

St Buryan Academy Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136269
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	395555
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2012
Lead inspector	Alex Baxter

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

Type of school	Academy Converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anita George
Headteacher	Janet Pascoe
Date of previous school inspection	No previous inspection
School address	St Buryan Penzance Cornwall TR19 6BB
Telephone number	01736 810480
Fax number	01736 810611
Email address	head@st-buryan.cornwall.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	5–6 July 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alex Baxter

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited 12 lessons taught by six teachers and listened to pupils reading. The inspector also observed break times, breakfast and after-school clubs and attended an assembly and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. He observed the school's work, and looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. The inspector analysed 53 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those returned by 59 pupils and seven members of staff.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below the national average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the normal times is above average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class. A part-time pre-reception group has recently been established within this class; as it is managed by the governing body it was included in this inspection. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school converted to Academy Status in September 2010 and the headteacher commenced her duties in April 2011.

The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

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	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- St Buryan is a good school, where pupils achieve well. It is an improving school where pupils benefit from close individual attention and have their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promoted extremely well. The school's community ethos and highly stimulating range of extra-curricular activities are particular strengths. The school is not yet outstanding because pupils' independent and self-evaluative learning skills are not systematically developed as pupils move through the school.
- Children make an excellent start in Reception, where joyful learning significantly extends social and communication skills. Pupils make good progress through the school and by the end of Year 6, attainment is above average. However, most pupils attain even higher standards in reading and speaking and listening.
- Teaching is typically good and has some highly effective features. Detailed lesson planning, high quality marking and excellent deployment of teaching assistants ensure pupils are challenged at the right level. Although teachers use questioning well to draw new learning from pupils' ideas, pupils' ability to assess learning and to set up lines of enquiry for themselves are not emphasised fully in all classes.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Comments from the vast majority of parents, carers and pupils fully support this view. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. Consistently above-average attendance also shows the pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Leaders and the governing body have a clear vision for the school. Strategic decisions, such as gaining academy status and staff appointments, including the headteacher, accompanied by effective self-evaluation and the effective management of performance, have enabled the school to emerge well from a period of significant change. The positive impact of the outstanding creative curriculum, more recently in advancing pupils' writing skills, further illustrates a

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secure capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By April 2013, lift the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - more systematically developing the pupils' independent thinking and self-directed learning skills as they move through the school
 - involving pupils more specifically in reflecting about the quality of their own work and that of others and expressing and recording their views.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are very pleased with how well their children achieve and pupils too are proud of their achievements. Attainment is mostly above average in English and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6, which reflects good achievement. Observations of lessons also show even higher levels of skill in reading and in speaking and listening. In addition, following a strong focus on writing, by Year 2 pupils write in clearly discernable and meaningful sentences and in Year 6 pupils' story character descriptions show above-average levels of expression. Pupils at both key stages show similar proficiency in using and applying numbers to solve mathematical problems. However, pupils' independent learning, including their self-evaluation skills, is less advanced.

Following a dip in attainment at Year 6 last year, inspection findings show that pupils' individual needs are now more sharply targeted. As a result, school assessments, current learning in lessons and pupils' recorded work show that all pupils, including those who have more recently joined the school, are making at least good progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers because of the additional individual support they receive.

Children join the school now as part of the pre-reception group, with skills matching those normally expected. They make excellent progress in Reception, where they communicate supportively with each other and develop very positive attitudes, which support future progress. For example, children rapidly develop their understanding of letter sounds, taking turns to read word cards accurately so that they can be placed in the 'Treasure Chest'. Good and sometimes even better progress continues through the school as pupils improve their skills and consistently apply themselves to the challenging tasks presented to them. For example, pupils of all abilities in Year 5 skilfully drew information about different places on the Scilly Isles from netbook computers, added their own first-hand experiences, and produced persuasively written paragraphs. Similarly, pupils in Years 3 and 4 discussed how to gain the reader's full attention when writing a record and showed impressive understanding of

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how this could be achieved by using a variety of words to extend sentences.

Reading is a strength throughout the school. From a very early age, children learn how to sound out letters and become competent at blending them together to read new words. Very frequent opportunities to read, enjoy and talk about books at school and at home enable pupils to enhance their reading skills systematically as they mature through the school. As a result, by the end of Years 2 and 6 reading skills are significantly above average.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good and almost all parents, carers and pupils who completed an inspection questionnaire agree that pupils are well taught and make good progress. Following a period of staff change, the quality of teaching is improving impressively. This year, the systematic teaching of reading (in Year 6 through a carousel of guided reading activities), more time for writing and the development of 'working wall' displays to share learning objectives with the pupils are accelerating progress. More pupils are now attaining above expected levels of skill because of teachers' continuing strengths in deploying teaching assistants to meet pupils' individual needs and in using assessments to match learning to their differing abilities. By these means, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught and also learn well.

Other attributes of teaching include excellent management of pupils' behaviour, very supportive relationships and the development of new learning from an outstanding range of curricular activities. The enthusiasm of pupils returning from camps attended during the week of the inspection demonstrated the positive impact of exciting events experienced on the Scilly Isles, at St Ives Bay Holiday Park and at Newquay Zoo, which also enriched pupils' academic and personal development. Additionally, lessons in Years 1 to 6 revealed the deeper level of understanding achieved by pupils through such first-hand learning. For example, pupils in Year 1 were clearly motivated to explore their thoughts about being excited and feeling 'super-doooper,' and pupils in Year 2 understood the relevance of 'time connectives' in writing about camp.

Children in the pre-reception and Reception groups also benefit from a wide range of stimulating activities, enabled by the recently constructed conservatory. Outdoor learning is given good emphasis, where a carousel of physical activity – involving riding and sharing large wheeled toys and playing with balls and hoops – promotes enjoyment, skills and fitness very successfully.

Staff give good quality and often individual oral advice, which, alongside high quality written marking, provides clear guidance to pupils about what needs to be done next to improve their work. Although learning continues at a good pace, at times there is too much emphasis on pupils completing tasks set by the teacher or listening to the teacher evaluating their work. This means that the pupils' independence in considering how to proceed for themselves and with each other is developed less

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consistently.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Throughout the inspection pupils behaved exceptionally well. To their great credit pupils in Years 1 to 4, even when very tired and ready for home after camp, sustained concentration, gave of their best and behaved impeccably in the lessons observed. The pupils live up to high expectations and respond very positively to the excellent relationships and sensitive support offered by all those who work at the school. School records show that there are very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour and that pupils' behaviour is typically excellent over time. The pupils interviewed confirmed that poor behaviour is very rare and is dealt with swiftly by staff. A small number of parents and carers expressed concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, but the very large majority painted an opposite picture reflecting what the inspector saw. Pupils show a good understanding of the different types of bullying, for example cyber, racist and verbal abuse, and are adamant that there is virtually no bullying and that they feel very safe at school. Parents', carers' and pupils' responses in the questionnaires also confirmed that pupils are kept very safe in school.

Pupils' consistently above-average attendance, their early arrival at breakfast club and willingness to join the after-school club also show their love of school. As one pupil said, typically reflecting the views of others, 'Our after-school and breakfast clubs are very special because there's a wide range of things to do and we are very well looked after.'

Leadership and management

The well-respected headteacher receives good support from colleagues in sustaining a determined drive for improvement. Good relationships with parents and carers and close knowledge of each pupil mean that self-evaluation and learning activities are effectively targeting the right priorities. As one parent wrote, reflecting the views of others who also appreciate the fact that staff accompany children on residential and other visits, 'I think it's fantastic that the staff give up their time to provide our children with such a wonderful opportunity.'

Since becoming an academy, leaders, including members of the governing body, have managed the additional funds effectively. Despite a period of staff change, the number of staff has been increased and now offers pupils more individual attention. New initiatives, such as the introduction of new pre-reception provision and a strengthened whole-school focus on pupils' writing, are accelerating pupils' progress. Effective leadership of teaching, allied to professional development, have ensured that the quality of teaching is good and continues to improve. This illustrates that the school has strong capacity to continue to improve.

The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well and sustains exemplary adherence to safeguarding procedures, such as staff recruitment checks. Over the past 12

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months, particularly since the appointment of the new headteacher, members of the governing body have become more proficient in holding the school to account to secure good value for money. The high quality of staff assessments of pupils' progress means that pupils benefit from equal opportunity, have their differing needs met and are kept free from discrimination. For example, effective support for pupils new to the school, and for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs enables them to progress as well as other pupils.

The curriculum is outstanding because of the way the wealth of first-hand learning experiences strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, over the past few weeks alone, pupils in different parts of the school have investigated the Olympic heritage, tracked and celebrated the journey of the Olympic Torch and have experienced and enjoyed memorable residential camps. The benefits of this form of activity are made clear by one pupil who said, 'We enjoy lots of trips where we can experience things at first hand instead of just imagining them.' Assembly themes and visitors to the school, such as a representative of the British Sikh community, further extend pupils' cultural understanding and prepare them well for the future.

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.



6 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Buryan Academy Primary School, Penzance, TR19 6BB

I really enjoyed my visit which took place at a particularly busy time for the school. In thanking you for the respect and kindness that you showed to me I must also express my admiration for the way so many of you returned from camp and other visits so positively. I know that those of you in Years 1 to 4 who returned from camp on Friday must have been very tired, nevertheless you concentrated and worked hard in the lessons that I observed. Throughout the inspection I was extremely impressed by your excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning and school. You will be pleased to know that I agree with you and your parents and carers that St Buryan Academy is a good school. Additional thanks to those of you that I talked to, particularly the group of Years 5 and 6 pupils that I interviewed who made it clear that you enjoy an excellent range of activities and feel very safe at school. Your responses in the questionnaires and those of most of your parents and carers made it very clear that you love coming to school because of the many friends that you make and because of the caring support that you receive from all the staff.

These are some of the other things I liked about your school.

- Children make an extremely positive start to school in pre-reception and Reception and pupils achieve well by the time they leave. Many of you become excellent at reading, speaking and listening.
- The teachers speed up your progress and enthuse you greatly by taking learning outside the classrooms into the school grounds, the locality and on camps.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors make sure that you are treated and respected as individuals and learn well, mostly in small classes.

The headteacher, staff and governors work very well with your parents and carers and share a strong determination to keep the school improving. To assist in this process, I have asked the teachers to help you to learn more independently and to develop your ability to check your own and each other's work.

You can help by thinking for yourselves and continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter
Lead inspector

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