

St Issey Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112017
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	378403
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2012
Lead inspector	Paul Garvey

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Benwell
Headteacher	Susan Wilcock
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Paul Garvey

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited 11 lessons and observed four teachers. A number of lessons were also visited for shorter periods to gather other information. Additionally, the inspector met with pupils, members of staff, a representative from the local church and members of the governing body. A phone call was made to gather information from the school improvement partner. The inspector listened to pupils read and analysed work in pupils' books. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The school's work was observed and a variety of documentation was seen, including the school development plan, records of pupil progress, policies and school self-evaluation documents. The responses to 41 questionnaires from parents and carers were received and analysed, as well as those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

St Issey Church of England Primary is a much-smaller-than-average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British origin and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than that found nationally. The proportion of disabled pupils and of those who have special educational needs is similar to the national figures. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed, firstly on an acting basis in January 2010 and then as substantive headteacher in July 2010. There have been several appointments of new teaching staff during this time. The school meets the current floor standards. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award and the International Schools Award Foundation level. There are three classes in the school: a combined Reception and Year 1 class, a combined Year 2 and Year 3 class and a combined Year 4, 5 and 6 class.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school in which notable improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Recently, the rate of improvement has accelerated under the headteacher's outstanding leadership. She has galvanised the school community to focus intensively upon pupils' progress. The school's work is much appreciated by pupils and their parents and carers. Progress for all groups of pupils and in all years is now rapid, but this has not yet been maintained for a sufficiently long period for the school to be considered outstanding.
- Teaching is good and an increasing number of outstanding lessons are being taught. This has led to pupils' achievement being good. Not all teachers, however, are sufficiently flexible in changing lesson activities when progress is either more rapid, or slower, than their planning has allowed for.
- The school's curriculum supports the good progress in English and in mathematics for all groups of pupils. The curriculum, although good, does not always cater for every individual's needs.
- Leadership and management are good, particularly of teaching and learning, and recent teaching appointments have created an effective team in which leaders at all levels are responding to the headteacher's clear vision. Staff performance is managed skilfully. The governing body supports the school ably, through regular contact with staff and with the headteacher. This allows close monitoring of the school's activities and in consequence, support and challenge is offered appropriately.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong. This provides the basis for behaviour to be outstanding. The school's excellent pastoral care and caring ethos allow pupils to develop an excellent moral compass. Pupils are thus keen to don responsibilities and they support each other to the extent that instances of bullying are extremely rare. Pupils are kept outstandingly safe in this caring environment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, raise achievement to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers are able to respond to changing rates of pupils' progress, so that lessons can be re-shaped where necessary to bring about outstanding progress

- developing the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2, so that it is flexible enough to provide personalised learning for all pupils.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is improving rapidly and pupils are making good progress across the school from starting points that are often below average. Attainment on entry is rising, however, as a result of excellent partnership work with the on-site, privately run, pre-school. Careful monitoring and planning for individual needs allow for good progress across Reception. In a lesson, for example, where free-flow play followed a brisk and enthusiastic phonics (sounds and letters) session, staff expected children to initiate their own learning and organise their own play independently of adults. This they did and staff then assiduously recorded children's learning in order to use the information in the children's detailed learning journals to plan for the next day's activities. As a result, children's progress was rapid.

This increasingly rapid progress is now seen in all year groups. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average but current Year 6 pupils are attaining at higher levels. Attainment is also above average for disabled pupils and those with special needs and the school was able to identify striking examples of where support for these pupils and for pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable has led to outstanding progress. This improving rate of progress for all pupils was almost always confirmed in talking to parents and carers. Almost all parents and carers who returned a questionnaire rightly felt that their child was making good progress at the school.

Progress was outstanding where lessons were planned to accommodate individual needs and pupils' progress was closely monitored. For example, in a Year 4/5/6 mathematics lesson, pupils were measuring coordinates and perpendiculars. A wide range of activities enabled pupils of all abilities and ages to learn with others, but at their own pace. Imaginative use of information and communication technology (ICT), together with excellent support from the classroom assistant, saw pupils using both the classroom and the school hall to gather information and to learn outstandingly well. Pupils in Key Stage 1 were confident in being able to use their phonics knowledge to make good progress in their reading. This good acquisition of early reading skills enables standards in reading to be broadly average at the end of Year 2 and above average by the time pupils leave school.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection and those parents and carers who returned questionnaires almost all agree that their children are well taught. Teachers plan well to ensure equal opportunities for all groups of pupils and this leads to good and at times outstanding progress. However, lessons are not always designed to extend every individual's learning and thus the curriculum is not yet flexible enough to meet the personal needs of all pupils. In a mixed Year 2/3 class, careful planning engendered paired and group talk in which

pupils supported each other's learning particularly well. Rigorous checking of the progress of all pupils by the teacher and the teaching assistant followed. This allowed them to suggest ways that individual pupils could incorporate more advanced adjectives and more complex phrases into their writing drafts. Thus each pupil was able to make outstanding progress in extending their descriptive writing. In some lessons, teachers do not check upon the progress of all pupils as carefully as they could. As a consequence, they do not re-shape the lesson to take account of individuals' changing rates of learning and thus progress becomes limited.

The skilful use of ICT by teachers is contributing to the current rapid progress of learners. In a mixed Year 4/5/6 dance lesson, for example, pupils watched their previous efforts at creating a dance using a chair as a prop. Internet clips of other dancers using the same prop were then woven into the lesson and pupils were encouraged to incorporate new movements into their group's dance. By videoing their performance, the teacher was able to deepen pupils' understanding of choreography and their own analysis of their improved efforts demonstrated excellent learning had taken place. An after-school ICT club was seen to extend pupils' ICT skills. The first day of the inspection fell on St Piran's day and teachers took every opportunity to celebrate local culture and Christian teachings through the life and work of Cornwall's patron saint. This is an example of the good impact that teaching has on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and safety are outstanding over time. The school emphasises the need for all pupils to treat each other with the utmost respect, through an effective personal, health and social education programme, and this high degree of respect is modelled very well by adults. All parents and carers who completed the questionnaire said that pupils were kept very safe in the school and almost all said that standards of behaviour were typically of a high standard. This is supported by the inspection evidence. This was also echoed by pupils during discussions, who said that behaviour was typically of a high standard. Pupils said that they had appreciated an opportunity to learn about different types of bullying – for example cyber-, racial and gender bullying – from visitors to the school, but also told him that bullying is all but absent in their school community. 'Everyone is friends with everyone else here', and 'Teachers are always there to help and they really encourage us', were typical quotes from pupils.

If any incidents of poorer behaviour do occur, pupils say they are confident that they will be quickly dealt with. Excellent behaviour systems are understood by pupils, who are proud of the rewards they receive for good behaviour. As a consequence of being in such a friendly and emotionally secure environment, pupils' attendance is above average and they are eager to take on responsibilities. The playground ambassadors undertake their role in settling any disputes, or comforting any upset youngsters, very seriously. Younger pupils are appreciative of their help. Pupils take part in healthy after-school activities and enjoy their active play times. This has helped the school to achieve the Healthy Schools Award. An effective partnership with a local doctors' practice supports the school's efforts to provide a healthy education for its pupils.

Leadership and management

Since the previous inspection, the school has been transformed into an institution that is reaching for the highest standards. This has occurred under the leadership of an inspirational headteacher. One parent/carer commented, 'This is a fantastic, close-knit school and a wonderful start for any child in their school life.' Such a comment was typical of almost all parent and carers.

With good support from the governing body, a team has now been assembled which has quickly become adept at working together. Consequently, achievement for all groups of pupils is good. Equality of opportunity is therefore good and discrimination is tackled extremely well. Improvements in the quality of teaching have resulted from accurate monitoring. This has allowed for identification of individual needs and staff feel well supported in being able to pursue appropriate professional development opportunities to improve their classroom practice. All staff have had the opportunity to work with colleagues from other local schools to share ideas and to improve their teaching. Following recent appointments, leadership in all key stages and in all subjects is now strong, but improvements have not yet been sustained over time. Hence, leadership and management are good rather than outstanding. As a result of accurate self-evaluation and because of improvements effected since the previous inspection, capacity for further improvement is strong.

Relationships with parents and carers are extremely effective and are benefiting the pupils in terms of their work at home. For example, pupils' reading at home is boosting levels of attainment in literacy. There is impressive partnership work too with a range of outside agencies to provide outstanding support for those pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. The school site is very safe. Arrangements for safeguarding are robust and are given a high priority in the school.

Outstanding social, moral, spiritual and cultural education helps pupils to develop an acute sense of moral values and the excellent social skills which characterise relationships within the school. Pupils contributed Bible readings and their own prayers in collective worship. Opportunities for learning about other cultures and beliefs are addressed through aspects of the broad and balanced curriculum. For example, links with a multi-ethnic, inner-city school in Nottingham and a link to a school in India have helped pupils to understand how people in different areas live their lives. The latter link has contributed to the school gaining the International Schools Award Foundation level.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Issey Church of England Primary School, St Issey PL27 7RN

Thank you so much for making me feel welcome when I visited your school recently. You told me many of the good things about your school and I saw you enjoying your learning in class. I was very impressed by how much you enjoy taking part in lessons and how you always try to do your best.

I would like to tell you about what I found. Yours is a good school in which the rate of improvement has recently accelerated. For example, your school gives you an excellent moral and social education and that is why you get on so well with each other. You behave outstandingly well in school and you told me that you feel very safe in such a friendly place. Your spiritual education is also excellent and I saw you enjoying your collective worship. You learn about the lives of people in different areas to yours through your links to other schools and I saw you celebrating your local culture on St Piran's day. You are well taught and well cared for and, as a result, you attend school well. You told me how much you appreciate the help from your teachers and I would like to tell you that your school is well led.

Your headteacher and the staff are keen to make the school even better. To help them to do this, I have asked your teachers to check on your progress more often, so they can respond more quickly to the speed at which you are learning. I have also asked them to develop the school's curriculum so that the school can provide a special personal learning experience for every pupil.

I trust that you will all continue to behave exceptionally well and attend school regularly and I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Garvey
Lead inspector

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