

Inspection of Bearnese Voluntary Primary School

Queen Street, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 2AU

Inspection dates:	18 and 19 December 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The executive headteacher of the school is Tracy Hoare, who is responsible for this school and one other. This school is part of Link Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Nicola Dunford, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Cheryl Diane Mathieson.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school sits at the heart of the community it serves. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of belonging. They appreciate their teachers and friends. Pupils are happy, feel safe and attend well.

There have been changes to school leadership and staffing since the previous inspection. The school is ambitious for pupils; nonetheless, these aspirations are not yet realised. In the early years and in some subjects, pupils achieve well. However, the curriculum does not support pupils in building their knowledge securely across some other subjects, including English and mathematics. Academic achievement has been too low. This is reflected in the 2024 published results.

Staff have high expectations for behaviour. Pupils live up to these. Many show positive attitudes towards each other and demonstrate the school's values. If bullying happens, the school is swift to act to ensure that all pupils receive the appropriate support to avoid future incidents.

The school makes sure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, take part in trips and residential experiences. These opportunities broaden their horizons and help pupils to build resilience and confidence. Clubs like multi-sport events and cricket help develop pupils' interests.

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

Leaders are determined to stem the decline in the quality of education at the school. They have reviewed and strengthened the school's curriculum. However, recent improvements made by the school are still in their infancy. On occasions, staff do not have sufficient expertise to ensure pupils learn the planned curriculum well. This means that pupils do not build their knowledge well.

Children get off to a positive start in the early years. The school places a sharp focus on developing children's writing. For instance, children in the Reception Year independently write letters to Father Christmas. They also develop a secure knowledge of mathematics. Children use vocabulary they have heard modelled by adults, such as 'one more than', to solve number problems.

In some subjects, the legacy of a weak curriculum remains. For example, many pupils in key stages 1 and 2 struggle with spelling, handwriting and the presentation of their work. In subjects such as physical education (PE) and geography, staff check what pupils know and understand. However, in some subjects, staff do not routinely check pupils' understanding or adapt learning to ensure it matches what pupils are able to do. Consequently, in these subjects, there are some gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge.

Reading is now a priority. Staff have the training they need to teach pupils to read well. Children learn to read from the start of the Reception Year. They learn the sounds that

they need to read words. Staff match books carefully to the sounds that pupils know. This helps them to build their reading fluency and confidence. Children who need extra support receive daily practice to help them keep up with the phonics programme. However, until recently, phonics teaching throughout the rest of the school has not been as effective. Last year, the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2024 were below the national average. In addition, some older pupils have not secured enough basic phonics knowledge. This impacts on their reading fluency.

The school identifies pupils with SEND swiftly. Skilled staff provide personalised care and support so these pupils learn well alongside their peers. Where pupils need support for their social, emotional and mental health, the school provides it. For example, sports coaches help pupils play structured games at lunchtime. Pupils value the different sports on offer.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is a strength. Pupils understand what it means to be a good friend. They know how to stay safe online and the importance of not sharing personal information. Specialist assemblies linked to fire and water safety equip pupils with the knowledge to stay safe. Pupils also have opportunities to perform, such as the choir singing at the local supermarket. Pupils are proud advocates. Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain through the school's work on fundamental British values, such as democracy. Elected school council helps improve the school grounds and raises funds for a range of charitable causes.

Governors and trustees value the school and the contribution of the community to the school's work. They are not afraid to make decisions to improve the school. Most staff feel valued and supported in their roles. They report that leaders consider their well-being and workload. Parents and carers are positive about the work of the school. They appreciate the thoughtful support it provides for their children's well-being and education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school is not addressing some deficiencies in how some subject curriculums are taught. This means that sometimes staff do not build pupils' knowledge well. The trust should oversee the implementation of the curriculum and develop staff expertise so that teaching supports pupils to know and remember more across all curriculum subjects.
- Some pupils' written work contains basic handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. These errors are not routinely picked up by staff. As a result, pupils repeat the same mistakes. The trust should ensure that the school's expectations for

pupils' writing are clearly established and that teachers have the expertise to address errors.

- Some older pupils are not fluent readers and have gaps in their phonics knowledge. These pupils have extra reading support, but this does not target and improve their phonics knowledge effectively. This means that they struggle to read new and unfamiliar words independently. The school should ensure that all pupils at the early stages of learning to read get effective help to meet their specific needs.
- In some subjects, teachers' checks on pupils' understanding are not specific enough, and staff do not readily address misconceptions. As a result, pupils continue with these misconceptions and do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers' checks on pupils' knowledge inform their teaching so that misconceptions are addressed.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142649
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10344707
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Cheryl Diane Mathieson
CEO of the trust	Nicola Dunford
Headteacher	Tracy Hoare (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.bearnes.thelink.academy/web
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher was appointed to work with the school from January 2024.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the assistant headteacher, school staff, parents and pupils. The lead inspector met with the CEO, the director of education for the trust, the chair of the trust board and members of the local academy committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also met with curriculum leaders and looked at pupils' work other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime. In addition, inspectors met with pupils to hear their views.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Esther Best

His Majesty's Inspector

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