

Battle Primary Academy

Cranbury Road, Reading, Berkshire RG30 2TD

Inspection dates

30 November–1 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
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

- Leaders, including the trust, have not secured sufficient improvement to the quality of teaching, particularly in key stage 1, since the previous inspection. Teaching is variable and not enough is securely good.
- Pupils, particularly in key stage 1, do not achieve the standards they are capable of. At the end of Year 2 in 2016 too few pupils achieved age-related expectations in reading and writing.
- Differences between the performance of key groups of pupils are not diminishing quickly enough. For example, boys do not achieve as well as girls do, particularly in key stage 1.
- The systems for monitoring the performance of teachers are not effective. Governors are unclear of the link between teachers' pay and their performance.
- Teachers do not use assessment information to plan activities that cater precisely for pupils' different starting points. Consequently, teachers' expectations, particularly of lower-attaining pupils and the most able, are too low.
- Teachers do not consistently help pupils understand how well they have progressed in lessons or what they have to do to improve further.
- Governors do not fully understand information about the performance of different groups of pupils. Consequently, they do not challenge school leaders robustly enough about the standards that pupils achieve.

The school has the following strengths

- Year 6 pupils who left in 2016 made good and sometimes accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2.
- Teaching in the early years is good. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points.
- The teaching of phonics has improved since the previous inspection.
- Safeguarding is effective. The school ensures that appropriate systems are in place. Pupils feel safe.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are consistently positive. They conduct themselves well throughout the school day. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by:
 - accurately evaluating the school's effectiveness, taking prompt action to address areas of weakness and monitoring closely the impact on improving provision and outcomes
 - improving the leadership of teaching and learning so as to have more influence on raising standards, particularly in key stage 1
 - making sure that leaders, including governors, consider information about pupils' performance, including key groups, in sufficient depth
 - ensuring that governors understand the links between teachers' pay and performance.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in key stage 1, in order to improve outcomes for pupils by making sure that teachers:
 - plan lessons based on an accurate understanding of what different groups of pupils and those with different starting points already know and can do
 - meet the particular needs and sufficiently challenge key groups of pupils, including boys, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those with low starting points and the most able
 - provide opportunities for pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, to develop their reading and writing skills across a range of subjects.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of the school's work can be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is not improving fast enough. A focus on raising attainment by the time pupils leave at age 11 has improved the quality of teaching and learning in key stage 2. Until recently, however, leaders have not focused sharply enough on the transition from early years to key stage 1. Consequently, standards at the end of Year 2 are not rising quickly enough, which, in turn, means that although outcomes at the end of Year 6 have improved, they could be higher.
- Turbulence in the school's leadership arrangements over the past year has hindered the school's progress. Support from the trust was not timely enough after the previous inspection to secure rapid improvement to pupils' progress in all year groups. More recently, support for inexperienced senior leaders has kept the school on an even keel and helped to improve key stage 2 outcomes. The trust has been instrumental in securing the interim headteacher for this school year.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is not based on a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They do not focus sharply enough on the performance of different groups, including boys, those with low starting points or the most able.
- Leaders have, however, successfully improved aspects of the school's work since the last inspection, including the teaching of phonics, pupils' behaviour and safety, and attendance. There has been some success in reducing the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others. Together, these provide a solid foundation for further improvements.
- Priorities in the current school improvement plan are appropriate, but progress towards achieving them is not monitored closely enough. This means that leaders are not clear on the difference they are making, or where more urgency is required. Some initiatives, such as a plan to audit provision for pupils learning English as an additional language, are very recent.
- The leadership team has been reorganised this school year because of key staff leaving or going on maternity leave. Middle and senior leaders have risen to the challenge and are responding well to their increased responsibilities. For example, they are taking greater account of pupil progress information, making well-judged changes to ensure that pupils make the progress they are capable of. This work is at an early stage.
- The curriculum is suitably broad and pupils are taught the appropriate range of subjects. In addition, pupils, including the most vulnerable, benefit from an appealing range of extra-curricular programmes, including meditation. Such opportunities develop pupils' self-esteem well. The curriculum does not, as leaders acknowledge, fully meet the needs of pupils in key stage 1. Plans are in place to review this aspect soon.
- The school promotes British values effectively, such as tolerance and respect for others. Meaningful whole-school assemblies develop pupils' understanding of how these values apply to their everyday lives. Leaders provide a range of opportunities

to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes towards others. The school is a harmonious community and pupils understand the importance of getting along well together.

- The school uses sports funding effectively to promote pupils' physical well-being. For example, leaders hire neighbouring grounds for sports activities, thus overcoming successfully the limitations of the school's small playground.

Governance of the school

- Governors do not challenge leaders about pupils' performance strongly enough. They do not have a secure understanding of pupil performance information or an accurate view of the reasons behind low outcomes for some groups of pupils in the school. They do not fully understand how performance compares with similar schools. As a result, they have an overgenerous view of the school's effectiveness.
- Governors meet some of their statutory duties effectively. For example, they carry out an annual health check of financial management procedures. They have a clear understanding of how additional funding, including the pupil premium, is used. However, governors have not been rigorous enough when making decisions about teachers' pay, based on their performance. Governors have not ensured that the school fully complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Governors are supportive of the school and the recent changes to its leadership. They are committed to improving their skills and expertise in order to help the school improve further. As a result, in recent times, governors are starting to ask more searching questions of school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School policies are followed carefully into practice. Staff receive regular training and, as a result, all staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Communication with external agencies, such as children's social services, is managed well.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate checks on adults' suitability to work with children are completed in a timely manner. They follow the safer recruitment guidelines, ensuring that all relevant checks are completed at the point of employment.
- Staff take their responsibilities seriously and are attentive, ensuring that pupils are kept safe. For example, entry arrangements for visitors to the school are robust.
- Staff, parents and pupils are positive about the culture of safety in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent and, as a result, the progress of some pupils, particularly in reading and writing in key stage 1, is too slow.
- Teachers do not use information about what pupils already know and can do well enough when planning lessons. Too much teaching is targeted at the middle. As a result, pupils sometimes tackle activities that do not build sufficiently well on their

prior knowledge and understanding or do not receive adequate support. This is particularly the case in key stage 1. Recent support and challenge from leaders to improve transition from early years has not yet had a marked impact on pupils' progress.

- In key stage 1, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write in subjects other than English. As a result, pupils do not build enough confidence in their writing abilities.
- In some classes, teachers' expectations are too low, particularly for the most able pupils. Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding and therefore pupils are not encouraged to move on quickly enough, particularly when they have already got to grips with a new skill or concept. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not always challenged to reach their potential and when this is the case, their progress slows.
- Teachers do not help pupils understand how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants who support pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language, play an important role in building pupils' confidence. Pupils appreciate the support they receive. However, leaders acknowledge that these pupils are capable of making better progress with more focused support for their learning.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. By the end of Year 1, most pupils gain a good understanding of the sounds that letters make. Teaching is not as effective in developing their comprehension skills quickly enough. The school's new library is helping pupils develop a love of reading.
- Teaching in mathematics is variable. Where it is more effective, particularly in key stage 2, teachers have secure subject knowledge and make good use of appropriate resources to promote pupils' understanding and engagement in tasks. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, through skilful questioning, pupils were encouraged to find common multiples and experienced high levels of success.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils appreciate the assistance they receive from adults, including support in lessons and online with learning tasks. Older pupils say they make good progress because of helpful guidance from teaching assistants and teachers.
- Pupils are happy and feel safe at school. They enjoy coming to school and this is evident in lessons, where most pupils want to learn and concentrate well.
- Staff and parents express no concerns about the welfare of the children.
- The school has used the pupil premium grant to enable pupils from less-disadvantaged backgrounds to access the school's breakfast club. Consequently, pupils enjoy a positive start to the school day. Such opportunities contribute well to pupils' emotional and social well-being.
- Pupils are encouraged to seek support if the need arises. For example, some

teachers have introduced a 'worry box' in classes to encourage pupils to note any concerns. In addition, school leaders listen regularly to the views of the head boy and head girl. Communication between adults and pupils is strong. This ensures that staff know, understand and act upon pupils' views appropriately.

- Pupils are alert to the different forms that bullying can take. They feel well supported and know that support from staff, including the headteacher, is readily available should the need arise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils know there is always someone keeping an eye on them on the playground. They know what to do if they are worried about others' behaviour. They say that incidents, including those where some pupils use derogatory language, are dealt with promptly by adults.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop respect and care for each other, including through activities on residential trips.
- Attendance is improving. It is close to the national average. The school works in partnership with an education welfare officer to contact parents if children miss school persistently. This results in overall improvement in attendance for individuals, including the most vulnerable children.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, too few pupils met the standard expected for their age at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing. Teachers do not build on pupils' learning in early years or have high enough aspirations of the standards that pupils can reach in key stage 1. Targets for pupils' achievement by the end of Year 2 are not sufficiently demanding.
- Lower-attaining pupils and the most able pupils do not make rapid enough progress. This is because teachers do not take enough account of pupils' starting points. Activities are not always pitched at the right level. Too often, tasks are too difficult for lower-attaining pupils or do not stretch the most able or encourage them to think hard and apply their understanding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make slow progress from their starting points. The school's special educational needs co-ordinator has wisely implemented additional support for pupils. In addition, there is now a more robust system for assessing and tracking these pupils' progress more closely. This is helping teachers to identify more accurately pupils' next steps, but it is too soon to see the impact of this on accelerating pupils' progress.
- Absolute beginners of English who join the school from Year 1 onwards gain in confidence in learning new words in small groups, but make slow progress in developing their communication skills. This is because activities in lessons do not match their emerging language needs sharply enough.
- In key stage 2 in 2016, disadvantaged pupils achieved less well in reading, writing and mathematics than their peers did. However, because of well-judged support, leaders are beginning to bring about positive change. The difference in achievement between current disadvantaged pupils and their peers is beginning to reduce. For example, in key stage 1 in 2016, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who

achieved the standard expected for their age in mathematics was in line with other pupils nationally. They also outperformed their peers in school.

- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who met the standard expected for their age at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics was below that seen nationally. However, this cohort made good progress, with some making accelerated progress from low starting points at the end of Year 2. The proportion of pupils who achieved greater depth in reading and mathematics exceeded that seen nationally.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children start school in the Nursery class, with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age, particularly in language and communication, often because they are at an early stage of learning English. They make good and sometimes rapid progress from their starting points, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able. Consequently, most children are well prepared for Year 1. The proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year in 2016 was above that found nationally.
- Leadership of the early years is effective. Leaders ensure that adults have a clear view of what children can do when they start Nursery. Standards in the early years have risen notably since the previous inspection because adults share high expectations of what children can achieve, particularly those starting with limited skills.
- Teachers plan a rich variety of learning activities in both the Nursery and Reception classes to develop children's skills in all areas of learning and promote their rapid acquisition of language and communication skills. Children concentrate for sustained periods to complete tasks indoors and outside. Adults engage well with children, asking relevant questions and providing suitable challenge.
- Children are encouraged to develop their early reading and writing skills from the word go. Teachers plan tasks that hold appeal, sparking children's interest and building their language skills steadily. For example, children benefit from regular opportunities to practise letter formation skills, order letters of the alphabet and match letters and sounds. During the inspection, children wrote messages to their teacher, displaying pride in their efforts. Consequently, children develop their language and communication skills rapidly.
- Additional funding is used effectively. The difference between the achievement of disadvantaged children and that of others is beginning to reduce, particularly in mathematics. However, leaders acknowledge that boys do less well than girls, especially in developing early number and writing skills. Plans are in place to address this but it is too soon to see the impact.
- Children behave well and treat each other with respect. For example, children readily share tools, while playing with sand or writing imaginatively, working cooperatively and considerately. Adults are watchful and keep a close eye on children's engagement and participation in activities. This helps children feel safe and secure in the early years classes.
- Effective partnership working is encouraged by the school. Adults share each

child's progress regularly with parents through daily contact and more formal parents' meetings. As a result, parents are fully involved and feel knowledgeable about the progress their child is making.

School details

Unique reference number	139066
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10019914

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	444
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ruth Allen
Headteacher (interim)	Mrs Joanne Gray
Telephone number	01189 375421
Website	www.battleprimaryacademy.org.uk
Email address	head.battleprimary@netacademies.net
Date of previous inspection	22–23 October 2014

Information about this school

- Battle Primary Academy is sponsored by the NET Academies Trust. The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school with an above-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. About half of pupils are known to speak English as an additional language, using a wide range of other languages at home.
- There are two classes in each year group. The early years consists of a Nursery class, which children attend either mornings or afternoons. Children attend the school's Reception classes full time.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support through the pupil premium is in line with that seen nationally.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about governance or parental requests for school information.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The interim headteacher has been in post for four weeks. The deputy headteacher has very recently started her maternity leave, with the assistant headteacher acting as deputy in her absence.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons across all year groups. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, other staff and governors.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the confidential questionnaire from staff and spoke to representatives of the academy trust.
- Inspectors evaluated documents including the school improvement plan, minutes of meetings, reports on attendance and behaviour, and records related to pupils' safety and academic progress.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons, scrutinised a sample of work across different ages and abilities and listened to pupils read.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed at break and lunchtime and around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils both informally and in two meetings and took account of the 11 responses to the confidential pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors took account of the results of a school survey of parents' opinions, analysed 10 responses from the parents' online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Kusum Trikha, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Doug Brawley	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Crouch	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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