

St Catherine's Church of England Primary and Nursery School

Moorland Road, Launceston, Cornwall, PL15 7HX

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' attainment over time has been below national averages at the end of Year 2, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Achievement is not good by the end of Key Stage 1 because teachers' and pupils' expectations of what pupils should achieve are not always high enough.
- Pupils are not making good progress through Key Stage 1. This is because the advice given by teachers when marking pupils' work does not give pupils enough guidance or require them to make improvements quickly enough.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils' behaviour and contributions to learning are not always good. This is because learning activities do not stimulate pupils' interest and help pupils to think more about their learning.
- Improved teaching and additional support have not been working long enough to lift pupils' skills to a good level by the time pupils leave Year 2.
- Over time, leadership and management, including governance, have not focused strongly enough on dealing with instability in staffing and improving Key Stage 1 provision.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is good through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 and ensures pupils' good progress.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) and reading are taught well across the school.
- The school's work in keeping pupils safe is good. It is appreciated by parents who work well with the school to improve attendance.
- Staff promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Stability has been restored. Strengthened leadership and management, with more specifically-shared responsibilities, are bringing improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 21 lessons and the lead inspector was accompanied by the headteacher during several of these observations.
- The inspectors observed morning and lunch breaks, and also visited the breakfast club and attended two assemblies.
- A meeting was held with pupils on the school council and with a representative group of pupils. Many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes.
- Inspectors also met with governors and the lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors held meetings with school staff, including senior leaders.
- The inspectors took account of 31 staff questionnaires and spoke informally with a number of parents as they brought their children to school.
- The views of parents were also gathered from 25 parent responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, planning and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors also examined records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding policy, procedures and practice. The inspectors considered the school's sport premium action plan.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Smith

Additional Inspector

Marcia Headon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school staff is broadly average overall.
- The proportion of pupils needing additional support from outside the school or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- There is a broadly average proportion of pupils supported by additional government funding. This additional funding is for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are accommodated in a Nursery class and in a Reception class. Other pupils are taught in single-age classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has experienced significant changes in teaching staff, especially in Key Stage 1, since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 by:
 - teachers always providing work that stimulates pupils' interest in learning and helps pupils, including the most able, reach the levels of which they are capable
 - improving the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work, making sure that pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve and that pupils make the necessary improvements.
- Raise pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing, especially by the end of Key Stage 1, by:
 - raising teachers' and pupils' expectations of what pupils are expected to achieve
 - teachers making sure that the tasks given to pupils, especially those entitled to additional support, focus more strongly on what they need to learn next to progress well.
- Strengthen leadership, management and governance, particularly of Key Stage 1, by:
 - ensuring that the checking of pupils' progress is rigorous and that action is taken swiftly to stem any underachievement
 - developing the role of middle leaders to enable them to make a more effective contribution to improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because teaching over time in Key Stage 1 has not been consistently good enough to help pupils achieve well.
- Instability in staffing, which has contributed to inconsistent teaching, has not aided efforts to secure good progress. This is especially the case for pupils receiving additional support and those with most ability.
- Pupils' skills in writing and mathematics are improving, but are not yet good enough by the end of Year 2. This is because pupils are not always challenged or inspired by the work they are set in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils' reading skills are being developed with increasing effectiveness across the school. Although still not high enough at the end of Year 2, pupils' above average performance in Year 1 phonic screening checks reflects improvement. Pupils sustain good, and sometimes better, progress in reading as they move through Key Stage 2; this is now quickening progress in writing.
- Children enter the Nursery class in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those expected for their age, especially in aspects of language and personal development. Children make good progress through the Nursery and Reception classes, especially in developing self-confidence and the ability to learn and mix well with each other.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able, make good progress through Key Stage 2 because teachers set high expectations and challenge them at the right level. As a result, standards are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar good progress as their classmates because they receive effective additional support to improve their skills.
- Compared to other pupils, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 in 2013 who received additional assistance almost matched their peers in mathematics. Their attainment was half a term behind other pupils in reading and represented a substantial narrowing of the gap compared to the previous year. In writing, the gap of just under a term's progress still showed some previous underachievement. However, all gaps in attainment are now closing well in current year groups across Key Stage 2 in response to good teaching and support.
- At the end of Year 2 the gap in attainment between pupils receiving additional assistance and other pupils continues to represent one year's progress. This shows that gaps in pupils' writing and mathematics skills are not being closed as effectively as in Key Stage 2 and this requires improvement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because teaching in Key Stage 1 classes does not promote good learning and progress.
- This is because staff and pupils' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are not always high enough. In addition, teaching and the activities set for the pupils do not enthuse or challenge them sufficiently to work harder and to learn more quickly and effectively. As a consequence, some pupils lose interest, including the most able.
- At times, some pupils, including those receiving additional support, are slow to settle into their work and do not learn well enough. This occurred, for example, during a mathematics lesson in Year 2, where a lack of concentration by some pupils limited staff's efforts to extend their knowledge of time.
- Pupils' learning, especially in Key Stage 1 classes, is also constrained because pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work. For example, after teachers have marked and corrected their work in books, some pupils often repeat the same mistakes. This shows that teachers are not always setting high enough expectations and checking that improvements are

made quickly enough.

- Even so, pupils' reading skills and their ability to read to support their work in other subjects are improving across the school. This reflects teachers' and teaching assistants' effective teaching of phonics and reading, which is also underpinning the current drive to improve pupils' writing skills.
- Across the school, staff also provide good support for the emotional and behavioural needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Pupils learn consistently well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 classes because teachers and teaching assistants sustain their full engagement in activities. Staff also hold high expectations of behaviour and provide interesting and challenging work that encourages pupils to think and reflect on their learning.
- In Reception, children were enabled to write full sentences when challenged to think closely about particular words by the teacher. At the same time, children with particular language needs were enthused by the teaching assistant's imaginative use of a toy frog to learn letter sounds.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because some pupils in Key Stage 1 become distracted from learning.
- Mostly this occurs when teaching and learning activities fail to stimulate pupils' interest or when work does not meet their needs or challenge pupils enough. Occasionally it is because a few pupils choose to chatter rather than listen to adults or when other pupils are speaking, and this slows learning.
- School records and parents' views expressed in the school's own survey, undertaken in the autumn term 2013, show some incidents of misbehaviour over time. More recent records show reduced incidents of misbehaviour, with pupils responding well to the effective support they have received.
- Staff, governors' and parents' views made known to the inspectors indicate that behaviour has improved over the past year. Pupils also talk about improved behaviour and welcome the work of older pupils acting as 'Playground Pals' in helping everyone to experience a happy break time.
- When enthused by good teaching and lively activities, pupils' behaviour is consistently good and enriches their ability to learn well. Inspectors also noted the warm relationships and good manners shown by pupils in assembly and when moving around the school.
- These qualities are typically seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 classes. For example, children in the Nursery took turns in riding the large wheeled toys in the well-equipped outdoor area. Similarly, when challenged by the teacher's thought-provoking questions, a group of most able pupils in Year 6 willingly exchanged ideas and improved their understanding of descriptive words.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. When questioned, pupils say that the 'school is a happy, nice place to be'. They feel safe and talk knowledgeably about the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying.
- They say there is very little bullying at school, but that some pupils are silly at times. Pupils say that adults deal well with any incidents and use targets to help pupils improve their behaviour.
- Strong guidance from the headteacher and closer links with parents have secured average levels of attendance. The pupils' good punctuality and improved attendance are also helping to quicken pupils' progress.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because not enough attention has been given to improving teaching and learning during a period of staffing instability in Key Stage 1.
- Leaders' and managers', including governors', checks on the impact of teaching on pupils'

progress in Key Stage 1 have lacked rigour. For example, unlike in Key Stage 2, they have not ensured that additional support for pupils helps them to attain as well as their peers.

- Leaders link decisions about teachers' training needs to school priorities for development. This has helped to sustain good teaching through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, but has not been used well enough to strengthen teaching in Key Stage 1.
- With stability in staffing now restored, relatively new middle managers are beginning to contribute more effectively to school improvement. This is seen in pupils' improved reading skills. Alongside the high level of staff morale evident in their responses to the questionnaire, these developments also reflect a refreshed drive to move forward.
- The increased number of pupils on course to reach above average standards at the end of Year 6 this year further demonstrates the school's capacity to improve.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and staff strive passionately to promote a caring atmosphere across the school. They work effectively to keep pupils safe. Staff treat pupils equally, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and do not tolerate discrimination. Leaders know that some pupils in Key Stage 1 could achieve better and, as improvements in reading show, are tackling this issue.
- The school provides a good range of learning activities, including educational visits and thought-provoking assemblies that strongly promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school makes good use of new sport funding to improve the teaching of sport and pupils' skills and fitness. Specialist guidance from local coaches has improved staff skills, for example in teaching swimming. This has increased the number of pupils able to swim 25 metres before they leave the school.
- Sports opportunities for younger pupils have also been increased and now include basketball. Leaders are checking the impact of these developments on pupils' health and already identify an increased number of younger pupils participating in sports clubs.
- The local authority has helped in sustaining strengths in teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. However, the light touch support provided since the previous inspection has not sufficiently promoted improvement in Key Stage 1.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors regularly visit the school to observe pupils' learning and to meet with parents, staff and pupils. Governors contribute to the caring atmosphere of the school and sustain pupils' safety effectively. Governors know how different groups of pupils achieve in relation to pupils in other schools and, for example, are clear about the positive steps taken to improve pupils' reading. Governors have helped to secure good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. For example, they have supported the more flexible deployment of the deputy headteacher to quicken the pace of improvement across Years 3 to 6. Governors know how additional funding is allocated and that it is used well in Key Stage 2 to lift pupils' skills. However, their checking of pupils' learning in Key Stage 1, particularly about the impact of additional funding in bridging gaps in pupils' skills, has not been good enough. This is also because their involvement in training, for example in how to consider teachers' pay and performance in relation to pupils' achievements, has been patchy. Governors make sure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112021
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	444034

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neville Helme
Headteacher	Sarah Chapman
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 March 2010
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