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Inspection of Chulmleigh Primary School

Beacon Road, Chulmleigh, Devon, EX18 7AA

Inspection dates: 13–14 November 2019

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

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

This school has lost its way since the previous inspection. There has been a significant amount of staff turbulence that has led to a decline in standards. Nevertheless, pupils enjoy coming to Chulmleigh. This is reflected in pupils' high attendance. Pupils told us that the school has improved a lot over the last two years. They are adamant that they are safe in school and that no bullying takes place.

Every single pupil is cared for by passionate and nurturing staff. They provide strong care for pupils who need additional social and emotional support. Everyone is welcome at the school.

Pupils in Year 6 enjoy being taught in the 'Year 6 Academy' at Chulmleigh Community College. They told us that this helps them to prepare well for their secondary education. These pupils are genuinely motivated by the access they have to specialist teaching and resources. However, this is not consistent for pupils in all year groups. Other pupils lose interest when learning is not well planned. This hampers their progress.

Leaders have not organised learning so that pupils are able to build on their knowledge and skills. This is particularly evident in science, history and reading.

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

There has been significant change since the last inspection. At the start of September 2017, nearly all teaching staff were new. The head of school also took up her role in 2017. Parents and carers feel that improvements are beginning to take shape and are positive about the current leadership. The vast majority of parents are on board with leaders' renewed direction and purpose.

The head of school and trustees from Chulmleigh Academy Trust (the trust) have a secure understanding of what needs to improve. However, curriculum plans do not enable pupils to practise what they have learned and build on what they already know. There are gaps in pupils' understanding of essential knowledge and skills. In some subjects, such as history, the curriculum does not provide pupils with the knowledge they need. Likewise, the science curriculum is underdeveloped. It does not provide pupils with all of the necessary scientific skills. As a result, pupils are not equipped with what they need to know to be successful. Many subject leaders are new and, while enthusiastic, do not yet have the expertise to have a strong impact.

Pupils do not have a strong grasp of subject vocabulary. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 have learned about reproduction in science but could not recall the meaning of fertilisation. This hampers their progress towards the next steps of their learning.

The teaching of phonics is effective. However, once pupils acquire the fundamental phonics skills, not enough time is dedicated to the teaching of reading. Leaders have

recently invested in new ways to support pupils who struggle with their reading. The early signs are that this is beginning to help pupils develop their reading fluency. However, pupils are not well motivated to read. One pupil said: 'I only read when I am bored.' Reading records show that pupils do not appear to read at home.

There are some strengths emerging in the quality of education. The teaching of writing and mathematics has improved over the past year. This is particularly evident in key stage 1. Nevertheless, older pupils have not yet caught up. This is because, for too long, weaknesses have not been rectified.

Pupils enjoy the enriching opportunities on offer, such as cooking, dance and gymnastics. They also welcome the additional leadership opportunities entrusted to them. One thing that unites pupils is their strong work in the community. Staff teach pupils how to be a responsible citizen effectively. Pupils respond well to the 'thought of the week'. This provides pupils with opportunities to debate and develop their social and moral understanding.

Children get off to a good start in Reception. Phonics is taught well. Strong relationships with the onsite Nursery allow staff to identify children who need additional support. Children are settled and happy. This is because children are supported effectively to move between Nursery and Reception. The Reception class is well-resourced. Teachers plan activities that are carefully designed and well thought out. As a result, most children make positive progress.

The leader responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is new to her role. Therefore, systems to ensure that pupils with SEND are making progress through the curriculum are not fully established. The progress such pupils make is variable. This view is also shared by parents.

Pupils behave well in lessons and in social times. However, where activities have not been well-planned, pupils lose focus. This happens when teaching staff have not used assessment information sharply enough to identify appropriate learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding is at the forefront of everybody's thinking. Procedures for reporting concerns are thorough and any concerns are diligently followed up. Staff are well trained and can confidently identify the signs of any pupil who may be at risk of harm.

Pupils learn how to stay safe in a range of situations. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils had a visit from the fire brigade. Pupils told us how they would respond to a fire. They also told us that they feel safe in school and that staff would respond instantly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Over the past year, leaders have worked hard to develop pupils' understanding of subject specific vocabulary. However, this is still not effective and a lack of understanding slows pupils' learning. Teachers should assure themselves that pupils understand the meaning of key vocabulary before progressing through the curriculum.
- In some subjects, the curriculum is not as well organised as it should be. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders should ensure that they identify the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn in each subject and sequence the curriculum so that learning builds on what pupils already know.
- The curriculum does not support pupils to secure what they have learned. Therefore, pupils move on in their learning before they are ready. Curriculum leaders should consider how pupils can revisit their prior learning to deepen their understanding.
- Teachers' use of assessment to check pupils' understanding and inform their teaching is not always effective. Teachers do not respond sharply enough to support pupils who have not secured the key knowledge and skills they need. Leaders need to ensure teachers use effective assessments to inform their curriculum plans.
- The reading curriculum lacks opportunities for pupils to secure and develop their reading skills after learning phonics. Therefore, pupils are not prepared well for the next stage of their education. Leaders need to ensure that pupils build the skills they need to be successful and competent readers.
- Many subject and middle leaders are new in post. While they are keen and determined, they do not yet have the expertise they need. This reduces the impact that they have. Senior leaders need to make sure that curriculum leaders have the right support and professional development to be more effective in their roles.

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're 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	137023
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10111638
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steven Baber
Head of School	Lully Newman
Website	http://www.chulmleigh-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20-21 March 2014

Information about this school

- In September 2017, a new head of school was appointed. She oversees the day to day running of the school.
- Year 6 pupils are taught at the nearby Chumleigh Community College. The chief executive officer of the trust is also the executive headteacher of Chumleigh Community College.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- Inspectors met with the head of school, subject leaders, the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND, the early years leader and a sample of support and teaching staff.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with two trustees. This included the chief executive officer.

- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's improvement plan, self-evaluation, attendance, behaviour and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- A significant proportion of the inspection focused on ensuring that pupils are safe at the school. Inspectors scrutinised records, tested staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The lead inspector considered the 38 responses to Ofsted Parent View. One inspector met with a group of parents at the start of the school day.
- The lead inspector had a meeting with the person responsible for school improvement.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, history, science and writing. This included, visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, meeting with senior and subject leaders and discussions with teachers and pupils.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Lees

Ofsted Inspector

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