

Minehead First School

Townsend Road, Minehead, Somerset TA24 5RG

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Actions taken by the trust to improve the quality of leadership at the school have not had the required impact on securing an acceptable standard of education for pupils.
- Very recent changes have been made, but it is too soon to see the impact of these on teaching and learning or outcomes for pupils.
- Expectations are too low across the school. Therefore, pupils, including the most able, do not achieve as well as they could.
- Leaders do not ensure that the support and guidance provided to the school are successful in raising standards. Too little is done to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, improves quickly.
- Leaders do not check that pupil premium funding is used well to secure better progress for pupils. Too few disadvantaged pupils leave the school with the skills and knowledge they need to achieve suitably.
- Assessment is weak across the school. Information about how well pupils achieve is not used effectively by leaders or teachers to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Subject leaders do not have the experience, skills or opportunities they need to support or challenge the progress that pupils make.
- There are too many incidents of poor behaviour that disrupt learning, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Leaders are not stringent in analysing poor behaviour or bullying. Therefore, these issues do not reduce.
- Too few pupils develop a pride in their work or positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Pupils' attendance is below average. Too many pupils do not attend school regularly. Leaders' actions have not been effective in improving attendance over time.
- Curriculum planning is weak and does not support pupils' learning effectively.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of religious education is effective in supporting pupils' understanding and appreciation of a range of cultures.
- Although teaching is not yet consistently good, improvements in the early years classes are moving forward more quickly than elsewhere in the school.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of leadership and management to ensure that:
 - the trust holds leaders, including governors, rigorously to account for all aspects of the school's performance, including how effectively the pupil premium funding is used to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - an ambitious culture for pupils pervades the school and expectations across the school rise
 - the professional support and guidance being offered to the school are effective in raising standards
 - subject leaders play an active role in improving standards across the school.
- Urgently improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by ensuring that:
 - information about pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is used successfully to plan challenging lessons that meet pupils' needs
 - the curriculum is planned systematically to ensure that pupils' skills are developed as they move through the school.
- Improve outcomes for pupils so that pupils in every year group, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils, make the progress they should.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - rapidly improving expectations for behaviour so that incidents of poor behaviour, particularly in key stage 2, are reduced
 - ensuring that leaders analyse bullying and behaviour incidents so that patterns are identified, and appropriate strategies are put in place
 - raising expectations of how pupils should present their work
 - improving pupils' attendance so that fewer school days are missed because of absence
 - ensuring that pupils develop strong, positive attitudes towards their learning and that they have high aspirations for their future.

An external review of governance is recommended.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium is recommended.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- School leaders, governors and trustees have not ensured that pupils at the school receive an adequate education. Too many pupils are working below expectations for their age, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have not promoted high ambition and expectations for pupils successfully. Too often, excuses for pupils' low achievement have prevailed. As a result, pupils' progress over the past three years has been weak and any improvements made have been too slow.
- The systems to check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are not applied consistently and have paused this year. Leaders have not placed enough priority on checking and improving the quality of teaching. Subject leaders play little part in supporting colleagues to improve their work. Consequently, too little teaching across the school is good.
- Leaders do not check the impact that professional support to staff, such as helping to improve the teaching of writing, is having on pupils' progress. Therefore, initiatives are not improving outcomes for pupils quickly enough.
- A wide range of subjects and interesting experiences on trips, including residential visits, support pupils' experiences of the world around them. However, because pupils do not master the basic skills, many leave the school with gains to make. Therefore, pupils are not as well prepared for their next steps as they should be.
- Leaders do not ensure that the pupil premium supports the learning needs of disadvantaged pupils effectively. They do not check carefully how the funding is spent or the impact it has on pupils' achievement. As a result, too few disadvantaged pupils leave the school with the skills and knowledge they need to achieve well.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium provides a wide range of external PE specialists and this enhances sport opportunities for pupils.
- Following reviews of the school's effectiveness, the trust provides additional support and challenge to the leadership team. However, this has not resulted in sufficient improvements to the quality of education over time.
- The new headteacher and the chief executive officer (CEO) have an accurate view of the areas that need to improve. There is a detailed plan to improve the quality of education. Staff, parents and carers, and pupils speak positively about changes that have started to establish higher expectations of behaviour. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these aspirations, plans and early actions.
- It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

Governance of the school

- Governors are aware of their roles and responsibilities but, along with the trust leaders, have been too ready to accept the information and explanations provided to them by

leaders. They have not promoted an ambitious approach for pupils or challenged the leadership team about the low standards that exist.

- Governors and trust leaders have not checked that disadvantaged pupils make good progress or that the pupil premium is spent effectively. Governors are not clear how funding is delegated or how it is spent to support pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils are safe and secure at school. They are confident that staff take good care of them, and they know whom to talk to if they have concerns.
- The trust has effective arrangements for ensuring that staff receive the safeguarding training they need to keep pupils safe. Governors fulfil their responsibilities to check that safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- The trust ensures that staff are recruited safely and that all checks are in place before staff begin their roles at the school.
- The designated leader for safeguarding has a secure knowledge of procedures, and works effectively with a range of agencies involved in keeping children safe. Staff are vigilant and understand the procedures for reporting any concerns they have about pupils' safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The teaching, learning and assessment provided do not ensure that pupils achieve well. Expectations are too low, and lessons frequently do not challenge pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills. In mathematics, for example, pupils do not learn successfully to use their number skills to reason or solve problems.
- The assessment of pupils' learning is weak. Too often, teachers' assessments are not accurate, and this leads to work being planned that does not match pupils' needs. Too frequently, lessons do not challenge pupils to move forward with their learning.
- In addition, pupils' misconceptions are sometimes not noticed during lessons and this leads to pupils continuing with their mistakes. For example, in writing, pupils continue to mis-spell words or to write letters incorrectly without being shown how to do this properly.
- Changes of staff and disturbances to some lessons because of poor behaviour have resulted in disruption to learning for pupils in key stage 2. This has slowed the progress of many pupils and prevented them from catching up following weaker outcomes in Year 2.
- Leaders do not use the information they have about pupils' progress to successfully challenge weaknesses in teaching. As a result, weaknesses continue, and pupils' progress is slowed.
- Professional guidance is being provided to the school to support the teaching of phonics and writing. However, leaders do not ensure that this has a lasting and deep impact on teaching and learning. Leaders are reliant on the external support and this

means that improvements being made to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are too slow and too fragile.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Too few pupils acquire the skills and attributes they need to be successful learners. For example, some do not develop the resilience they need to use feedback from teachers to develop new skills. In addition, too many pupils do not present their work well and do not show pride in their work.
- Pupils are aware that occasionally bullying incidents occur in school. They do feel certain that staff resolve these issues. However, leaders do not ensure that incidents of bullying are recorded and that patterns are identified. Therefore, leaders are not able to ensure that pupils receive the guidance and support needed to prevent bullying from occurring again.
- Many parents are happy with the care and support provided by staff. A typical comment was, 'the school is very welcoming, and staff are very friendly'. Some parents express concern about bullying and behaviour issues that have not been responded to quickly enough.
- Pupils develop an appreciation of, and respect for, a range of cultures through their learning in religious education lessons.

Behaviour

- Attendance has remained stubbornly low over time. Leaders have not been stringent in checking or supporting the reasons for low attendance for different groups of pupils. Actions have not been successful in improving attendance, including for pupils who miss many school days.
- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Incidents of disruption to pupils' learning, and of poor behaviour around the school from a few pupils, have increased over time. Leaders have not reduced these incidents quickly enough. Too often, pupils, particularly in key stage 2, show poor attitudes towards their learning and do not engage well in lessons.
- The recent re-launch of behaviour expectations is providing better guidance to pupils on how to behave in school. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this on pupils' behaviour over time.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Leaders have not ensured that pupils achieve well. Owing to weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school, pupils do not gain early reading, writing and mathematical skills quickly or successfully.

- Outcomes for pupils in Year 1 for phonics are consistently below average. This year, new teaching strategies and a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics have been introduced, but these are still being embedded. As yet, too few pupils in Years 1 and 2 write with the skill and confidence expected for their ages.
- By the end of key stage 1, far too many pupils are not achieving as well in reading, writing and mathematics as they should. Any improvements made have proved to be fragile. Current pupils' books show that the trend continues, with too few showing a good grasp of skills in spelling, grammar, writing composition and number.
- Too little is done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils catch up. There are not reliable or evaluated strategies in place across the school to ensure that additional learning needs for disadvantaged pupils are met.
- Expectations for the most able pupils are too low. Too few lessons challenge pupils to extend their thinking and to make the progress they should. As a result, too few of the most able pupils achieve as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make slightly better progress than their peers. This is because of the extra, individualised support and resources provided.
- The curriculum, although broad, is not planned sufficiently well to ensure that pupils develop skills systematically through the school. In addition, pupils do not consistently use and apply their skills across subjects and, therefore, do not grasp new skills as well as they could.
- Too little has been done to ensure that pupils develop a love of reading or to support pupils with the skills needed to read well.
- Science outcomes in key stage 1 are much higher than in other subjects. This is based on teacher assessment. However, current pupils' books show that pupils' understanding of science concepts is below that expected for their age and does not match the assessments made by staff.
- Weaknesses in achievement from key stage 1 are not rectified as pupils move on to key stage 2. Weaknesses and inconsistencies in teaching result in too few pupils catching up sufficiently to enable them to be well prepared for the next steps in their learning when they leave the school.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Across early years, the quality of teaching is too variable to be good. For example, some staff have weak subject knowledge of how to teach phonics and writing, despite this being a current focus for improvement for the school. As a result, some children do not make the progress they need to be ready for learning in Year 1.
- In addition, expectations for writing and mathematics are sometimes too low, and this results in children making weaker progress. At times, children do not successfully develop their learning when exploring different learning areas inside and outside the classroom. This means that children sometimes make slower progress than they should.

- As is consistent with the rest of the school, leaders do not have an accurate picture of how the pupil premium is used to help disadvantaged children accelerate their progress.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of children achieving the skills they need to be ready for learning in Year 1 has been steadily improving. However, this is still below average and does not represent good progress from children's starting points. Weaknesses in the assessment system mean that too little is done to match activities with the next steps that children need to make in their learning.
- Early years leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas to improve. Staff across the Reception and Nursery classes work together closely to share their practice. Together, teachers from the classes are improving the quality of their work faster than the rest of the school.
- Across the early years provision, the high level of staffing ensures that welfare requirements are met, and that safeguarding is secure.
- Routines and high expectations are established straight away. Children settle quickly and form strong relationships with staff, who help them to feel secure at school. A key focus is on learning new ideas and words. For example, children in Nursery enjoyed discussing weather and the colours of the rainbow by looking at light shining through a prism. They went on to use new words about weather as they painted weather pictures.
- Parents report that their children settle in very well, and those who expressed a view said that they were happy with the communication and the progress that their children make. They appreciate the care provided by staff and the external advice sought when needed.

School details

Unique reference number	142800
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10088344

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

Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	362
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Martina Forster
Headteacher	Adam Evans
Telephone number	01643 702938
Website	www.mineheadfirstschool.co.uk
Email address	office@mineheadfirst.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In April 2016, the school converted to academy status and is now part of the West Somerset Academies Trust, a multi-academy trust. The trust is governed by a board of trustees who have overall responsibility for the work of the trust. The trust works in partnership with the Diocese of Bath and Wells.
- Trustees delegate powers and functions such as educational standards, finance and health and safety to committees, including a local governing body. The governing body is responsible for supporting and challenging school leaders and for holding leaders to account for educational standards. The work of the local governing body is overseen by the CEO of the trust.
- Minehead First School works in partnership with six other schools in the trust. The headteacher of the nearby Minehead Middle School, also part of West Somerset Academies Trust, became the headteacher of Minehead First School in April 2019. This

headteacher is now executive headteacher across both Minehead Middle and First schools.

- In September 2018, the nursery on the school site became part of Minehead First School. It caters for two- and three-year-old children.
- The trust has identified that the school requires additional support and provides this through the collaboration with other schools in the trust as well as extra support from the CEO. In addition, the school receives external support to improve the quality of the teaching of phonics and writing and the leadership of provision for pupils with SEND.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. In addition, meetings were held with two members of the local governing body, the CEO and a senior adviser from the trust.
- Inspectors observed learning across the school, including Nursery classes, with senior leaders. A range of pupils' books were scrutinised, as well as the information provided by school leaders about pupils' progress.
- A wide range of documents were taken into consideration, including reviews of the school's progress carried out by the trust and governing body and minutes of meetings, as well as the school development plan, records of behaviour and exclusions, attendance information and safeguarding documents. The school's single central record and recruitment arrangements were checked.
- The 34 views and free-text responses provided on Parent View, alongside views from parents gathered during the inspection, were considered. The views of staff from the 28 returns to an Ofsted online survey were taken into account.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils to gather their views in small groups and informally.

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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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