

St Stephen's (Saltash) Community Primary School

Long Park Road, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4AQ

Inspection dates 13–14 September 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Nearly all pupils make good progress in reading, writing, communication and numeracy.
- Standards have risen steadily over the last three years and are currently broadly average in English and above average in mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from generally below expected starting points.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school and some teaching is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and provide lessons that are interesting and help pupils to learn well.
- All pupils clearly enjoy school and take part in lessons with enthusiasm. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Attendance is high and nearly all pupils arrive punctually. Pupils are safe and well looked after.
- The headteacher, assistant headteachers and governors provide an effective leadership team with high expectations for the further improvement of the school.
- The actions taken to improve teaching through robust monitoring and the use of performance management systems have been highly successful. Previously inadequate teaching has been eliminated.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few pupils in the lower junior department have a poor understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics).
- The progress made by pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties in writing requires improvement.
- A small proportion of teaching requires further improvement by ensuring that all pupils always have work to do that is well matched to their needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior and middle leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, one other governor and members of the school management team.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and evidence relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Stephen Dennett, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Marion Hobbs	Additional inspector
Robert Arnold	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The number of pupils on roll has fallen slightly since the school was last inspected in 2010. The school is currently larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average.
- Around a sixth of pupils are identified as disabled or with special educational needs, which is below the national average. Of these pupils, half are supported on school action and half on school action plus; one pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils supported on school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Pupils' special educational needs mainly relate to specific learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorders, speech, language and communication difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups, mainly of mixed African and White or Asian origins. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a number of recent awards, including the Eco School's Silver Award and the Cornwall PADL (Promoting Active Democracy Loudly) School Council Award.
- There is privately run, pre-school provision on the school site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards of reading and writing in Years 3 and 4 by:
 - identifying those pupils who have weak phonics skills
 - providing focused teaching and targeted support for these pupils so that the remaining gaps in their understanding are closed rapidly.
- Improve the support for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties so that they make better overall progress, particularly in writing by:
 - conducting further analysis of the barriers to learning that are preventing them make progress
 - providing additional specialist teaching for these pupils, particularly in their understanding of phonics and sentence construction.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good throughout the school by:
 - building on the outstanding practice already in place
 - ensuring that the work given to pupils is appropriate to their current needs and builds effectively on their prior learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the school with skills that are generally below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress through the school and by the time they leave in Year 6, their attainment is broadly average in English and above average in mathematics.
- Gaps in learning, which were evident in the 2011 national tests and teachers' assessments, have been closed for nearly all groups of pupils. Boys have now caught up with girls and there is no significant difference in their performance.
- There was evidence in 2011 that more-able pupils were underperforming, but now these pupils have made accelerated progress, with some making twice the expected progress in mathematics.
- Most groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, make better progress than that expected nationally. Most disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress, although a few pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties are making slow progress in writing. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their acquisition of the language as well as other aspects of their learning.
- Pupils communicate well and speak clearly and with expression when explaining their work in lessons.
- Most pupils read well and widely, although a minority of pupils in the lower junior classes have a poorly developed understanding of letters and their sounds, which has a detrimental effect on both their reading and writing. Overall, pupils' standards of reading are good at both key stages.
- Standards of writing generally develop well through the school and pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are consistently good in all classes. Older pupils use a good range of vocabulary when interviewing each other as part of their Victorian project, for example. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and use imaginative and varied vocabulary. Standards of spelling are good, except for a minority of pupils in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils' numeracy skills develop well across the school. Younger pupils have good basic numeracy skills, which they use effectively in a variety of situations to solve problems. Older pupils are very adept at manipulating numbers and often make very rapid progress in lessons. They quickly apply what they have learned to make accurate estimates when carrying out four-figure subtraction, for example.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The overall quality of teaching over time is good, with some examples of outstanding teaching in upper Key Stage 2.
- In many lessons where pupils make good progress, assessment information is used well to ensure that work is carefully matched to pupils' differing abilities. A range of interesting activities motivates pupils to learn and teachers use effective strategies to develop pupils' social skills.
- Frequently, the pace of lessons is brisk, so that learning is rapid and pupils quickly acquire new skills. Effective plenary sessions review what pupils have learned and this enables them to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Occasionally, teachers do not provide the younger pupils in Key Stage 2 with sufficient guidance when giving them work to do. When this happens, pupils lose interest and stop working. Also, some of the tasks do not take sufficient account of pupils' prior learning and current needs with the result that more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- All teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise, which they use effectively to develop pupils' skills in literacy. They provide a wide range of activities that promote pupils' vocabulary, confidence when speaking and writing skills. Reading is promoted effectively through guided reading sessions and the newly refurbished libraries encourage pupils to

read widely.

- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning by supporting pupils in lessons and small withdrawal groups. They also take effective lessons in design and technology as part of the school's strategy to provide teachers with planning, preparation and assessment time.
- Teachers and teaching assistants generally support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs well in lessons. They usually have tasks that are well matched to their needs, but a few pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties do not have sufficient specialist help to overcome their barriers to writing effectively.
- Marking is used effectively throughout the school and there is consistent practice in all classes. This enables pupils to have a good understanding of how well they have performed and the next steps they need to take to improve their work. Most older pupils have a good understanding of the level at which they are working.
- Homework is appropriate and successfully builds on what pupils have learned in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school. They have positive attitudes to work and enthusiastically join in lessons.
- Nearly all pupils were insistent that there was no bullying in the school and all said they felt safe. This was endorsed by the parents and carers spoken to during the inspection and from the online questionnaire (Parent View). Staff also agreed that behaviour was good and that pupils were consistently polite.
- Behaviour is managed consistently well by all staff, including midday supervisors. The school rules and procedures are applied consistently and it is evident from records of incidents and exclusions that behaviour has improved considerably over the last three years.
- The few pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties are managed well. The school has a good track record in reintegrating pupils with challenging behaviour. Pupils with attention deficit disorder are also managed well.
- Attendance has also improved dramatically over the last two years, moving from well below to well above average. Nearly all pupils arrive at school on time and the incidence of persistent non-attendance has been reduced to negligible levels.
- Pupils are confident, well-balanced individuals who are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, assistant headteachers and governors consistently communicate high expectations and an ambition to see the school improve. This is also shared by staff and the pupils themselves.
 - As a result of concerted and effective action by the governing body and senior management, teaching is good and any inadequate teaching has been eliminated. Performance management and professional development are used well to promote good teaching and are closely matched to the school's targets for improvement as well as teachers' training needs.
 - The school has robust procedures to evaluate its performance and consults widely with pupils, staff and parents and carers. Detailed analysis of pupils' performance is used to set challenging targets for improvement. Staff monitor each pupil's progress carefully and this information is used to ensure that no pupils fall behind in their learning.
 - The school has a well-thought-out strategy to promote literacy which ensures that all teachers are sufficiently well trained to deliver the curriculum effectively.
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■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body systematically challenges and supports the professional management of the school through regular meetings, visits, monitoring of lessons and the use of parental questionnaires.
 - Governors are proactive in establishing priorities for improvement and have taken a lead role in dealing with poor teaching and pupils' underachievement.
 - Highly effective use has been made of performance management systems to ensure that the targets set for school improvement have been carried out.
 - The governing body has made effective use of the local authority school improvement team and a consultant to help it address the issues that self-evaluation has identified.
 - Effective sub-committees oversee every aspect of the school's work and ensure that it meets statutory requirements, including those relating to safeguarding. They also ensure that resources, including financial resources, are used effectively.
 - Effective use has been made of the pupil premium to overcome most barriers to learning.
- The imaginative school curriculum provides a range of interesting activities that are well matched to the needs of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, including a good emphasis on the arts and music. It is also effective in promoting positive behaviour and a good understanding of health and safety.
- The school places a suitable emphasis on equality of opportunity, so that no groups are disadvantaged. The curriculum and building have been adapted appropriately to ensure that all pupils have equal access to all the school offers.
- The school works well with parents and carers. The school website is useful in communicating with parents and carers and most of those spoken to say they are kept well informed. This was also reflected in the responses to the online questionnaire. Parents and carers say that the reports they receive on their children's progress are informative and accurate.
- The school works effectively with other schools and organisations, including the on-site, pre-school provision, which is privately managed.
- The school works well with the local community, including the parish church, the Saltash May Fair and Christmas lantern parade. It also has benefited from involvement with the town band, with many pupils taking up brass instrument lessons as a result.
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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	1110966
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	405366

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	274
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Willcocks
Headteacher	Martin Watkins
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 December 2010
Telephone number	01752 843561
Fax number	01752 849729
Email address	secretary@st-stephens-salt.cornwall.sck.uk

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