

Austin Farm Academy

Delamere Road, Egguckland, Plymouth, Devon PL6 5XQ

Inspection dates

9–10 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' actions have not secured sustained improvements in mathematics. As a result, mathematics outcomes have been in the lowest 20% of schools nationally for the last two years.
- Leaders' systems for monitoring different groups of pupils' performance do not provide sufficient information to enable early support to be put in place.
- Leaders do not use pupil premium funding well enough to help disadvantaged pupils make consistently good progress, particularly in mathematics and writing across key stage 2.
- Despite pupils enjoying school, low attendance disadvantages some. The school's overall attendance is below average and shows no real signs of improvement.
- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to develop a range of mathematical skills. Too much focus is on calculation and number. Consequently, pupils' skills are limited, and this hinders their progress in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching varies across year groups and subjects, and this leads to inconsistency in current pupils' progress from their different starting points.
- Assessment information is not used precisely enough by some teachers to meet pupils' needs, especially those of the most able. Too often, pupils are completing work that is too easy.

The school has the following strengths

- Early years is well led. Children get off to a 'flying start' in the early years as a result of good teaching and provision.
- Leaders and governors are committed to continued improvement and recognise the importance of sharpening their evaluation and monitoring of mathematics.
- Teaching is improving, especially in reading and writing. Pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in their phonics.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning across the school are positive. Pupils work hard across a range of subjects, sometimes producing their very best work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the mathematics curriculum is balanced and provides pupils with more opportunities to apply a range of mathematical skills
 - evaluating the impact of the use of pupil premium funding more rigorously by checking that planned actions are having an impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, particularly in mathematics and writing
 - improving the systems for measuring and tracking the progress of different groups of pupils, and their attendance, so that early intervention can happen.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure teachers:
 - plan more opportunities for pupils to learn a broader range of mathematical skills beyond calculation and number
 - use what they already know about what pupils can do to match work with greater accuracy so that pupils are sufficiently challenged, particularly the most able
 - intervene more quickly when pupils are ready to tackle more challenging work.
- Improve attendance, including a reduction in persistent absence, so that it is at least in line with the national average.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have accurately identified the main school improvement priorities in their development plan. However, actions to improve the school are not rapid enough. Consequently, pupils' progress is limited, particularly in mathematics.
- The leadership team does not evaluate all aspects of the work of the school with sufficient attention to detail to bring about sustained improvements. This means that leaders are unable to effectively tackle emerging weaknesses.
- Leaders' evaluation of the impact of the strategies used to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is not rigorous enough. Measures are not aligned with the national picture. Consequently, too many of these pupils have underachieved in writing and mathematics.
- The mathematics curriculum is not broad and balanced. It requires further improvement to ensure that pupils are receiving a rich diet of knowledge and skills beyond calculation and number. However, the wider curriculum makes good provision for pupils, and inspectors observed this in lessons.
- Middle leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects. They are passionate and determined to continue to drive forward further improvements. Nonetheless, the effectiveness with which middle leaders monitor, evaluate and develop the quality of teaching and learning needs to improve further.
- Senior leaders, and governors, have developed the arrangements to manage and improve the performance of staff. These reflect closely the priorities for improvement identified in the school's improvement plan. However, it is too early to be able to assess the impact of the arrangements.
- Leaders and teachers provide pupils with many extra-curricular opportunities to become confident, reflective and mature individuals. For example, pupils in Year 4 told inspectors that a visit to a Second World War museum helped them reflect on challenges faced by children at that time in history. They were able to relate this directly to children whose families are serving in the armed forces, through what pupils describe as a 'special remembrance service', and then apply this knowledge to their history learning.
- Leaders use the sport premium funding well to both improve pupils' participation in sport and develop staff expertise through external coaching. In 2017, for recognition of pupils' participation in sport, the school received the gold 'Sports Mark' award. Leaders' plans for physical education (PE) and sport are meticulous and precise. They ensure that pupils of all abilities can engage and compete in a wide range of sporting activities.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are receiving high-quality support. Interventions are planned carefully, so that they address pupils' particular needs. Leaders ensure that any additional funding they receive for these pupils is well spent. As a result, pupils make good progress.

- Leaders have successfully raised standards in English across the school. They recognise that there is still work to be done to ensure that provision of mathematics is also of the same standard.
- Parents who spoke to the inspectors or who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, are very happy with the provision at Austin Farm Academy. Several parents commented to inspectors 'how brilliant the school is'.

Governance of the school

- There have recently been considerable changes in the structure of the governing body, including the removal of the local board and the appointment of a new chief executive. As a result, governors of 'Eggbuckland Community College Academy Trust' board can monitor the work of the school more closely. However, the actions taken by governors of the trust board are in their infancy and it is too early to assess the impact of their actions, although members have a wide range of skills and expertise which add to the leadership capacity. The headteacher is set aspirational targets by the governors to improve the school, and these are reviewed and challenged regularly.
- The new structure is not yet fully established, but governors have wasted no time in getting to know the school. They know how the pupil premium is spent, but are not fully aware of the impact that it is having on outcomes. The safeguarding governor checks the school's policies and procedures regularly. Governors have received training in child protection and safer recruitment. They regularly visit the school to check upon the school's work and have an accurate understanding of the school. Furthermore, they are determined in their vision to ensure that all pupils at Austin Farm Academy have a good education that prepares them well for secondary school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders ensure that all adults working with children are kept up to date with training on how to keep children safe. Staff are trained regularly to an appropriate level and understand the procedures to follow should they have any concerns. Staff are able to clearly articulate the signs and symptoms of what to look out for to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe through a variety of curriculum opportunities. They know how to stay safe outside of school and what to do if they have any worries. Pupils say that there is always a 'trusted adult' who they can talk to and that teachers act upon any concerns swiftly. They also said that they find regular extra-curricular days such as 'internet bullying day' useful in understanding the potential dangers of social media.
- Pupils are adamant that they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including outside of school. Parents and carers are also unanimous in their views that pupils are safe in school.
- Records show that vulnerable pupils and their families are supported well. The parent support adviser provides effective support to vulnerable pupils and families in challenging circumstances. She has developed effective relationships with families to secure positive interaction between school and home. Parents value the support that

they receive from the school.

- Leaders are quick to follow up on any concerns in order to put appropriate early help in place. Referrals to social care and other professional services are thorough and timely. This ensures that pupils and their families receive the support they need quickly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school, particularly in mathematics. Some teachers do not use information about what pupils can already do to plan and adjust work which is matched well enough to their needs, particularly for the most able. During some lessons, teachers do not respond quickly enough when pupils are ready to move on to learning that is more difficult. This reduces the potential that they have to progress further.
- Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to learn a range of mathematical skills. The vast majority of teaching focuses on number and calculations. As a result, pupils do not make sufficient progress in mathematics, especially across key stage 2.
- Where teaching is better, for example in lower key stage 2, pupils make progress through activities that are more closely matched to their abilities. Teachers have good subject knowledge and briskly move pupils on once they have secured the learning.
- All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. All classrooms are warm, welcoming and nurturing environments. Pupils show respect to their teachers and positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils work hard and are eager to please their teachers. Pupils show pride in their work and a range of pupils' books from across the school demonstrates a consistently high standard of presentation. Particularly impressive is the standard of handwriting.
- Teaching assistants across the school provide high-quality support. They are well trained and recognise when to intervene and provide support that effectively facilitates learning. They use questioning sharply to elicit pupils' understanding and where appropriate, consolidate or develop further. As a result, pupils who are being supported progress well in their learning.
- Teaching of English has improved rapidly across the school. A new systematic approach to the teaching of reading has ensured that pupils are now making strong progress from their starting points. Standards in writing have also improved, particularly in key stage 1. Current pupils are typically at least in line with what is expected for their age.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge of English to explain concepts to pupils well. Teachers often extend pupils' vocabulary effectively by challenging pupils to find alternative words which are more powerful in presenting their point of view.
- Pupils' books show that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length in a range of subjects. This enables pupils to develop their writing skills. For example, pupils wrote a report in Years 3 and 4 about 'Life as a Roman' using a range of skills that they have been taught in their previous lessons. Pupils' attitudes to learning in other subjects are a strength of the school.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club start the day well. They are provided with a wide range of healthy options to choose from and a range of activities to engage with. Pupils report that they 'enjoy breakfast club'. As a result, pupils who attend breakfast club are well placed for learning.
- The school's curriculum helps pupils understand how to value difference, develop relationships and treat others with respect. For example, every month the school promotes a different whole-school focus on preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils feel safe and talk positively about the school. Pupils told inspectors that they have been taught how to contact the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) if they need further guidance. As a result, they know if they have concerns about which they do not feel able to talk to an adult, help is available.
- Pupils have a deep understanding of what bullying is, including cyber bullying. They are adamant that bullying never happens at Austin Farm Academy. They are also very confident that staff would immediately address any concerns, such as 'falling out' between friends.
- Parents are complimentary about the impact that the school has had on their children's personal development and well-being. One parent commented to inspectors that 'pastoral care is second to none'. This comment was typical of many.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attendance remains below the national average, including persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Although the school has systems in place and works closely with other agencies, such as the education welfare officer, attendance is still below the national average and the systems are having little impact. Procedures to monitor attendance are not rigorous enough, and as a result, too many pupils are not identified early enough who need extra support to catch up.
- Teachers and teaching assistants expect pupils to behave well. In lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are typically positive. This is a result of effective relationships between adults and pupils, where mutual respect is an expectation. As a result, pupils are polite and confident and try their very best in all that they do.
- Pupils' views of behaviour across the school are highly positive and school information shows that incidents of poor behaviour are rare.
- Pupils move around school sensibly. They come in from breaktimes with positive and focused attitudes, ready to learn. At lunchtime, they show their good table manners as they enjoy eating lunch with their friends.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, progress in reading and mathematics in key stage 2 was well below the national average. Mathematics has been in the lowest 20% of schools nationally for the last two years.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in reading and writing by the end of key stage 2 is improving, when compared to other pupils nationally. However, progress in mathematics is not. In some year groups, the difference between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is not measurable. This is because school systems are not efficient enough to track progress against other pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils, particularly in key stage 2, are not always adequately challenged in their lessons. As a result, pupils do not attain the higher standards seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 and 2017 were in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportions of pupils working above the expected standards at the end of 2017 were slightly below the national averages in reading and writing.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check the pupils' outcomes have been above the national average for the last two years.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress. Leaders accurately identify their learning needs and provide carefully planned support to assist their learning.
- Current pupils are starting to make better progress in writing in key stage 2. A new approach to teaching reading is helping pupils to consolidate their writing skills and to apply them in different contexts. Pupils' written work shows a good level of accuracy in spelling and grammar.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is good. Children, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, typically join the setting with starting points lower than those expected for their age.
- Relationships between staff and children are very positive. Staff are kind and caring and are quick to intervene to support children who are feeling less confident. They promote children's self-esteem and personal development well.
- Leaders continually assess children to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the children and adapt the vibrant curriculum accordingly. Sharp assessments on entry to the Reception class enable staff to prepare for children well. Parents contribute to the assessments leaders make about their children and are encouraged to support their children's development online.
- Good, stimulating and fun teaching ensures that children secure the skills to learn to read and write. The consistent and systematic approach to teaching phonics is effective and work in children's learning journeys and displayed around the setting demonstrates that they make good progress over time. Children also demonstrate good number

skills. For example, children were confidently counting objects beyond what is expected for their age, adding 'one more or less' competently.

- Children behave well. They follow clear routines and respond well to teachers' high expectations.
- The learning environment is lively and there is a stimulating 'hive' of activity as a result of well-designed activities that engage and promote inquisitiveness among the children.
- Teachers make sure that children are safe. The environment is supervised carefully and this enables children to 'buzz' around the setting, engaging with chosen activities with great confidence.
- Parents are very positive about the early years provision, particularly with transition arrangements. They are happy with how well their children settle into Austin Farm Academy and the progress they make. They say that staff are warm and friendly and this reassures them that their children are safe and well looked after.
- The proportion of children well prepared for Year 1, and who reach a good level of development, is rising rapidly and is just below the national average. By the end of Reception, differences in standards between groups of children have almost disappeared.
- The early years provision meets all welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	141232
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10042644

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Carrie Wills
Headteacher	Mr Colin Randall
Telephone number	01752 705367
Website	www.austinfarm.plymouth.sch.uk
Email address	mailbox@austinfarmacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about pupil premium funding.
- Austin Farm Academy opened as an academy in March 2015. When its predecessor school, Austin Farm, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be inadequate. The school is an academy sponsored by Eggbuckland Community College Academy Trust.
- The trust board takes full responsibility for challenging and supporting leaders to ensure positive outcomes for pupils. The chief executive officer of the trust is the recently appointed headteacher of Eggbuckland Community College.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum standard expected for pupils at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the

national average.

- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or who are supported by an education, health and care plan, or statement of special educational needs, is above average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons or part lessons. A number of these observations were undertaken with senior leaders.
- The inspectors scrutinised work in a range of pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met with several groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime, as well as in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the chief executive officer, headteacher and the deputy headteacher, as well as other senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body from the trust board.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally during the inspection in order to seek their views about the school.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included assessments and records of pupils' progress, and the school checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection, school improvement plans and attendance. Inspectors also considered documents outlining the arrangements for the use of pupil premium funding and the primary PE and sports funding.
- Inspectors took account of 19 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Shirley	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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