

St Mary's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	111998
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	395403
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2012
Lead inspector	Stephen Dennett

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	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Owen
Headteacher	Hilary Tyreman
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Dennett

Additional Inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited eight lessons and parts of other lessons, and observed seven teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View questionnaire in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, listened to pupils' read and looked at policies, pupils' books, safeguarding records and evidence of the monitoring of teaching and learning. They examined 85 questionnaires from parents and carers, 71 from pupils in Key Stage 2 and 25 from staff.

Information about the school

St Mary's is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with minorities of Eastern European, Turkish and Asian origin. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average and has increased recently. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. There has been an increase in the number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, with both being above average. There are fewer girls at the school than boys. The proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than in Reception has increased recently. Pupils are taught in one mixed-age class and five single-age classes. Since the last inspection there have been some significant changes to staff, including the appointment of the present headteacher in 2010. There is a pre-school using the school building that is subject to a separate inspection. The governing body manages a breakfast club, which formed part of the inspection.

The school has the School Council Platinum Award, the Primary Science Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Plus status and the Sing-Up Gold Award. The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the minimum government expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

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

Key findings

- This is a good school that provides its pupils with a rich and engaging learning environment. It is not yet outstanding because there are some inconsistencies in progress made by a minority of pupils and occasionally the level of challenge in lessons is not appropriate for some. In addition, attendance rates have recently fallen below average.
- Pupils' attainment is broadly average at the end of both key stages, but their achievement is good because pupils make accelerated progress from their individual starting points. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, but there are a few pupils whose progress is slower, especially those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, because although barriers to their learning have been tackled robustly, this has not yet resulted in improved progress for this group.
- Teaching is good. Planning is of a consistently high quality throughout the school and lessons are frequently imaginative. Tasks are usually tailored to pupils' needs, but occasionally the level of challenge is too great for lower-attaining pupils. Assessment is used effectively to inform pupils of how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, the pupils enjoy learning and they all say they feel safe in school. Parents, carers and pupils say there is virtually no bullying and that minor incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils are polite and frequently help each other voluntarily. Despite the best efforts of the school, attendance levels are below average.
- The school is well led and managed. The effective monitoring of teaching and learning has led to improved attainment at Key Stage 1 and good achievement throughout the school. Staff performance is managed well. The actions taken by leaders and managers have led to measurable improvement in several areas. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is a very strong feature

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of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate the remaining inconsistencies in progress made by pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties by continuing to address existing barriers to learning and ensuring that their progress is the same as that of their peers.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that the levels of challenge for lower-ability pupils in all lessons are commensurate to their ability levels and prior learning.
- Improve attendance by ensuring that there is closer monitoring by the governing body and senior management and that challenging targets for improvement are set.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The significant changes to the composition of the school over the last few years, coupled with small cohorts, make the analysis of data over time difficult. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below those expected for their age. They make good progress to reach expected levels in most areas of learning by the end of the year. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, most groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are making good progress from their starting points. Gaps in learning have been closed, or are closing rapidly, for all but a few pupils. Underachievement at Key Stage 1 noted over the last few years has been addressed effectively and attainment is now broadly average in all subjects, including reading.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is also broadly average and rising. As a result of improved teaching throughout the school, attainment and progress has improved. A few pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are making slower progress because they have poor attitudes to learning and challenging behaviour patterns. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress, as do those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. The most-able pupils often make outstanding progress from their starting points.

The positive attitudes of pupils help them to enjoy learning and achieve well. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed their English lesson identifying adjectives and similes in their writing about a duck at sea. They enthusiastically worked in small groups using computers and made outstanding progress. Year 6 pupils made good progress in writing poems based on 'The magic of the brain' because the work was well matched to individual abilities and effectively challenged and fully engaged all of them. Pupils for whom English is an additional language invariably respond well to

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the learning activities presented to them. Pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school and apply these skills well in lessons. They also apply their mathematics skills well; for example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils showed that they were able to read data from a chart to work out the mode and mean.

Inspection findings that pupils' progress is good are confirmed by the work seen in their books, and further endorsed by the many positive responses of parents and carers who returned questionnaires.

Quality of teaching

Throughout the school, teachers have good relationships with pupils. Teaching has a strong effect on pupils' personal development. Teachers are good role models and use curriculum content well to extend learning of pupils' own faiths and also to teach about other faiths and cultures. Adults provide good support for pupils' learning and the quality of care is also good. Teachers use strategies for learning that match most pupils' individual needs, so that pupils learn well across the curriculum. The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is, in the main, effective, and teachers deploy teaching assistants well throughout the day to provide support.

All teaching is consistently good or better and some lessons include outstanding features. In a Year 2 English lesson, the teacher ensured that pupils learnt rapidly by identifying tight deadlines for all activities. Reinforcement of prior learning was provided and the teacher used deliberate 'mistakes' to check pupils' understanding, while actively involving them in the lesson. Teachers plan learning well and make good use of information and communication technology to make the experience interactive and enjoyable. Occasionally, in lessons where teaching is otherwise good, the level of challenge is too high for lower-ability pupils and, where this happens, these pupils become confused and their progress slows. Teachers consistently help pupils understand what they are to learn in lessons and how to improve. Targets are used well to motivate pupils and the marking of their work helps them know exactly how to get to the next level in their learning. Teachers use regular opportunities to develop pupils' reading skills, including sessions on phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in Key Stage 1 and guided reading sessions throughout the school. The inspectors' view that teaching is good endorses the views of parents, carers and pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

For almost all pupils, the behaviour and attitudes to learning seen during the inspection were good. Parents and carers, as well as pupils and staff, confirm that this is the normal situation in the school. The questionnaire responses from parents and carers about behaviour, attitudes and bullying were very positive, with a typical comment being, 'Pupils are unfailingly polite to me when I come into school.' Pupils say they feel very safe in school, a view shared by staff, parents and carers. Incidents and exclusions are rare and there is no evidence of bullying of any kind

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that is not dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils are aware of the dangers of internet use and cyber bullying, as well as other forms of bullying including prejudice-based harassment. The occasional incidents of challenging behaviour by pupils who have recently joined the school are managed well by staff to ensure that the learning of others is not disrupted. However, the school's work in removing barriers to learning for these pupils is fairly recent and they are not yet making the same good progress as their peers. The school is a very harmonious community with good relationships throughout that effectively promote learning and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance has declined recently and is currently below average, partly because of a virus epidemic in the Spring, but also because many parents or carers take their children on holiday during term time. Most pupils are punctual, but there are a few who are persistently late to school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, senior leadership team and the governing body provide good educational direction to the work of the school. Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken effective action to address all the identified areas for improvement and have managed the considerable changes that have taken place since then well. Underachievement in Key Stage 1 has been addressed robustly and standards have risen as a result. The focus on improving reading has also been successful, with nearly all pupils making better progress than typically expected. Good professional development is provided for all staff and this has led to better quality teaching and improved progress by pupils. Consequently, the school shows capacity for further improvement. The governing body is well led and provides good support and challenge to the school. Governors are strongly involved in monitoring progress and have a programme of regular visits and established links with aspects of the school's work. However, there has been insufficient monitoring of attendance and action to improve it, with the result that it has declined recently. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and its development plan demonstrates the clear vision of leaders towards even better outcomes.

The good relationships throughout the school mean that adults know every pupil well. The school has experienced a recent influx of pupils joining at times other than at the beginning of Reception, some of them being at the very early stages of learning English. Good systems are in place to ensure these pupils are quickly integrated into the school. The school has worked hard to ensure that all pupils have equal access to all the school has to offer and the result is a school that is highly inclusive. Safeguarding requirements are met with a good focus on health and safety.

The curriculum has a strong focus on English and mathematics as a basis for improving academic standards. Effective use is made of information and communication technology in most lessons. Breadth and balance across learning opportunities are extended through topic work and through subjects such as music and religious education. The curriculum is adapted well to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as providing opportunities for

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those with specific gifts and talents. The range of learning opportunities during and after the school day makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, especially through links with the church community and other schools. The breakfast club provides a good service for parents and carers and pupils enjoy the opportunity to socialise. The school has good relationships with the pre-school on the site and there is good liaison between this setting and the school's Early Years Foundation Stage team.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



29 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's CofE Primary School, Penzance TR18 4HP

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you, reading the questionnaires many of you completed and looking at the work you do. Your school provides you with a good education.

There are many things we admired about your school and these are a few of them.

- Nearly all of you make at least good progress because teaching is good and those who need extra help are given it.
- You enjoy coming to school where you all work and play well together.
- You behave well and know how to keep each other safe.
- You are well cared for in school.
- Your school is led and managed well.

For the school to improve further, we have asked your headteacher and the staff to do three things.

- Help those who find it difficult to manage their behaviour make better progress and overcome the things that stop them learning.
- Make sure that those of you the find learning a little difficult at times always have work that you can understand and do.
- Help everyone be on time to school and improve your attendance.

All of you can help your school to move forward by continuing to work hard. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Dennett
Lead inspector

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