

# Stithians Community Primary School

Church Road, Stithians, Truro. TR3 7DH

**Inspection dates** 9–10 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- The headteacher, staff and governors have improved the school's performance in all areas over the last two years and leadership and management are good. The school's determined approach has had a positive impact on its overall effectiveness.
- Achievement is good and pupils of all abilities make good progress in English and mathematics throughout their school careers.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher, staff and governors have worked extremely hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Pupils' progress throughout their time at Stithians is very closely monitored and any underperformance is addressed quickly and effectively.
- The majority of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage join the school from the neighbouring pre-school. They settle extremely quickly and make excellent progress in all areas of learning during their first year at school.
- Pupils feel safe in school and their behaviour is very good. Pupils in all age groups get on exceptionally well together. They have positive attitudes in almost all lessons and are very proud of their school.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and underpin all that the school does.
- The broad curriculum provides an extremely varied and challenging range of learning experiences which meet the needs of all the pupils.
- The governors provide a strong level of challenge, and support and take decisive action as appropriate.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils are reaching higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding. This is because in some lessons not all tasks are challenging enough for the more-able pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two days with half a day's notice.
- All full-time staff were observed teaching. A total of nine lessons and one assembly were seen. This included a joint lesson observation with the headteacher.
- The inspector heard pupils from Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 read individually and observed the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent).
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the pupil school council, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other members of the governing body, and subject leaders. A telephone conversation was held with the school improvement adviser.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of evidence which included: the school's improvement plan, the school's data for tracking the progress and attainment of individual pupils and specific groups, performance management documentation, the school's checks on how well it is doing, curriculum and lesson plans, governing body documentation, and the work pupils were doing in their books.
- Parents and carers were met at the beginning and end of the school day and the 34 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered. The school's own parent survey was also scrutinised. Responses from 18 staff questionnaires were also taken into account.
- During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was observed, both inside and outside the classroom, and the school's safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Mark Anderson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Stithians is a smaller than average-sized primary school located near to Truro, Redruth and Falmouth.
- The vast majority of pupils at Stithians (96%) are of White British heritage. The remainder of the pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Pupils are taught in six classes: Reception, Year 1, Year 2, a Year 3/4 class, a Year 4/5 class, and a Year 6 class.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children with a parent in the armed services, is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported through school action, and also the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs, are broadly in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The majority of pupils join Stithians from the neighbouring pre-school, which also provides a breakfast club facility and after-school care.
- The school has achieved Healthy Schools Plus status.
- Stithians became a partner school in the Redruth Cooperative Trust in February 2013.

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

- Further improve the quality of teaching and level of challenge for pupils by:
  - agreeing what makes outstanding teaching, and sharing and celebrating best practice
  - ensuring that all teaching provides sufficient challenge for pupils of all abilities to achieve their full potential.
- Continue to raise the standards of attainment in mathematics and English by:
  - providing plentiful opportunities for pupils to use and develop their numeracy and literacy skills in meaningful contexts in a range of subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children have skills in line with those expected for their age when they join the school. They make strong progress in their first year at school and many exceed the levels expected nationally as they move into Year 1. The Early Years leader and teaching assistants ensure a well-balanced curriculum, providing activities which are led by adults, and others chosen by the children, both in the classroom and outdoors. Substantial improvements also take place in the children's personal development and social skills.
- Good progress continues through Year 1 and Year 2. Levels of attainment in all subjects are above national expectations and this is a strong feature of this stage of the pupils' learning. Standards have continued to improve in recent years.
- In the 2012 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils achieved at least Level 4 in English and mathematics, the level expected for their age, and standards overall were broadly in line with national expectations. The progress of pupils in mathematics is improving in Key Stage 2. However, 2012 national test results showed that the overall attainment of girls was below that of boys, who exceeded national average standards in mathematics. The school's assessment data and the inspector's observations indicate that current standards in Key Stage 2 are above national expectations.
- Overall, the progress in Key Stage 2 exceeds national expectations and most pupils are improving faster than the national rate.
- Pupils get regular opportunities to read in school, and teachers and learning assistants ensure that their knowledge of phonics continues to be reinforced during lessons and support sessions.
- There are no significant differences in the progress made by groups of pupils, including pupils from different ethnic groups.
- In the 2012 Key Stage 2 national tests in English and mathematics, the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium was similar to that of other pupils in the school. The impact of well-planned actions is leading to improvement in the achievement of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and has successfully narrowed the gap between their attainment and that of all other pupils. This improvement is an example of the school's successful promotion of equality of opportunity.
- The school's systems for tracking each individual pupil's level of progress and achievement are very detailed and accurate. The tracking data are carefully analysed to establish any areas that are in need of strengthening and any individual pupils or groups who require additional support.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The teachers' commitment, their experience and their knowledge of individual pupils mean that the great majority of lessons are carefully planned and engage and inspire the pupils. Their attitude to learning is very positive and their enthusiasm in the classroom is clearly apparent. This was particularly evident in a Reception lesson when children were able to explain in great detail how hot air balloons went up and down.
- In most lessons, teachers promote learning well, and lessons are lively and conducted at a brisk pace. Teachers' questioning keeps all pupils focused on the task in hand and involved. Pupils are very keen both to ask and answer questions. A very good example of effective teaching was seen in a Year 6 lesson, when pupils were challenged to prepare and present a news story to the rest of their class, and did so with great confidence and enjoyment.
- Although teachers are providing increased opportunities for pupils to use and develop their numeracy and literacy skills in subjects across the curriculum, this is not consistent in all classes.
- Phonics teaching to pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 is effective and adapted to suit different ability levels so that pupils learn well. Although the pupils recorded a score below the national average in the recent Year 1 phonics screening check, the school has been proactive in

addressing this issue. The school has conducted its own check in Year 2 to inform teaching. This shows the gap has been successfully closed and pupils have made good progress since the 2012 phonics screening check.

- Marking and both written and verbal feedback help pupils meet their learning targets. Pupils receive clear guidance as to how to improve their work. Marking and feedback are consistently good in all year groups.
- In a small number of lessons, activities are not well matched to the different abilities of pupils. This results in some pupils completing tasks very quickly when they could tackle more demanding work.
- Classrooms are colourful and stimulating, and the displays contribute extremely well to the pupils' learning environment.
- The contribution, commitment and expertise of the teaching assistants are a major strength of the school, and the teamwork and support for colleagues are very effective throughout the school.
- All the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire or spoke to the inspector consider that their children are taught well and make good progress.

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

- Pupils demonstrate good attitudes towards learning and quickly settle to the tasks they are set with enthusiasm. They clearly enjoy coming to school.
- Young children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught what is expected within the school regarding good behaviour. These expectations ensure that behaviour is generally very good across all age groups.
- Parents and carers have a positive view of behaviour in the school, as expressed by those responding to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and to the school's own survey. Parents and carers appreciate that the school is caring, approachable and will deal appropriately with any issues that arise. Parents and carers are fully involved in their children's education and the two recent mathematics 'Open Evenings' were extremely well attended and well received.
- Pupils at Stithians are very polite and courteous to staff and visitors. They are taught to show respect and consideration for others. They get on extremely well with each other across the age groups, both in lessons and in the playground, where they show a good awareness of each other and how to keep safe.
- Pupils are keen to take an active role in school life and take on a variety of responsibilities. The range of clubs and activities has expanded and includes an exciting range of sports and music. Sporting opportunities include cricket, netball and athletics. The variety of opportunities ensures there is something for everyone. For example, Year 6 pupils have thoroughly enjoyed the 'Green Car Challenge' and are really looking forward to racing their own car at the Newquay race track.
- Celebrations of good individual and whole-class attendance, together with close home-school working links, have resulted in an ongoing record of significantly improved attendance.
- Pupils say they are well cared for and feel safe at school at all times. They feel able to speak to adults if they have a problem or need to confide in someone. They show a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying, including physical, emotional and cyber bullying, and commented that the adults always dealt with any instances quickly, fairly and firmly.
- In a small number of lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are not as focused as they might be and there are a few incidents of low-level disruption. However, any occasional lapses are dealt with effectively and appropriately by staff.
- There are clear systems to record incidents of poor behaviour, which are extremely rare.
- Behaviour policies and procedures are implemented consistently, which contributes well to the positive atmosphere and good relationships. Staff provide strong role models for the pupils, and mutual respect and trust are embedded throughout the school.

## The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are extremely ambitious for the school's further development and have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. In recent years, the school has increased the level of academic ambition, and the school's vision highlights its goal to ensure that every pupil achieves his or her full potential.
  - Teachers, parents and carers consider that the headteacher and governors provide effective leadership and management across all areas of the school.
  - The leadership of teaching has become increasingly rigorous and performance management has served to address previous weaknesses and underperformance, which have been eradicated. These improvements are well supported by the strong teamwork and morale of the teachers and their desire and commitment to keep the school moving forward. Teachers have a clear understanding of what good teaching looks like, but less time has been spent developing a shared view of outstanding teaching and, as a result, too few learning activities ensure rapid progress.
  - Data on pupils' attainment and progress are rigorously collected. The information is analysed accurately and pupils' progress meetings are scheduled every term in order to identify those pupils falling behind or not making at least expected progress.
  - The school's checks on how well it is doing are accurate and the school improvement plan is forward-looking and achievable.
  - Ongoing improvements to outcomes for pupils, their attendance and the quality of teaching indicate that the school is well placed to maintain improvement. The growing strength of the school's reputation is reflected in the steady increase in pupil numbers.
  - The local authority has provided 'light-touch' support for the school since the last inspection.
  - The school is committed to improving its facilities and resources. The relocation of the Early Years Foundation Stage, together with the addition of a conservatory and development of the outdoor area, are already having a significant and positive impact on the children's education.
  - Safeguarding arrangements comply with statutory requirements. The school's leaders identify and respond to any concerns regarding child welfare. The governors have recently ratified a new 'Internet Safety' policy.
  - Teachers are regularly observed in the classroom, and accurate judgements are made regarding the quality of their practice and the progress pupils make. These findings are used appropriately to decide teachers' pay and internal promotion within the school. Clear links exist between teachers' performance, appraisal and pay progression.
  - The strong profile of music throughout the school is reflected by all Year 6 pupils learning the guitar and, in particular, the success achieved by many pupils at the Wall Music festival.
  - The range of subjects and topics taught is extensive. The creative curriculum includes an extremely wide range of activities and educational experiences available to pupils. Examples of the breadth of opportunity have recently included visits to Pendennis Castle and Newquay Zoo, and themed days such as Viking, Cornish and Tudor days.
  - The curriculum also provides many opportunities for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and understanding, such as the recent visit to Truro Cathedral. Opportunities to develop mathematics and English across the curriculum are not yet as embedded.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Members of the governing body know their school well and are committed to its ongoing improvement. They hold the headteacher to account for the effectiveness of the school and have a clear understanding of its strengths, including the quality of teaching and how its performance compares with that of similar schools and with national standards. They have a
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clear understanding of the school's performance management system and how effective teaching is rewarded. They understand the areas for development and work with the school to develop the school improvement plan. They regularly visit the school and are individually attached to different year groups and curriculum areas. The governing body has an effective committee structure and individual governors' expertise is used well. Governors ensure that the school's finances are carefully audited and well managed. They have a clear understanding of how the pupil premium funding is allocated and its impact in improving levels of pupil attainment. Governors are well informed by the school's leadership and attend training so that they can fulfil their roles more effectively. They ensure that the school meets all statutory obligations, including safeguarding and safer staff recruitment.

## 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>	111851
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	413013
<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>	152
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cath Cullen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nick Illsley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3–4 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01209 860547
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