

St Just Foundation Trust School

Bosorne Road, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19 7JU

Inspection dates 7–8 November 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well in this school because teaching is typically good.
- Strong teaching in Years 4 to 6 successfully develops pupils' self-evaluation skills and their ability to learn independently.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in their speaking and listening, independent learning and mathematical skills.
- All adults working in the school value pupils' efforts, and promote excellent behaviour, exemplary relationships, and very positive attitudes to learning.
- High-quality care, guidance and support keep pupils happy and safe.
- The headteacher's strong drive and ambition for further improvement are fully supported by the school's community.
- The school has developed very supportive links with parents and carers, partner schools and the local community. These links are used to enhance the rich quality of the curriculum, stimulating pupils' successful learning and leading to full enjoyment of school.
- Teamwork across the school has been strengthened, leading to a faster pace of improvement. This is seen, especially, in the way teachers use their assessment of pupils' skills to plan lessons that build more effectively on pupils' previous learning. This is helping to raise pupils' achievement.
- Governors have improved the way they carry out their checking of the effectiveness of the school. They have made a strong contribution to ensuring the safeguarding of pupils and have helped to secure good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The pupils' writing skills, especially handwriting, are not always emphasised or developed quickly enough in Years 1 and 2.
- There is some inconsistency in the way learning activities and a few whole-class lesson introductions extend pupils' individual skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 20 lessons. The headteacher accompanied the lead inspector during several of these observations.
- The inspection team observed morning playtime and lunch breaks, attended an assembly and visited story-time settings. They also visited the breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with members of the school council, and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes. Inspectors also met with governors and spoke informally with a number of parents and carers as they brought their children to school. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with school staff, including senior and middle managers.
- The inspection team took account of 34 parents' responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection. They also received responses to 21 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the the school's own data of pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Marcia Headon

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is below average in size.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is broadly average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is slightly above average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is comprised of one Reception class. All other classes through the school are single-age classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- On the first of November 2012 the school changed its category from Community to Foundation status and became a member of the Penwith Education Trust, which is a partnership of 12 schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress in writing in Years 1 and 2 by teachers:
 - devoting more time and attention to demonstrating and instilling good handwriting skills in their pupils
 - involving pupils more in evaluating and developing these writing skills for themselves
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write about their freely chosen learning activities in Reception and Year 1.
- Move the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all activities more consistently meet pupils' differing needs and abilities
 - making sure that lesson introductions are more focused and succinct, so that they hold the attention of pupils, and more rapidly engage them in their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Above average levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 reflect good and improved achievement since the previous inspection. School assessments of pupils' progress show that the proportion of pupils making expected and better than expected progress compares well with the national picture and continues to rise quickly.
- Pupils' speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and independent learning skills, including their ability in using computers, are well developed throughout the school. Pupils' writing skills are less well developed, especially in Years 1 and 2. Nevertheless, effective reorganisation of staffing, together with raised expectations, has led to pupils generally making good progress, including in Years 1 and 2.
- Children generally enter the school in Reception with skills and abilities that match those typically expected for their age, but at times language and communication skills vary significantly.
- Children make good progress in Reception, quickly gaining in self-confidence and developing strong social skills. They also acquire a good understanding of phonics (how letters sound), which underpins the effective development of their reading skills and continues throughout the school. However, writing skills are not always emphasised or developed quickly enough. At times, the emphasis placed on developing pupils' handwriting, especially in Years 1 and 2, varies and slows the pace of improvement.
- Assessments of pupils' progress in all classes show that earlier identification of pupils' needs, and increased assistance for pupils supported by pupil premium funding and those with special educational needs, is helping these pupils to achieve as well as other pupils. The needs of more-able pupils are also well provided for, ensuring that they also make good progress.
- Progress throughout Key Stage 2 is securely good, and continues to improve, as pupils systematically become better at learning independently. For example, in one Year 3 lesson pupils offered perceptive ideas about why some rocks are harder than others, one boy even using terms such as 'matter' and 'mass'. In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils use writing 'tool kits' effectively to evaluate and improve work for themselves.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Exemplary staff role models, excellent management of pupils' behaviour and a stimulating range of learning activities underpin pupils' eager engagement in learning across the school.
- The successful development of pupils' self-evaluation skills and frequent opportunities for pupils to think and reflect are consistent strengths in Years 4 to 6, which further enhance pupils' commitment to learning and drive their achievement.
- A strong drive to raise standards in mathematics has significantly improved teaching and learning in this subject over the past year. Improvements have included the effective use of pupil premium funding and voluntary support to provide additional one-to-one and small-group adult guidance. Pupils readily talk about this improvement and say, 'When we learn we do it in interesting ways.' Parents and carers too expressed appreciation of the individual support their children receive. Effective teaching is also seen in the neat, accurate and carefully marked work in pupils' books, which promotes pupils' progress.
- Mathematics lessons proceed at a brisk pace, seen, for example, in a Year 4 lesson, where challenging targets set by the teacher were very successful in helping to develop pupils' understanding of subtraction.
- Teachers, with the capable support of their assistants, teach reading well and take every opportunity to develop pupils' skills throughout the curriculum. Staff also promote speaking and listening skills well, especially by valuing pupils' contributions and weaving them effectively into

their questioning to foster new learning. On a few occasions though, discussions at the beginning of lessons continue for too long and do not always engage all pupils to equally good effect in their learning. Good teaching in Reception enhances the children's enjoyment of school. By providing an engaging and stimulating range of activities, for example, searching for letter shapes in the 'muddy pool' and working together in the 'post office', teachers quickly develop the children's ability to learn independently as well as with others.

- Teaching is mostly good in Years 1 and 2, because teachers have improved their teaching of speaking and listening and phonics and now use assessment more effectively to check pupils' learning.
- In Years 3 to 6, good and often outstanding teaching gets the best out of pupils and leads to an acceleration in their progress. This is largely because teachers' high expectations challenge pupils to find things out and think for themselves. Teachers also use interesting topics to successfully extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson the teacher's insistence that pupils reflect about and explain their ideas greatly enriched the quality of their writing about the creation of the universe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' exemplary attitudes to learning are strengths in all classes and make significant contributions to their successful learning. For example, during an English lesson in Year 6 pupils eagerly offered perceptive thoughts about the horrors of trench warfare during the First World War, for example, describing the emptiness and desolation that followed each battle.
- Inspectors observed outstanding behaviour in all parts of the school, with pupils of all ages happily learning in classrooms and playing joyfully with their many friends at break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils, parents and carers, staff and governors overwhelmingly describe a step-by-step improvement in pupils' behaviour since the previous inspection with pupils expressing great confidence in 'very caring staff'.
- This significant improvement in pupils' behaviour in response to rigorous and thorough actions of staff and close communication with parents and carers is also evident in the school's detailed records of the effective support offered to pupils. Essentially these relate to a small number of pupils with emotional and behavioural needs who are now successfully included in all school activity.
- Pupils say: 'We feel very confident to speak to a teacher if we are upset' and 'We feel very safe here', and demonstrate a secure understanding of how to stay safe and how to support each other. Pupils know about the different types of bullying, for example, computer cyber-bullying, and are adamant that bullying is now rare in the school and that if it did happen then the teachers would 'sort it out' very quickly.
- Pupils are proud of their school, often spontaneously applauding each other's contributions in lessons. They show that they appreciate other pupils' awards given out in assemblies, and also during lessons.
- Inspectors were impressed with the pupils' politeness and good manners, especially when stepping back or holding doors to allow adults to move through the school and even, at times, applauding others for showing such warm consideration to visitors.
- The pupils sustain above average attendance and good punctuality, and are fully involved in a wide range of after-school clubs. They show their great enjoyment of school and illustrate the school's strong and supportive partnership with parents and carers.

The leadership and management are good

- The highly experienced headteacher leads a strong commitment to continued improvement that is fully shared by all staff. With good support from senior colleagues and governors, she has steadily developed an effective team approach to monitoring and developing the school.
- This has enabled the school to make good improvement since the previous inspection, notably in securing accurate assessments of the pupils' skills, and in making sure that early identification of pupils' needs and timely additional support more consistently promote their good progress.
- Good development and maintenance of the school's facilities and resources reflect secure financial management and the capacity to bring further improvement. This is found, for example, in the effective use of pupil premium funding to boost pupils' numeracy skills. However, steps taken to use additional funding to develop pupils' writing skills have not been in place long enough to raise skills quickly enough in all classes.
- Because staff are valued members of a team, they are all enthusiastic and contribute to a high level of morale. Increasingly they share their expertise and sustain a rich curriculum, which makes pupils' time at school so productive. The varied programme of residential visits to the Isles of Scilly and the Roseland and Delaware Camps, visits from storytellers and thought-provoking topics such as the First World War, also promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- Staff sustain a strong commitment to inclusion. All pupils, especially those with special educational and emotional needs, are valued equally and supported by high-quality care. Very secure safeguarding procedures include stringent staff checks and regularly updated site security. This, together with excellent staff role models, which support pupils' exemplary behaviour and attitudes to learning, are significant strengths.
- The local authority has contributed well to developing shared leadership and improved teaching and now provides 'light-touch' and 'bought-in' support.

■ The governance of the school:

The governing body's improved systems for checking the school's effectiveness have strengthened their knowledge of the quality of teaching and how it promotes pupils' learning. For example, regular visits to the school, discussions with staff and detailed reports from the headteacher have secured governors' ability to question and support the headteacher effectively. The knowledge gathered has enabled them to contribute well to the appointment of new staff and to develop and deploy staff efficiently. This is particularly the case in their effective use of pupil premium funding to facilitate individual support for pupils and raise achievement in mathematics to close the gap with other pupils. Reports from senior staff, which include data and an analysis of pupils' progress, also enable governors to use performance management effectively to inform salary progression. As a result they have supported staff training and the sharing of leadership responsibilities, which have improved provision, notably in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs. The governing body is fully involved in forming the strategic development of the school. The recent decision to join a partnership of schools, for example, seeks to widen leadership expertise and to extend links with the local community and further widen pupils' learning activities.

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	111801
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	401203

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Hall
Headteacher	Diane O'Brien
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2010
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