

Inspection of Devonshire Primary Academy

Devonshire Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY3 8AF

Inspection dates: 14–15 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Devonshire Primary Academy. Pupils feel safe and secure at the school. This is because they are put at ease by staff who clearly care about their welfare.

Pupils are confident that staff address any issues with behaviour well. This ensures that pupils can focus on their learning. Instances of bullying and aggressive behaviour are dealt with effectively by staff so that they do not continue.

Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to enhance their cultural and personal development. They draw on these experiences to enrich their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, for example visiting a theatre to bring literature to life or to bring greater purpose to their written work. They also have access to a range of interesting clubs and activities after school.

Although leaders and staff are starting to set appropriate expectations for pupils' learning, pupils do not make enough progress in subjects across the curriculum. This is because they do not remember their prior learning well enough. There is still a strong emphasis on catching up on learning that has not been taught well enough in the past.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection, there have been some modest improvements in pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Even so, pupils fare less well than pupils nationally. This means that some pupils are not as ready as they should be for the next stage of their learning.

The newly formed board of trustees is aware of the need for change. With the support of the chief executive officer and the recently appointed headteacher, they are taking positive steps to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. However, trustees do not presently question senior leaders well enough about the quality of education. This is because they have been busy setting up the new multi-academy trust. Staff are motivated and optimistic about the direction that new leaders have brought to the school.

Leaders have introduced a new curriculum to prioritise pupils' love of reading and to accelerate the development of their reading skills. The curriculum is starting to bring more coherence to the teaching of reading. Leaders have focused their efforts on developing pupils' phonics knowledge to help pupils to catch up on learning that has been forgotten. Staff match pupils' reading books to the sounds that they have learned, so that pupils practise their emerging reading skills more often. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check improved in 2019. However, there remain gaps in other aspects of

pupils' reading that prevent pupils from reading as well as they should by the end of Year 6.

In writing and mathematics, subject leaders set long-term goals for pupils' learning. However, there is a lack of guidance for teachers on how to achieve these targets. This has led to teachers focusing on getting topics covered rather than thinking about the key knowledge pupils need to acquire. Although pupils' learning is sequenced, it often lacks depth. For example, in their written work Year 6 pupils know what a metaphor is but they struggle to choose the most suitable one in their writing. Leaders are starting to address this, but it is too soon for subject leaders to be able to say how effective their actions have been in helping pupils to know and remember more.

In contrast, some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from revisiting their learning. Staff are clear about how to help these pupils, because their learning is looked at in more detail by teachers. This is especially true for those pupils with an education, health and care plan, who are supported well to meet their individual targets. The advice and support of a knowledgeable special educational needs coordinator ensure that the next steps in learning for all pupils are identified clearly and met well.

In the early years, staff have a clear idea of what they want children to learn by the end of each topic. The curriculum is well designed and well established. Adults understand exactly what knowledge children need to gain in order to make a successful start in Year 1. They set clear expectations for each task to build towards these goals. The positive work of this team accounts for the marked improvement in the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. Staff question children effectively to enable them to understand their learning. For example, we observed how staff used equipment to structure children's understanding of how to add two numbers together. Children are well behaved because they are engaged by the opportunities that they have to learn.

The role of the subject leader is not yet established in assessing the quality of education in some subjects. This is reflected in the varying quality of learning in subjects other than English and mathematics, where pupils' recall of their learning is very mixed. In music and physical education, pupils talk knowledgeably about their learning. In contrast, in subjects such as geography and history, pupils struggle to explain the main themes of the subject, such as in history understanding how the past informs modern living. This is because staff do not link pupils' knowledge to other learning to make it meaningful. In addition, senior leaders have not ensured that the school's curriculum fully matches the ambition of the national curriculum. This is because pupils do not study a foreign language.

Leaders have ensured that they promote pupils' personal development well. Older pupils are provided with responsibilities such as being anti-bullying ambassadors. They work effectively with other pupils to ensure that relationships between pupils are a strength of the school. Leaders have put in place a number of experiences to

build pupils' awareness of their local and national heritage as well as understanding the views of others, so that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are clear routines and procedures in place to keep pupils safe. Staff know these well. Staff receive regular training and updates in safeguarding matters. Any concerns about an individual pupil are followed up swiftly and decisively.

Pupils know how they can keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Pupils know who to approach if they have any worries. They trust adults at the school. Their frequent lessons on e-safety ensure that they know how to stay safe when using mobile phones to access online content. Leaders know the school community well. They work well with other agencies and support parents and carers effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Trustees have been busy establishing the newly formed multi-academy trust. This has taken up much of their time and effort. As such, they have not questioned the quality of education at the school in enough detail. Trustees should use the new governance structure to hold leaders to account for the quality of education in the school more closely. This will enable trustees to more closely assess the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 and pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2.
- In reading, writing and mathematics, leaders have set end points for pupils' learning in each year group. However, these expectations are too broad and do not provide staff with the guidance that they need to build on pupils' prior learning. Leaders should ensure that they continue to embed the recently implemented strategies to ensure that staff have the expertise and guidance that they need to build more effectively on pupils' prior learning, so that pupils become successful learners by the end of Year 6.
- Subject leaders' aims for pupils' learning in subjects such as science, geography and history are largely based on pupils learning a series of facts. They do not develop pupils' understanding of the core themes of these subjects. Subject leaders should ensure that staff are given guidance on how to link pupils' knowledge to the aims of the national curriculum so that pupils develop their depth of understanding in these subjects.
- Senior leaders should also ensure that subject leaders check on the quality of education in their subjects so that there is greater consistency in the quality of learning across different subjects.

- Senior leaders should ensure that pupils have the opportunity to study a foreign language, so that the school's curriculum matches the ambition of the national curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	140128
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10121992
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	465
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mrs Clare Mulderrig
Headteacher	Mr Daniel Simm
Website	www.devonshire.blackpool.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	12 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school moved from Blackpool Multi Academy Trust to be part of the Sea View Trust in November 2019.
- The headteacher took up post in January 2020. He had only been in post for 6 working days prior to the inspection.
- The school has used two local alternative providers in the past. There are currently no pupils in the school accessing alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During this inspection, we met with the executive principal of the trust, the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. We also spoke to governors, trustees and other school staff.
- We met with groups of pupils from across the school to ask them about safeguarding. We reviewed documentation, which included the school's

safeguarding policy, register of the checks carried out on new employees and safeguarding records.

- We also met with pupils to ask them about their learning in a range of subjects and looked at the schemes of work for subjects across the curriculum.
- We observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils, teachers and senior leaders.
- We took account of 31 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View. There were no responses to the staff or pupil surveys.
- We considered reading, writing, mathematics, geography, history and music deeply as part of this inspection. For these subjects, we spoke with the headteacher, met with curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils, undertook an analysis of pupils' work and visited lessons. We heard pupils read. We also looked at pupils' work in subjects across the curriculum and met with other subject leaders.

Inspection team

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