

Trefonen CofE Primary School

School Lane, Trefonen, Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 9DY

Inspection dates

1–2 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders provide strong and determined leadership. They use their accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development to ensure that their plans for improvement are appropriate.
- Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning. This information is used to provide training that is well matched to the needs of all practitioners.
- Governors are ambitious for the success of the school. They make regular visits to the school to find out for themselves what is working well and what needs further development. They provide effective challenge and support.
- Subject leaders have benefited from bespoke training to develop their skills. Each leader can demonstrate the positive impact they have had on the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils in their areas of responsibility.
- Pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum. Most pupils make good progress in a variety of subjects. They become keen and successful readers. Occasionally, in some subjects, pupils do not have enough opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to how mathematics is taught. Pupils have a secure grounding in mathematical concepts. They also have plenty of opportunities to solve problems and they are developing good reasoning skills. Sometimes, pupils make too little progress when the work they are given is too easy for them.
- Teaching assistants are deployed very well. They make a valuable contribution to the progress of the pupils they support.
- Due to recent action taken by leaders, the quality of pupils' writing is improving. However, more needs to be done to ensure that these improvements are embedded.
- Pupils are polite, have good manners and are welcoming to visitors. They behave and work well together.
- Despite recent improvements to the quality of provision, children in the early years do not make as much progress as they should.
- Most parents and carers are positive about the work of the school. They agree that their children are happy and safe and make good progress. However, some parents feel that their concerns are not listened to well enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of pupils' writing by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - pupils apply their knowledge of punctuation and spelling more accurately in their independent writing.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - further developing the curriculum so that pupils can deepen their knowledge and understanding of what they are learning in all subjects
 - improving communication between home and school so that parents feel fully informed about decisions taken by leaders that affect their children.
- Improve provision in the early years by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently plan activities that meet the needs and interests of all children, including the most able, so that they make the progress of which they are capable
 - leaders continue to improve the environment so that it supports children's learning in all areas of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have formed an effective partnership and, together, they have responded well to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Leaders are passionate about ensuring that pupils receive a good quality of education. Their determination to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can is shared by all staff at the school.
- Leaders use a wide range of evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work. This includes lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work in a wide range of subjects, discussions with pupils and reviews of the progress that pupils make. Leaders have used this information successfully to bring about significant improvements to the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Subject leaders have a thorough understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in their areas of responsibility. They benefit from focused leadership development training and from working alongside their peers from local schools. They use their expertise well to provide effective training and support for all staff at the school.
- Staff who spoke to the inspector and those who completed Ofsted's questionnaire all agree that they enjoy working at the school. They are enthusiastic about the changes that have been made over the last year and say that they believe their practice has improved because of the training they have received. Staff strongly agree that they are proud to work at the school.
- Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils acquire subject-specific knowledge and skills through learning in a wide range of topics. Pupils talk positively about the topics they learn and say that teachers make their lessons interesting and fun. In some year groups and in some subjects, the curriculum requires further development to ensure that pupils, particularly the most able, have more opportunity to deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Pupils learn about different world religions and cultures and they are respectful of people's differences. Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to visit a variety of places outside their local area so that they start to develop a good understanding of the wider world around them. Pupils have a good understanding of the school's values, including trust, empathy and love. They also develop an understanding of British values. For example, pupils talk confidently about democracy through linking it to the election of the school council members.
- Pupil premium funding is used to support the academic progress and personal development of disadvantaged pupils, using a range of strategies. This is successful because leaders know the individual pupils and their needs very well.
- The school uses the physical education (PE) and sport funding effectively. Pupils experience a wide range of sport through their PE lessons and there are a variety of after-school clubs on offer throughout the year. These include cross-country, archery and multisports. Pupils have opportunities to take part in inter-school competitions and

there are annual sports days. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about taking part in orienteering activities.

- The special educational needs coordinator knows the needs of each pupil well. She tracks the progress they make accurately and checks the quality of the additional support or intervention activities regularly. Consequently, additional funding is used effectively.
- Most parents who spoke to the inspector or who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are highly supportive of the school. They praise the staff and the care that their children receive. Most are confident that their children make good progress. However, a small number of parents say that their concerns are not listened to and they are not sure what action has been taken when they have asked for support for their children. Leaders and governors have recognised this and have plans to improve the way they communicate with all parents and to try to build relationships with parents where necessary.

Governance of the school

- Over the past year, the governing body has been reorganised, with a new structure and several new members. Leaders have ensured that all governors have the necessary skills and knowledge required to be effective. Governors are deeply committed to the school and they have high aspirations for all pupils.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses at the school. This is because they work closely with subject leaders through their link roles. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and provide effective challenge and support for leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. Staff are knowledgeable about the signs of abuse and know that it is their responsibility to report their concerns about pupils' safety and well-being to the safeguarding leaders. All staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire strongly agree that pupils are safe at the school.
- Records of recruitment and vetting checks meet requirements. In addition, there are clear and robust systems in place for checking the suitability of visitors and volunteers.
- Child protection records are stored securely. Leaders know individual pupils and their needs very well. Records show that leaders seek professional advice and provide intervention, where necessary, to keep vulnerable pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and support staff have strong subject knowledge and they use this knowledge well to plan learning that reflects what must be taught in each year group. In addition, all staff have a good understanding of the needs of individual pupils in their class. As a result, teachers generally plan lessons that build on what pupils

already know and can do in a range of subjects across the curriculum. Leaders and teachers work together to check the progress that pupils make and intervene quickly when pupils are at risk of falling behind.

- A new approach to teaching mathematics was introduced during this academic year. Pupils experience a broad curriculum in this subject and they develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of mathematical topics. Teachers ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to solve problems and to reason about their work. On the occasions that pupils are not given work that challenges their thinking and understanding, they make less progress.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Teachers ensure that whole-class texts are interesting and appropriately challenging, and they plan tasks that enable pupils to acquire a deep understanding of what they have read. Pupils enjoy reading and they make good progress throughout the school.
- Because of changes made at the start of the year, pupils' writing skills are improving across the school. Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to write through tasks linked to whole-class texts. In addition, there are increasing opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces in subjects across the curriculum. However, throughout the school, there is variability in teachers' expectations of the quality of writing that pupils produce. For example, although pupils demonstrate that they have a good understanding of spelling, grammar and punctuation in discrete activities, they do not consistently apply this knowledge when they write independently. This limits the progress that pupils make to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Phonics is taught well. Adults ensure that lessons are engaging and fun. Pupils successfully apply their knowledge of phonics when they are reading unfamiliar words. By the end of key stage 1, most pupils are fluent, confident readers.
- Teachers plan topics carefully so that pupils develop subject-specific knowledge and skills. For example, pupils learn how to plan, carry out and evaluate experiments and investigations in science. In geography, pupils learn how to read maps and to identify key features, including continents, countries and oceans. In some year groups and subjects, pupils benefit from opportunities to deepen their understanding. For example, pupils have considered the impact of climate change around the world now and what could happen in the future. However, there is some variability throughout the school because some teachers do not provide enough stretch and challenge in a wide range of subjects.
- Teaching assistants work very well alongside class teachers to ensure that the pupils they are supporting make good progress. Teaching assistants have a deep understanding of the needs and interests of the pupils they are working with and, as a result, relationships are highly positive.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is good.
- The school's curriculum provides a range of opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes a thorough understanding how to stay safe online,

how to use roads safely and staying safe around water. The school works with agencies, including the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, to ensure that pupils acquire an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and how to manage their feelings.

- Pupils understand the importance of good physical and mental health. For example, pupils talk about getting plenty of exercise and eating a balanced diet. Pupils also told the lead inspector about how they have been supported by the school to manage their feelings, with one pupil explaining that, in relation to worries, 'If something doesn't feel right, you need to say something.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and the different forms that it can take. They say that when bullying has happened at the school, adults have dealt with it quickly. Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe at school and they agreed that an adult in school would help them with any problems they might have.
- Pupils develop a knowledge of British values through the curriculum, special events and educational visits. Pupils told the inspector about the charity work they have been involved in and understand that many children in the world do not have as much as they do. Pupils also learn about religions and cultures different to their own, for which they demonstrate high levels of respect.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils understand the school rules and the consequences of not following them. Pupils told the inspector that most pupils behave very well all of the time. They added that a very small number of pupils can misbehave but that teachers apply the rules fairly when this happens.
- Throughout the school, relationships are positive and pupils are keen to learn. Most pupils work very well together and enjoy collaborative projects. In addition, most pupils take pride in their work and always try hard to do their best. Occasionally, some pupils do not present their work as well as they could because teachers do not have consistently high expectations of the work they produce.
- Overall attendance is above the national average and has been for several years. In addition, very few pupils have been persistently absent during the past three years.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was above the national average. As a result, most pupils are academically well prepared to start secondary school. However, the proportion achieving the higher standard was below that seen nationally.
- In 2018, pupils' progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 was well above the national average. In mathematics, it was in line with the national average but, in writing, it was well below average. Improvements to the quality of the teaching of writing mean that current pupils are making better progress.

- At the end of key stage 1 in 2018, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with the national average at both the expected standard and at greater depth.
- Assessment information about current pupils' progress and work in their books show that most pupils make good progress in a range of subjects across the curriculum, including reading, mathematics and science. Although it is possible to see some improvement since the start of the year, overall, pupils make less progress in writing. There is variability in the progress made in different year groups in both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics. Over the last two years, the proportion of pupils who have achieved the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been similar to the national average.
- Pupils attain well in science at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. They gain appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills in a wide range of scientific topics.
- There are very low numbers of disadvantaged pupils at the school. Therefore, in the interests of confidentiality, it would not be appropriate to comment on the achievement of this group. However, pupils are well supported to make the progress of which they are capable in many subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because of the effective support they receive. Leaders and teachers work together to ensure that they carefully monitor the small-step targets that are set to match individual needs.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- School leaders have acted to bring about improvement in the early years but it is too soon to see the full impact of these actions. Although outcomes last year were broadly in line with the national average, over the last three years, the proportion of children who have achieved a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has declined. Children currently in the early years do not make as much progress as they should.
- Relationships are positive in the early years between adults and children and children with each other. Most children have very positive attitudes and they are happy to come to school. They generally behave well. However, some children lose focus and do not follow instructions when adults' explanations are not clear enough.
- Teachers plan activities that reflect the different areas of learning. In addition, they ensure that they build in opportunities for children to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills. However, tasks are not matched well enough to needs because staff do not take sufficient account of what children already know and can do. The most able children do not make enough progress because adults do not have high enough expectations of what they can achieve.
- School leaders have started work to improve the physical environment. However, some areas remain cluttered and do not promote learning across all areas or reflect children's interests well enough. In addition, some resources are difficult to access, and this restricts children's independence linked to the choices they can make to be creative or

investigative. Teachers are now making better use of the outdoor area and building in a wider range of structured activities that support children's learning.

- Welfare requirements are met. Children are safe and well cared for. All adults have had appropriate child protection training.
- Relationships with parents are positive. Parents told the inspector that they were very pleased with the changes that have been made in the early years. Parents are particularly pleased with the changes to the curriculum and how their children learn. This includes the use of the outdoor area, with 'Welly Wednesdays' an example of a very popular activity.

School details

Unique reference number	123507
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10083952

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Kirk
Headteacher	Cathy Dunleavy
Telephone number	01691 652 960
Website	www.trefonenschool.co.uk/
Email address	head@trefonen.shropshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2018

Information about this school

- Trefonen CofE Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- A section 48 inspection took place in December 2016.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all year groups. The observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector met with pupils and heard pupils from key stage 1 read. She observed and had discussions with pupils from all year groups at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector met with the senior leadership team, the leader of provision for pupils with SEND and several subject leaders. She also met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector, alongside school leaders, scrutinised pupils' work from a variety of subjects.
- The inspector looked at documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. She also considered information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety.
- The inspector spoke to parents to gather their views and took account of the 42 responses, including the 21 free-text messages, to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- The inspector also took account of the 62 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and the 10 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jo Evans, lead inspector

Her Majesty's 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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