

Frome Vale Academy

Frenchay Road, Downend, Bristol BS16 2QS

Inspection dates

28 February and 5 March 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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes in key stage 2 have declined since the previous inspection. In particular, pupils who have low starting points do not make the progress they need to catch up quickly.
- Although there is recent evidence of improvement, the academy council and the Cabot Learning Federation have not taken rapid enough action to halt the decline in key stage 2 outcomes.
- The school's improvement plans do not demonstrate well enough how actions taken are going to improve pupils' outcomes quickly.
- Until recently, leaders did not check and evaluate well enough the progress of all groups of pupils to make sure that they make the best possible progress. Consequently, gender differences remain. Boys underperform in reading, writing and mathematics across all year groups.
- Subject leaders are new to post. Consequently, they are not yet playing a lead role in developing aspects of teaching, learning and assessment across the curriculum.
- Teachers are not sufficiently aspirational in what pupils can achieve, especially so for boys and the most able pupils.
- Teaching, especially in key stage 2, does not consistently meet the needs of pupils. Activities set can be either too easy or too difficult. This hampers pupils' progress.
- Although the number of children achieving a good level of development in the early years is rising, it remains just below the national average. This is because the quality of teaching is not consistently good and the learning environment is underdeveloped.
- Pupils do not have the information they need from teachers to improve their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The fervent drive of the principal and the new interim vice-principal is having a positive impact on improving pupils' achievement.
- The school's curriculum excites and engages pupils.
- Outcomes in key stage 1 continue to improve in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outcomes in phonics continue to improve year on year and are well above the national average.
- Behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, well mannered and respectful.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels by ensuring that:
 - the academy council and directors of the Cabot Learning Federation hold leaders to account more robustly to quickly improve the quality of education pupils receive
 - teachers are aspirational in their expectations of what pupils can achieve to secure the best outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics
 - improvement plans indicate precisely what, and how, leaders and the academy council will check so that actions taken continue to improve pupils' achievement and ensure that they make the very best progress
 - leaders ensure that activities planned for pupils, especially in key stage 2, help pupils to make accelerated progress so they at least meet the national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics
 - the curriculum is consistently building on what pupils already know, can do and understand
 - subject leaders have increased opportunity to monitor and develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that they know what does or does not work and why
 - further work is undertaken in the early years provision to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that children achieve a good level of development in line with the national average
- Improve pupils' achievement to enable pupils to make good progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve across year groups and subjects but especially in reading, writing and mathematics
 - pupils with low starting points are provided with high-quality teaching and learning opportunities to enable them to catch up quickly
 - teaching, especially in key stage 2, provides pupils, including the most able, with the challenge they need to make good progress
 - the difference is rapidly diminished between boys' and girls' achievement especially in reading, writing and mathematics
 - teachers implement the school's approach consistently to provide incisive feedback to pupils so that they know how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes in key stage 2 have declined since 2015. Until recently, leaders, including the academy council and the Cabot Learning Federation, have not acted quickly enough to halt this decline. Consequently, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable in reading, writing or mathematics. This is particularly so for pupils who have low starting points.
- Leaders have not tackled all the areas identified as requiring improvement at the previous inspection successfully. Consequently, these areas requiring improvement remain. For example, pupils are not consistently provided with the information and guidance they need in order to improve their work.
- Leaders, including the academy council and the Cabot Learning Federation, have an overgenerous view of the school's effectiveness, including the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes. Monitoring does not focus well enough on the impact teaching has on pupils' achievement. This is especially so for boys and the most able pupils. As a result, these groups do not make consistently good progress.
- Procedures to check the performance of teachers are in place. However, targets set are not sufficiently aspirational. They are not focused well enough on what leaders expect to see in pupils' outcomes, especially to ensure that pupils are on track to secure at least the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, there remains a legacy of pupils' underachievement, which until recently has not been closing quickly enough.
- The school's current improvement plan lacks precision. It does not identify precisely enough how actions taken are going to improve outcomes for pupils and groups of pupils. Plans lack clarity as to who and how checks will be made.
- Subject leadership is underdeveloped. This is because there have been staffing changes since the previous inspection and subject leaders are new to role, especially in English and mathematics. Consequently, they are not yet playing a lead role in developing aspects of teaching, learning and assessment in the subjects they lead.
- The leader of special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities identifies pupils' needs effectively. Recent training and guidance to staff are ensuring that teachers provide learning activities which better meet pupils' needs. However, leaders' actions have not ensured that the quality of teaching and learning across the school is consistently strong for this group.
- Pupils who attend the alternative provision unit called 'the NEST' have their emotional needs met well, which is resulting in their making better progress. This is because staff have received appropriate training and plan activities which meet pupils' needs more precisely.
- The school's curriculum is exciting. Leaders are successful in covering all the national curriculum subjects with the pupils' interests. Topics are typically well chosen to motivate and engage pupils, and are introduced by the 'big question'. For example, in Year 5, pupils learn about homelessness and 'How would you survive living in a forest?'

In Year 3, pupils are considering 'what the Victorians did for us'. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning. Nevertheless, checks are not made carefully enough by leaders to ensure that progress is evident and pupils are developing the skills they need across a range of subjects.

- The school is working with a local leader of education to improve pupils' achievement. She is currently deployed to the early years provision. However, this is only recent and it is too early to evaluate the impact of her work on the achievement of children.
- The principal has the drive and determination to implement the necessary changes. For example, she does not shy away from tackling underperformance when teaching does not meet her high expectations. To this end, there have been some recent significant changes, most notably staffing in key stage 2. The appointment of the interim vice-principal has been pivotal in improving aspects of provision. Together, the principal and interim vice-principal are driving forward improvements. However, these changes are recent and impact is not yet fully evident.
- The tracking of pupil premium funding is undertaken by leaders. As a result, the differences in achievement are closing in reading, writing and mathematics across year groups for these pupils. However, leaders are not complacent and know that further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that gaps in achievement are closed.
- Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or who spoke to inspectors are pleased with the quality of education and care their children receive. Indeed, comments such as 'teachers go above and beyond' and 'cannot praise the school enough' were just two of the positive comments made by parents. Furthermore, parents welcome the approachability of the staff, especially the principal, and feel that their views are heard. Parents also commented on the office staff, 'always welcoming and with a smile on their faces'.

Governance of the school

- The academy council has not recognised or acted on the decline in standards at key stage 2 well enough. It has an overgenerous view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school and the impact this has on pupils' outcomes. While there is evidence that the academy council has an understanding of school information and asks challenging questions about pupils' performance, until recently this has not been sufficiently robust to ensure that the school provides a good standard of education.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Record-keeping is well maintained and meets all current statutory requirements.
- Risk assessments to keep pupils safe are in place for activities in and beyond the school. They are checked by those responsible for safeguarding to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. For example, the recent visit to Bristol Zoo had a detailed risk assessment in place. This carefully covered all potential risks, including if pupils acquired a phobia to the animals while out on the trip.

- Staff receive regular and high-quality safeguarding training so that a clear culture of safeguarding practice permeates across the school. Staff are well informed about all types of risk to pupils, including child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. They are confident in the action to take should they have any concerns about the safety or care of pupils. Staff and the academy council have a clear understanding of the need to protect pupils from all potential risks.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding make timely referrals and are diligent in their record-keeping. They work closely with outside agencies to minimise risks to pupils.
- Pupils said that they feel safe and know how to keep safe. Parents endorse this view and are confident that leaders and staff look after their children well while in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not consistently have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils' work shows inconsistencies in teachers' expectations. There are differences between classes and across subjects. As a result, pupils are not catching up quickly enough, especially in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not consistently plan activities which precisely meet the needs of pupils. This means that work is either too hard for lower-ability pupils, who are unable to access the learning, or too easy for the most able. Consequently, pupils do not make consistently good progress.
- Teachers do not plan activities for boys which sufficiently motivate them. As a result, there remains a significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls across the school.
- Teachers do not follow the approach agreed for providing information to pupils about what they need to do to improve their work consistently enough. Consequently, too many pupils do not know what they need to do to improve their work or to fully understand their next steps in learning. This contributes to pupils not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers know which pupils need to catch up as a result of more detailed analysis of what pupils know, can do and understand. While there are signs that pupils are moving ahead more rapidly, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who speak English as an additional language, it is too early to see the impact of this work in published outcomes, especially at the end of key stage 2.
- The teaching of phonics is good. This is securing better progress for pupils which is reflected in the year-on-year improvements in the phonics screening check.
- The quality of teaching is improving as a result of very recent changes in the school's senior leadership team. There is evidence that achievement is rising. However, it is too early to indicate that these improvements are securing consistently strong or sustained achievement across year groups and subjects.
- Leaders' increased monitoring, training and guidance through coaching and mentoring are having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching quickly. There is evidence of strong practice developing – for example, teachers' strong subject

knowledge and probing questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. Nevertheless, this has not been the case for long enough and there remains a legacy of pupils' underachievement. Consequently, teaching is not yet securely good.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. These relationships are built on trust and mutual respect. As a result, pupils feel able to share any worries or concerns they may have with a member of staff, knowing that they will be listened to carefully and the appropriate action taken.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. They told inspectors that incidents of bullying and racism are rare. They are confident that if there are any incidents, staff act quickly to resolve them successfully.
- Pupils describe how they feel safe. This is because staff provide them with a range of activities which teach them how to keep safe. For example, pupils described to inspectors how they are confident in the action they should take in the event of somebody getting into the school who should not be there.
- Parents reported that they feel their children are safe in school. 'We are confident our children are safe. Site security is good' and 'The school has a warm and welcoming approach' were typical of the comments made to inspectors.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have a good understanding of the differences between right and wrong. This is because staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils behave well around the school. This includes during playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils told inspectors that they appreciate the staff playing games with them during these times. They enjoy playing with the varied activities that are available to them via the play pod. Consequently, playtimes and lunchtimes are typically enjoyable experiences where pupils play and socialise happily together.
- Pupils who attend the NEST behave well. This is because staff are well trained to deal effectively with their complex and emotional needs. For example, during the inspection, pupils had been on their regular visit to Horse World in Whitchurch. Pupils spoke enthusiastically to the inspector about how they benefit from these visits and how it makes them more confident, particularly in their communication skills.
- Most pupils attend well and enjoy school. As a result of leaders' timely and systematic actions, pupils' attendance has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' attendance is now in line with the national average.

- Leaders have worked hard to reduce quickly the number of fixed-term exclusions. This is because pupils' social and emotional needs are being identified more readily. A greater range of approaches, including play therapy, are being used to support pupils.
- Typically, pupils are motivated to learn. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and most pupils take pride in their work. Occasionally, when work is not precisely matched to pupils' needs, their rates of progress slow and they do not achieve as well as they should.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In key stage 2, pupils' outcomes have declined since the previous inspection. However, as a result of current leaders' drive and determination to reverse this underachievement, there are signs that progress is now improving in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2017, published outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 show that they did not make good progress in reading, writing or mathematics and were significantly below the national average in each subject. In 2017, the school was deemed to be coasting.
- There remains a legacy of underachievement in key stage 2 as a result of previous weak teaching. In writing, pupils continue to have gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding which need to be eliminated quickly if pupils are to achieve the best outcomes and reverse this decline.
- Current progress information indicates that pupils are not making consistently good progress especially in their writing and mathematics, particularly at key stage 2. Work in books viewed during the inspection supported this information. This is because not all teachers expect pupils to produce consistently high-quality writing. In mathematics, they are not able to use their knowledge of number consistently to solve mathematical problems. For example, pupils' lack of understanding and application of number led to their struggling to answer a question on percentages with money.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics has risen year on year since 2015. In 2017, 96% of Year 1 pupils achieved the expected outcomes which is well above the national average. This is because teachers have a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics and instil in pupils an enjoyment of reading. Indeed, a pupil read to the inspector with confidence from their chosen Roald Dahl book.
- In 2017, published key stage 1 outcomes show pupils achieving above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The numbers of pupils working at greater depth is higher than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils achieve well in their reading and writing but not in mathematics. Nonetheless, this positive picture is not continued into key stage 2.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because children do not make

consistently good rates of progress, especially boys. This underachievement of boys has not been tackled well enough by leaders. This has meant that the gap has been too wide for too long, especially in reading, writing and number.

- Historically, children started in the early years provision with skills below those expected of them, especially in reading and writing. However, more recently, children enter with skills which are expected for their age. Inconsistencies in teaching result in children not making the progress of which they are capable
- Leaders' assessment systems to track and analyse children's progress are not sufficiently secure. Therefore, there remain some inaccuracies in determining what children can and cannot do. This means that activities planned for children are not matching their needs well enough. Consequently, children do not make consistently good progress.
- Work in books and learning journals suggest that there are weaknesses in provision, especially in number and writing. For example, the most able children are not given activities to extend their knowledge of number. This hampers the progress they make.
- Children's mistakes are not routinely picked up by staff, or example correct letter formation and pencil grip. This means that children continue to make the same mistakes in their work.
- Published outcomes show that there have been year-on-year improvements in the number of children achieving a good level of development. In 2017, 68% of children achieved a good level of development compared with 64% in 2016 and 54% in 2015. Nevertheless, the school remains just below the national average.
- In 2017, disadvantaged children achieved well and were above the national average, especially in reading and writing.
- Leaders are providing support and guidance to staff in the early years. A local leader of education has recently started working with staff to improve teaching and the learning environment for children. It is too early to see the impact of this work on children's progress.
- The behaviour of children is typically good. This is because staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and there are well-established routines.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and welfare requirements in the early years provision are met fully.

School details

Unique reference number	138791
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	10045031

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	165
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Bridgid Allen
Principal	Janet Saunders
Telephone number	01173 532 902
Website	www.fromevaleacademy.co.uk
Email address	school@fva.cabot.ac.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 July 2014

Information about this school

- Frome Vale Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The academy is part of the Cabot Learning Federation.
- The principal took up the substantive post in June 2015.
- The interim vice-principal took up post in November 2017.
- An independent local leader of education is currently working with leaders to support staff in the early years.
- The academy has on site an alternative provision unit called the NEST which inspectors visited as part of the inspection.
- There is a breakfast club on site which inspectors visited as part of the inspection.
- The most recent published contextual information indicates that the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average.

- The most recent published contextual information indicates that the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and are supported by the school is above the national average. The pupils who are supported by an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic results in 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Due to significant weather disruption and subsequent school closures, there was a delay in the second day of the inspection being completed. There was a change in the team inspector for the second day, Catherine Leahy, Her Majesty’s Inspector.
- Inspectors observed lessons or part lessons, all of which were joint observations with the principal or interim vice-principal.
- Meetings were held with leaders, staff, members of the academy council and directors from the Cabot Learning Federation, including the chief executive officer. A meeting was held with the independent local leader of education.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection, including the school’s evaluation of its own performance and data relating to pupils’ attainment and progress. Inspectors also checked the effectiveness of the school’s safeguarding arrangements and attendance information.
- The inspection team scrutinised the quality of pupils’ work over time.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors took account of the 15 responses from staff questionnaires. They also considered the 17 responses to Parent View and the 16 free-text messages. Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the day.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Lisa Harford	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Leahy	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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