying off. The level of attainment is still below that in many schools, but that is because pupils join the school with low starting points.
- While pupils are learning to express themselves well, using sophisticated language, the quality of spelling and punctuation has not improved to the same extent. This will undermine attainment if left unchecked.
- Very few pupils reached the higher standard at the end of Year 6 last year. This is because most pupils joined the school with relatively weak skills. Nonetheless, more pupils in Year 6 are now reaching the higher standards, particularly in reading and writing.
- Standards in mathematics are improving. In the older year groups, pupils are now reaching a similar standard to pupils in other schools. Pupils are generally fluent in their number work. They are less confident when applying their skills to solving problems and reasoning.
- Standards in science, geography and history are good. Pupils are using their language skills to express their thinking and discuss key ideas.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress because of the support they receive. Their progress is tracked, and they get additional support if they fall behind. Their books show that they are proud of the progress they are making.
- Standards of attainment in key stage 1 are low. However, pupils are making good progress and beginning to catch up. Some pupils are held back by poor letter formation and presentation. Leaders are aware of this and improvements are under way.
- The proportion achieving the national phonics screening check in 2018 was well below the national average. However, the pupils in Year 1 now have benefited from good-quality phonics teaching and are reaching standards similar to those in other schools.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the nursery and early years are now making good progress.
- Children join the nursery and respond well to the routines that staff put in place and to the expectations that staff have of them. They settle down quickly when asked and behave well in a calm and purposeful manner. Children are enthusiastic and develop positive attitudes to learning. Boys as well as girls are keen to explore and learn.
- Children are well behaved. Relationships between the children are good. Children play together, take turns and share resources well. Teachers and other adults know each child well and form strong, positive relationships with them.
- Children are responding positively to well-structured early phonics and writing sessions. This is having a significant impact on their progress over the year.
- Leadership of early years is strong. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the unit and of what needs to be done to improve it further. They have developed the environment inside, with support from the trust. It is now stimulating and word-rich. The outdoor area has also been developed. This is giving children

greater opportunities to explore and discover.

School details

Unique reference number	142958
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10088353

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	442
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Phil Mason
Headteacher	Kaye Haywood
Telephone number	012087 2773
Website	www.beacon.aceacademies.co.uk
Email address	info@beacon.aceacademies.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Beacon ACE Academy was formed by the amalgamation of Beacon Infant and Nursery School and Robartes Junior School in 2017. It is a larger than average primary school.
- The school is part of Atlantic Centre of Excellence (ACE) Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school has a higher than national proportion of disadvantaged pupils. It serves an area of high deprivation.
- The number of pupils with low levels of prior achievement is much higher than the national average.
- The school has a much higher proportion of pupils with SEND, including those on EHCPs, than the national average.
- The school includes a local resource base for 10 pupils that meets the needs of those with significant additional needs, often those with social, emotional and mental health needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across the range of subjects and age groups and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' written work. The observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including minutes of local advisory board meetings, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour data. They also considered safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, newly qualified teachers and groups of pupils.
- An inspector spoke with the chief executive officer and deputy of the multi-academy trust, the chair of the trust and the chair of the local advisory board.
- Inspectors took account of 21 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents in person. They considered the responses to the staff and pupil questionnaire. Inspectors also took account of the school's own recent surveys of parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Lovett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rachel Miller	Ofsted Inspector
Adam Morris	Ofsted Inspector

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