

St Stephens Community Primary School

Roydon Road, St Stephens, Launceston, PL15 8HL

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school because:

- Pupils' outstanding achievement starts from the moment they enter the school and continues until they leave. They are inspired and encouraged to excel in this wonderful school where everything is focused on improving the life chances of all pupils.
- Pupils come to school highly motivated and are keen to learn. As a consequence, they are making exceptional progress and achieving high standards in all subjects.
- Inclusion is at the heart of this school where everyone really does matter. All pupils are encouraged to take a full and active part in all school activities. This extends to the pupils from the Area Resource Base where outstanding provision, delivered by a team of dedicated staff, ensures that they are fully included.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They are extremely proud of their school and are keen to represent it within the community. They wear their achievement badges with pride, are polite and are highly respectful towards each other, their teachers and other adults.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Stimulating lessons are well planned and expertly delivered by an excellent team of teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils are keen to say how much they enjoy the work and they can be seen in lessons working hard on tasks that are set at exactly the right level for individual pupils. However, on a few rare occasions pupils are not given enough opportunities to think and learn by themselves in order to fully develop their independent learning skills.
- The headteacher and his highly committed team have ensured that the school has rapidly improved. They demonstrate outstanding leadership and management, driving sustainable improvements focused on improving pupils' outcomes.
- All leaders, including governors, have challenged teachers to deliver lessons of the highest quality. They have an attention to detail and a desire to ensure that the school continues to improve in the future.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day’s notice and took place over two days.
- The inspectors observed nine teachers and visited 16 lessons, including some guided reading sessions to inspect the standards in reading and the teaching of phonics (pupils learning letter patterns and the sounds they represent). The inspectors also observed a number of small-group activities led by teaching assistants.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher both joined the inspectors for a number of lesson observations.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, parents and carers, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors 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 inspectors took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire during the inspection.
- The Area Resource Base located within the school was included in this inspection.
- A privately managed pre-school and a children’s centre are both located within the school grounds but are inspected separately. The latest reports can be found on the Ofsted website.

Inspection team

John Cavill, Lead Inspector	Additional inspector
David Nebesnuick	Additional inspector
Rob Isaac	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Stephens is a smaller-than-average sized primary school where most pupils attend from the local community.
- The school has an Area Resource Base, which provides for a small number of children with severe learning difficulties.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few have 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 well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children in the care of the local authority, is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop pupils' independent learning skills by providing as many opportunities as is possible for them to think and learn for themselves in lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children come into the Reception class with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are well below what would normally be expected for their age. Pupils make outstanding progress across the school so they leave with levels of attainment that are above the national average at the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress because they are very well supported. This is also the case for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Systems to identify those who would benefit from additional support ensure their needs are met well. This is especially the case in the Area Resource Base where the highly specialist provision for pupils with highly complex needs is delivered by an excellent team. As a consequence, some of these pupils make such exceptional progress that they are integrated into some main school lessons.
- The outstanding teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, focusing on individual pupils' needs, ensures that all children quickly settle into good routines and respond well to the school's high expectations. They make rapid progress in their acquisition of skills through an interesting mix of both adult-led and child-initiated activities, which ensures that they are well prepared to move into Key Stage 1.
- Funding to support the learning of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is used effectively and they make better than expected progress. The attainment of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above the average for similar pupils nationally, with an average point score for the group of 26.8 in the 2012 national tests at Key Stage 2. However, although this figure is lower than the average point score of 28.2 for all the school's Year 6 pupils, the starting points for many of these pupils were much lower than average. School data indicate that this gap has been successfully closed for pupils currently at the school.
- Pupils' attainment in reading is above average and has improved due to a consistent approach focusing on daily, guided reading sessions and is supported by outstanding phonics teaching. In a Year 6 class, pupils were reading books that challenged their reading ability and were using the surrounding text to help them understand difficult words and use them in a different context.
- The proportion of pupils who make and exceed expected progress is high when compared to the national average. This is reflected in the higher than average, and improving, proportions who attain the higher levels at both key stages.
- Above average attainment in mathematics and writing has been secured and the previously lower attainment in writing has been improved with the focus on storytelling across the school.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their skills in speaking and listening. In lessons they are encouraged to discuss their learning and teachers use questioning expertly to ensure that pupils develop their skills in communication.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The outstanding quality of teaching has secured outstanding levels of achievement for all pupils.
 - Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported exceptionally well in small groups by talented teaching assistants who have a clear understanding of how they can help the pupils to learn using a range of effective resources.
 - Teachers with secure subject knowledge and experienced teaching assistants plan lessons as a team to ensure that tasks are innovative and challenging, and that pupils are fully engaged. However, there are a few occasions in lessons where pupils are not given opportunities to think and learn for themselves, which is limiting the development of their independent learning skills.
 - The teaching of reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills is outstanding and fully interwoven into all of the activities to ensure that all learning opportunities are maximised. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils were using their communication skills to discuss the feelings and motives of each of the characters in *The Highwayman* poem and then use role play to describe these feelings to the rest of the class. The awe and wonder with which the pupils recalled the phone call about the realistic crime scene in the classroom demonstrates how teachers are resourceful in how they ensure all pupils get involved in their work.
 - There is a positive climate for learning and relationships are strong. Classrooms are full of well-behaved pupils who are very focused when working together and eager to do well.
 - All parents and carers questioned said that their children are taught outstandingly well and make excellent progress at the school, a view also shared by the pupils.
 - Teaching in the Reception class is superb. In a lesson where children could self-select their activities, adults carefully ensured that all children were encouraged to undertake activities that would benefit their development the most.
 - There is a consistent approach to the assessment of pupils' work. The 'tickled pink and green for growth' system is understood and valued by the pupils who regularly respond to the teachers' comments on how they can improve their work. They enjoy self-assessing their work and check each other's while working in groups, demonstrating high levels of independence.
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The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' attitude to learning is outstanding. They are ready to learn and keen to start working. In lessons they contribute fully and respect their teachers highly. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary.
- All pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, say that they feel safe and very secure. They report that they are confident that adults at the school will deal with any problems that they may have quickly and effectively. All parents and carers agreed with these findings.
- The systems at the school to manage behaviour are very well understood by both staff and pupils. However, the procedures are only required occasionally as most pupils are very able and willing to manage their own behaviour, understanding the difference between right and wrong and demonstrating their strong moral code.
- Pupils are fully aware of what constitutes bullying, including physical, emotional and cyber bullying. There are a small number of bullying incidents logged at the school that have been successfully resolved. Parents and carers and pupils report that bullying is not a problem at the school and that it would be sorted out quickly by the staff.
- Pupils are keen to come to school and are punctual. Attendance is average and has improved. The school is working hard with parents and carers to ensure that the number of pupils who are persistently absent is reduced, as this has a negative impact on their progress.
- Pupils are very keen to take a full part in all activities within the school. The school is proud of its sporting achievements, as are the pupils. They are especially appreciative of the wide range of opportunities that the school provides them including the residential trips that are organised for pupils in Key Stage 2.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides inspirational and visionary leadership to this outstanding school. Together, with the excellent team that supports him, they have ensured that the rapid improvements at the school have been secured and made sustainable.
 - A common purpose, to improve the life chances for the pupils, is shared by all leaders including the governors. There is a shared determination and focus on demanding high expectations and a consistency of approach to ensure that the school continues to move forward. Leaders have a clear understanding of how and why the school is successful, as well as how it can get even better.
 - Leaders track pupils' progress regularly to see how well they are doing. They use this information to set challenging targets and make checks on the performance of individuals and groups. This is especially the case for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs or those who are eligible for support through the pupil premium. This has been so successful that they have now successfully closed the gap that existed between the performance of these groups with all pupils.
 - Teachers are held accountable for the successes of their pupils. This is reflected in the performance management processes, which also provide the means to identify how to support teachers in improving their practice through further training. As a consequence, teaching has improved and is now outstanding.
 - The curriculum is outstanding and is planned to ensure equality of opportunity and to reflect the backgrounds of all pupils. It provides pupils with a wealth of opportunities to develop, both academically and personally. Visits, such as the Year 4 trip to Trewortha Bronze Age Farm, maximise the impact that activities have by using the trip to focus both on history and also on team-building skills. These activities also support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - Parents and carers are regularly invited into school. Parents' evenings are attended well and the
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school is having increasing success in engaging with parents and carers with family learning sessions that have been arranged for mathematics and information and communication technology.

■ The statutory requirements for safeguarding children are robustly managed.

■ The local authority provides light-touch support to this outstanding school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– The governing body is highly effective. Governors understand the school well and how well the pupils are doing in relation to all pupils nationally. They have a clear understanding of what the data are telling them about the effectiveness of the school and they use their knowledge to monitor the school's arrangements for performance management, salaries and promotion. They take part regularly in suitable training. Governors are fully involved in making checks on all aspects of the school, including whether funding, including the pupil premium, is being spent wisely and having the desired effect on pupils' outcomes. They are individually responsible for specific aspects of provision through a link governor role. They hold weekly meetings with the headteacher and visit classrooms to ascertain the quality of teaching. Teachers' performance is regularly reviewed to ensure that their salary progression reflects the quality of their teaching and their leadership responsibilities. Governors use information about the school well and hold the school rigorously to account. This contributes effectively to ensuring that all groups of pupils have the opportunity to succeed, resulting in outstanding achievement for all.

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	111946
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	401218

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diana Easter
Headteacher	Will Hermon
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 November 2009
Telephone number	01566 772170
Fax number	01566 773872
Email address	head@st-stephens-laun.cornwall.sch.uk

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