

# St Levan Community Primary School

The Bottoms, Penzance, TR19 6HD

**Inspection dates** 20–21 November 2012

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory                | 3        |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good                        | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The teaching of mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2, has not had a strong enough focus on the basic number skills. Pupils are not able to apply these skills well enough to achieve well in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is not strong enough to ensure good progress for all pupils. Teachers are not responding quickly enough in lessons to move pupils on to work better suited to their ability and extend the learning for the most able.
- Teachers are controlling the pace of learning with pupils listening to the teacher for too long and too much learning using worksheets. This is limiting pupils' ability to think and learn for themselves.
- When marking pupils' work, teachers do not always provide clear and easy to understand next step guidance. This leads to pupils not being able to use this information well to make good progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not have continuous access to the outside and this limits their ability to make individual choices of what activity they want to be involved in.
- Although leaders, including the governing body, have identified areas to improve, particularly in the quality of teaching, inconsistencies remain.

### The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher continues the drive to improve the school, which has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1 and Reception.
- Reading is well taught and is enjoyed greatly by the pupils. They are making good progress in this subject.
- Pupils are very keen to come to school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. They say that they feel safe and adults in the school look after them well. Their behaviour is good.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice and took place over two days.
- The inspector visited seven lessons and observed two teachers. The acting headteacher joined the inspector for a number of observations.
- Discussions were held with the acting headteacher, staff, pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plans, priorities for development, achievement data and documents relating to safeguarding children.
- The inspector took account of the five responses to the on-line Parent View survey during the inspection.

## Inspection team

John Cavill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Levan is a much smaller than average-sized rural primary school. There has been a fall in the roll over the last 12 months where approximately 25% of the pupils left the school during the year.
- The school is currently led by an acting headteacher who, having been in post for only five weeks, is the fourth acting headteacher at the school in the last 18 months. All teaching, and most non-teaching, staff currently at the school were not there during the previous inspection.
- The numbers of pupils in each year group vary widely. Pupils are taught in two classes: one for pupils in Key Stage 2, and the children in the Reception Year are taught in the same class as pupils in Key Stage 1.
- The majority of pupils are from White Cornish backgrounds and the remaining pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is extra money given to schools by the government to support, among others, pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils every day.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better by:
  - ensuring teachers use information about the progress of individual pupils during lessons to reshape tasks and so improve learning
  - planning work that is hard enough, especially for the more-able pupils
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to think and learn by themselves by restricting the amount of time they spend listening to the teachers and completing worksheets
  - developing the existing procedures to provide feedback to pupils on their work and ensure the next step comments really help them to improve.
- Improve pupils' achievement in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2, so that they all make at least good progress by:
  - structuring the mathematics curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 2, to focus on the progression of basic number skills
  - matching activities more accurately to pupils' different abilities so that work is not too hard or too easy
  - providing increasingly more difficult problems for pupils to solve using their number skills.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - governors stabilising the long-term leadership of the school
  - ensuring that the systems for checking the quality of teaching result in consistently good teaching
  - improving children's access to the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so

that they can make choices about how and where they want to learn and play.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils are not making fast enough progress in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2. Inadequate teaching in recent years limited pupils' achievement in the subject and it still trails behind the achievement in English, even with some improved teaching this year. This is leading to levels of attainment in mathematics that are below average at the end of Year 6.
- Weak achievement in mathematics is primarily as a result of weak teaching of basic numeracy skills in the past. Pupils are poorly equipped to use these skills in order to solve more complex problems that are expected at the higher levels in the subject. Current teaching is much better and has used the start of this year to focus on redressing this weakness with good success. For example, most pupils used their number skills well to solve problems measuring the area and perimeter of shapes quickly. However, some pupils who are at an earlier stage of development, or are disabled or have special educational needs, required extra support in basic number work in order to move on.
- Children generally join the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are below what would normally be expected for their age.
- A good understanding of the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that they make good progress and all attain levels that are at least in line with what would normally be expected as they enter Key Stage 1. Good progress now continues in Key Stage 1 and has rapidly improved since the appointment of the current teacher, reversing the previous inadequate achievement.
- Achievement in reading is good. The teaching of linking letters and sounds in the Key Stage 1 and Reception class is good and effective. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to read fluently and with emotion demonstrating their understanding of the story.
- Targeted support in lessons for pupils who receive pupil premium funding has enabled them to make good progress so that their achievement is closer to that of their peers. Although some disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have underachieved in mathematics in the past, their progress in this subject is improving. In English they make as much progress as their peers because of the support they receive.
- There have been rapid improvements in achievement in writing in Key Stage 2. The introduction of a structured programme to support pupils' use of vocabulary has resulted in them having a greater interest in writing for pleasure, demonstrating their creativity with interesting characters and settings such as robots in space.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires further improvement to make it consistently good as some pupils are still underachieving. However, the quality has improved recently with the appointment of new teachers in both classes.
- Parents who responded to the questionnaire had mixed views about the quality of teaching and this is reflective of the time that each teacher has been at the school and the impact that they have had on pupils' achievement.
- Children in the Reception year are taught well and supported in their learning by teaching assistants who ensure that most of their needs are met within this mixed-age class. However, children cannot always have a free choice of activity as they do not have easy access to the outside.
- While there is some good teaching, too much is not yet strong enough to eradicate the legacy of underachievement. There are still too many lessons where pupils are not being moved quickly onto tasks that challenge them and help them learn well. This is especially the case for the higher ability pupils. For some other pupils they become distracted quickly if the task is too demanding and this leads to some unacceptable off-task behaviour. Teachers and teaching

assistants address this quickly to re-engage pupils in their learning.

- Pupils are often being restricted from thinking and learning for themselves in lessons that are too structured with long introductions and activities that are controlled by the teacher. There is too much use made of worksheets, especially in mathematics, that limit the opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- The most effective teaching is stimulating and sustains pupils' interests. In a Key Stage 1 English lesson, for example, pupils were encouraged to develop changes and extend their own stories independently. They did this with such enthusiasm that they were reluctant to stop at the end of the session and were very proud of their work when they shared it with the rest of the class.
- Teachers are now monitoring pupils' progress well and use effective questioning to help pupils understand their work. Pupils' work is regularly assessed and the 'two stars and a wish' feedback system is well understood by the pupils. While this is used consistently across the school the quality of the next step comments are variable and generally not specific enough. This limits the pupils' ability to support their own learning, as it does not focus them on the most important aspect they have to improve.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and the school are strengths. They are proud of their school and were keen to tell the inspector that it is improving, especially in lessons.
- Most parents who responded to the questionnaire said that their child was happy at the school and they were kept safe. They also indicated that there is no bullying of any kind. Pupils agreed. They showed a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and said that there is no bullying of any kind, including physical, emotional and cyber bullying.
- Pupils are respectful of each other and of their teachers. They reported that they were confident the adults in school would quickly resolve any problems that they may have.
- Generally, in lessons, pupils' behaviour is good. However, on the very rare occasions when there is some inappropriate behaviour such as chatting to each other or losing concentration, it is usually because the work provided by the teacher is not appropriately demanding.
- Outside in the playground pupils play together well and support each other with the older pupils looking after the younger ones. They move around the school in a calm manner. All pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, say they feel safe and very secure.
- Pupils are keen to come to school and their attendance is above average. They arrive at school punctually and many use the breakfast club, which provides a good start to school for some pupils and encourages them to be ready to learn.
- The school is a happy community and now a stimulating place to be. Pupils are keen to share their experiences such as their involvement in the school play that they are developing with a local author. This ensures that this really is a school play. Pupils also said that they were very lucky to be taught in a small school in the country.

### **The leadership and management** require improvement

- Although the acting headteacher and those who led the school in an acting capacity in recent times have provided strong leadership, the lack of continuity has impeded progress towards reversing the trend of underachievement, especially in mathematics.
- Leaders, including governors, have successfully identified and addressed the inadequate teaching at the school. Recent appointments have resulted in an improving quality overall. However, there are still inconsistencies in teaching that have not yet been addressed and still require improvement to become consistently good.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved but children do not have easy access to the outside. This limits their opportunities to make a free choice of activity, including the use of the big toys outside providing for their physical development.

- Leaders have worked together to ensure that improvements are effective. They have secured improvements in the quality of teaching and the systems to monitor pupil performance. Most of the issues raised at the previous inspection have been resolved. This indicates that there is a strong capacity to sustain further improvements.
- Pupils enjoy the topic-based curriculum, which is creative and stimulating. They especially enjoy the visits that complement the work. For example, the recent visit to Pendennis Castle by the pupils in Key Stage 1 and Reception inspired them to write about knights and princesses and build fantasy castles to help with their storytelling. However, the mathematics curriculum is not providing all pupils with enough opportunities to learn and develop their basic skills across all subject areas.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through the curriculum and the additional activities the school provides. The school play and their participation in the local La Frouda festival help pupils develop their understanding of local culture and demonstrate an ability to work together and reflect on each other's emotions well.
- Leaders robustly manage all statutory requirements relating to safeguarding. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and leaders ensure equality of opportunity for all.
- The local authority is providing ongoing support and guidance to help maintain effective leadership at the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have supported the acting headteachers and their drive to improve the quality of teaching. They have challenged successfully where teachers were not performing well enough. Governors review teachers' performance and ensure the link between salary progression and the quality of teaching and leadership. They monitor how well pupils are doing at the school and evaluate the impact of developments within the improvement plan to have maximum impact on the outcomes for pupils. Governors know how well the school is doing and are clear about what it needs to do in order to improve. Funding to the school is monitored effectively, especially the pupil premium allocation; governors expect leaders to justify how the spending has improved the outcomes for these pupils. They understand how the funding, which has been used to buy extra teaching assistant hours for small group work, has improved the achievement in English for these pupils.

## 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

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 111803   |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Cornwall |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 401204   |

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

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                       |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                     |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                          |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                         |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 22                            |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body            |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Sharon Brolly                 |
| <b>Acting Headteacher</b>                  | Gerry Sweet                   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 18–19 May 2010                |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01736 810486                  |
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