

Kings Ash Academy

Pimm Road, Paignton, Devon TQ3 3XA

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have not dealt successfully with the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The school's improvement journey had stalled but has gathered momentum over the last 12 months.
- Pupils' progress in writing in some year groups remains weak. The legacy of gaps in pupils' writing skills still exists.
- Previously, teachers have not been supported well enough to improve their skills. As a result, the quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- Until recently, governors had not been rigorous in holding leaders to account for the school's effectiveness. Pupils' attainment has remained low and pupil exclusions high.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 has put the school in the bottom 20% of all schools nationally over the last two years.
- The most able and middle-ability pupils do not get the challenge they need to achieve well.
- Standards in mathematics are still too low. This is because pupils have not been given enough opportunities to use their mathematical reasoning in their work.
- Pupils' attendance has risen to be closer to the national average. Nevertheless, too many pupils are absent from school too often.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong senior leaders have a clear understanding of the improvements that need to be made. They have the support and the confidence of staff and the Bay Education Trust.
- Children make a good start in the early years. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils behave well and are polite and respectful. They are confident learners.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive exceptional support. These pupils make strong progress socially, emotionally and academically.
- The school's curriculum is broad and varied, with a strong emphasis on teaching music, art and sport. Pupils have effective opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so raising pupils' outcomes, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use what they know pupils can do or understand to plan activities that meet the needs of all pupils from their different starting points
 - teachers embed the school's approaches for teaching writing consistently
 - teachers give pupils regular opportunities to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Continue to strengthen the effectiveness of the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils so that fewer pupils are persistently absent from school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Over the past two years, the school has been through a very challenging period. The previous inspection was followed by a period of instability in staffing and leadership, leading to a further drop in standards. As a result, The Bay Education Trust (BET) restructured. These changes led to the appointment of a new chief executive officer (CEO) and a new senior leadership team at the school.
- On appointment, senior leaders engaged the support of a national leader of education and the local authority. This support has enabled leaders to gain a clear picture of the school's effectiveness quickly. School leaders have an acute understanding of the school's strengths and the weaknesses. They have begun to build a solid team. The executive headteacher has dealt robustly with staff underperformance and quickly gained the confidence and trust of school staff. Staff morale is high.
- The school's senior leadership team is a small and powerful group that is making positive changes in the school. The executive headteacher ensures that the whole leadership team demonstrates high aspirations for the pupils. This is enabling swift improvements to be made in many areas of the school. Examples include pupils' improved behaviour, conduct and attendance.
- The head of school has ensured that pupils are taught a full range of subjects. The music, sport and art curriculum has been enhanced. The school's curriculum interests the pupils and is effective in broadening pupils' experiences. There are effective opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, pupils take part in assemblies which deepen their understanding of characteristics such as resilience and how to increase their self-confidence.
- The leadership of special educational needs is strong. Leaders have identified specific development priorities to further enhance the effective teaching for these pupils. They make close checks of whether interventions are effective and monitor the quality of teaching for pupils with SEND to ensure that it is improving their achievement. Learning is planned precisely and tailored to the needs of individual pupils.
- The way leaders spend the sport premium funding is having a positive impact. More pupils are actively engaged in a range of sporting activities, including lunchtime clubs and activities. Sports coaches play a valuable part in ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of the importance of sport and exercise and develop pupils' understanding of how to be physically healthy.
- Leaders' actions to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have been successful. Funding invested in pastoral care and family support has led to an improvement in pupils' overall attendance. The level of persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils is also improving. The quality of support in teaching and learning, through specifically tailored high-quality provision, ensures that disadvantaged pupils with low starting points are catching up.
- Leaders have been effective in meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable pupils who have social and emotional needs. Leaders have established an internal

support centre, 'The Hive', to provide additional support for these pupils. This is improving pupils' readiness for learning and has dramatically reduced the need for exclusion. As a result of leaders' actions, pupils' learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

- Senior leaders have established effective systems and structures to ensure that teachers' assessments are accurate. However, leaders' impact on improving the consistency in teaching across the school is at an early stage. The turbulence in staffing has affected the pace at which staff subject knowledge is developed. As a result, some teachers do not use information from assessment effectively to plan activities that close the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school. They say that their children are happy to come school. Parents express confidence in the school's leadership and recognise improvements in pupils' behaviour.

Governance of the school

- Trust leaders have been instrumental in stemming the decline in the school's performance through a very turbulent period.
- Since January 2018, the work of the local governing board has focused on monitoring and regularly reporting on the work of the school to trustees. Previously, governors and trustees had been too accepting of the information they received from leaders and had not followed up concerns with sufficient rigour. Recently appointed trustees are robust in holding leaders to account for standards in the school. For example, they have challenged leaders to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make good progress.
- Governors ensure that they carry out their statutory duties effectively in overseeing staff performance, safeguarding and recruitment. Aspects of attendance, behaviour, and the quality of teaching and learning have all improved as a result of challenge from trustees and governors over the last 12 months. Governors make regular visits to the school to check the progress of the school improvement plan.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff work well as a team and share a strong commitment to keeping pupils safe. They are vigilant in reporting concerns and follow the school's procedures diligently. Senior leaders maintain extensive records of the concerns that are raised about pupils' well-being. Leaders are quick to make sure that families receive the support they need by tenaciously following up referrals to outside agencies.
- The school maintains close links with parents and outside agencies to meet pupils' needs. Leaders protect the most vulnerable pupils by checking that the additional off-site provision that provides support for these pupils is of a high standard.
- Safeguarding documentation is very detailed and thorough. All checks on recruitment, staff, governors and visitors to the school are comprehensive and up to date.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching lacks consistency across the school. Despite improvements over the last year, the quality of teaching varies too much between year groups and between classes. Considerable turbulence in staffing has had a negative impact on the consistency of teachers' subject knowledge and their ability to make effective use of assessment across the school.
- Over time, the teaching of writing and mathematics has not ensured that pupils achieve well. Teaching in some year groups and classes does not reflect the high standards demanded by senior leaders. Nor does it build on the skills that pupils have already acquired, for example in writing.
- Teaching in mathematics is tackling gaps in pupils' knowledge of number-related facts. It has also been successful in supporting pupils' skills in calculation. However, teaching does not deepen pupils' understanding through reasoning. As a result, challenge is inconsistent, especially for the previously average-attaining pupils and the most able pupils.
- Leaders have recently improved the teaching of reading. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to tackle unfamiliar words when reading. Teachers ensure that pupils read widely and often. Pupils read fluently. Where pupils have previous gaps in reading, precise intervention is improving pupils' reading skills. Teaching makes effective use of high-quality texts to develop pupils' vocabulary.
- Well-trained teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils who need additional help. They use questioning well to encourage pupils to find answers for themselves and to extend pupils' vocabulary. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning.
- Pupils with SEND receive very effective teaching and support. Staff understand these pupils' needs well and structure support to enable them to be focused on their learning. Assessments of pupils' achievements accurately identify their learning needs. Staff use this information to plan for these needs, which helps them make strong progress.
- Teaching is improving in the school. Teachers ensure that classrooms are well organised to support pupils' learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Consequently, pupils' generally positive attitudes contribute to uninterrupted learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff know their pupils well and provide high levels of pastoral care to cultivate and sustain confidence-boosting relationships with them. 'The Hive' nurture provision supports pupils well. Staff plan activities to enhance pupils' mental health and well-being effectively.

- The school also provides a calm and nurturing environment to support the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Their social and emotional welfare is exceptionally well supported. Staff ensure that pupils with SEND are fully included in the life of the school.
- Staff help pupils to understand how they can keep themselves safe. Pupils understand what bullying is and say that if it does happen, teachers deal with it quickly.
- Most pupils show good attitudes to learning. On occasion, a small minority of pupils find it difficult to take part in lessons but are well supported by adults to join in. Pupils are confident to contribute in lessons because they have strong relationships with staff and each other. The majority of pupils are proud of their achievements.
- Pupils have an increasing range of opportunities to take on responsibilities, through the school council, acting as play leaders and in lunchtime clubs. They are proud to take on extra responsibilities.
- The vast majority of the pupils who responded to the online questionnaire would recommend the school.
- The school's breakfast club provides pupils with a good start to the school day.
- Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of tolerance and respect. They readily accept their differences and welcome the many pupils new to the school so that they feel included and supported.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour at lunch and playtimes and as they move around the school shows their understanding of how to stay safe. The school is an orderly community. This is because all staff have clear expectations of how pupils should conduct themselves.
- The school's behaviour policy is effective. Pupils like to see their names on the class wall for good behaviour, and proudly show their 'green cards' to adults and pupils alike.
- Teachers and pastoral support assistants help pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour well. Pupils who need additional help to behave well in classrooms and stay safe have effective provision to support them. As a result, fixed-term and repeat exclusions have fallen considerably.
- Instances of bullying, racist and other prejudicial behaviour are few and decreasing. Leaders track these cases carefully and keep accurate records of the school's response.
- Pupils' overall attendance has improved to just below the national average. However, there are still too many pupils who are regularly absent from school. Leaders communicate their expectations for pupils' attendance well. They have put in place a range of initiatives to increase attendance and punctuality, including breakfast club and additional support from a family support worker.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Historically, too few pupils leave Kings Ash with the skills and knowledge they need to

be ready for the next stage in their education. Pupils' previous weak achievement has still to be eradicated.

- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard for their age at the end of key stage 1 has, in the past, been well below that of pupils nationally. The achievement of the most able pupils in key stage 1, while improving, remains weak. Too few pupils make good progress to reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard for their age at the end of key stage 2 in reading has improved to be close to the national average. Pupils make strong progress in reading. This ensures that the proportions of the most able pupils achieving the higher standard is in line with national averages in key stage 2.
- Pupils' work in their books shows that they are making inconsistent progress in mathematics across the school. Too few pupils are reaching the standards they are capable of. Pupils' limited skills in applying mathematical reasoning is hindering their achievement. However, in some year groups, for example Year 6, pupils make stronger progress in mathematics.
- Pupils with SEND now make good progress against their targets. This is because leaders have ensured that their learning needs are clearly identified. The strong social and emotional support that pupils with SEND receive enables them to engage positively with their academic learning.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the 2018 phonics screening check was much lower than the national average. Current pupils now achieve well in phonics in key stage 1. In addition, the pupils who did not meet the expected standard in phonics in the Year 2 screening tests have had additional support which has helped them to catch up in Year 3.
- Pupils achieve well in physical education and make good progress in their levels of stamina, fitness and physical skills.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of the early years is strong. Leaders articulate high expectations to staff. There is a clear vision to provide high-quality experiences for all children. The school's strong focus on supporting children and their families ensures that the very youngest children settle quickly into school life.
- The proportion of children reaching the expected standard in the early learning goals at the end of Reception has been lower than the national average for the last few years. However, children make good progress from typically low starting points.
- Leaders have ensured that there are a wide range of inviting learning resources, both inside and outside, to capture children's interest.
- Clear routines and high expectations result in children showing high levels of independence and good behaviour. The high ratio of adults in the setting ensures that interactions are timely and effective and allows children to take carefully calculated risks in their learning. Leaders make good use of their assessments to ensure that children develop their skills across all areas of learning.

- Effective teaching in phonics supports children’s love of reading and, as a result, they get off to a good start in reading from a very early age. The most able children work with older children to develop their phonics skills and increase their reading fluency. Teachers ensure that no child is disadvantaged in reading by their home circumstances.
- Well-trained staff are vigilant in keeping children safe. Where children have complex medical needs, leaders are uncompromising in ensuring that they can safely access all the learning resources that are available. Welfare requirements are met.
- The school has used the additional funding well to provide extra staff to support disadvantaged children and ensure that their needs are met effectively. This means that most disadvantaged children make good progress.
- Staff work sensitively with parents and are successfully supporting them to become more involved in their child’s learning and development. This results in parents feeling well supported as partners in helping their children to learn at home as well as at school.
- The learning environment is well structured. Children can easily access a wide range of well-organised resources. They are able to be independent and work together collaboratively. However, activities are not purposeful enough to support the most able children to exceed expectations. The level of challenge in some tasks does not develop further exploration and thinking to extend children’s skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Staff work together as a team to plan exciting activities which focus on important skills in number, reading and writing. They intervene quickly when children need additional support. Consequently, outcomes for all children are improving and more children are ready for the next stage of their education in Year 1. However, the proportion of children meeting the early learning goals in writing is lower than in reading and mathematics and lower than the national average.

School details

Unique reference number	138773
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10058305

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	432
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Gavin Jones
Executive Headteacher	Jessica Humphrey
Telephone number	01803 555657
Website	www.kingsashacademy.org
Email address	admin@kingsashacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	16 November 2018

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The school joined the Bay Education Trust in December 2014. The trust comprises three schools in total, including one secondary and one other primary.
- The local governing board monitors the work of Kings Ash school and reports to the board of trustees. The trust oversees the education of pupils in the four schools in the Bay Education Trust.
- A new executive headteacher was appointed in January 2018 and a new head of school was appointed in March 2018.
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- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above the national average. The proportion

of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is also above the national average.

- A breakfast club and an after-school club are provided for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the school's leadership team to consider their evaluation of the school and current improvement priorities.
- Meetings were held with representatives from the school's monitoring board, the CEO of the Bay Education Trust, trustees and the national leader of education supporting the school. Telephone conversations were also held with the chair of the local governing board and a representative from the local authority.
- Learning was observed in most classes. Some observations were carried out jointly with the head of school and assistant headteachers. On some occasions, inspectors visited classes unaccompanied.
- A range of pupils' workbooks from Years 1 to 6 were scrutinised. Inspectors visited Nursery and Reception classes and took account of children's work as well as scrutinising the online assessment record of learning.
- Inspectors met with pupils from key stages 1 and 2 to gain their views of the school's work as well as listening to pupils in key stage 1 read.
- The views of the 25 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 23 parent free-texts were considered. Inspectors also met with parents to gather their views.
- Inspectors considered the responses of 63 staff to the staff online questionnaire and the 49 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders with responsibilities for subjects and pastoral care. Discussions were held with leaders when reviewing a range of documentation, including the use of additional funding, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors considered leaders' documentation about pupils' progress and teaching and learning.

Inspection team

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Deborah Tregellas	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Cogher	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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