

St Meriadoc Church of England Junior School

Cranfield Road, Camborne, Cornwall, TR14 7PJ

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2013

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| 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

- Achievement requires improvement. Although pupils' attainment improved sharply after the last inspection, attainment at age 11 has not improved further for several years.
- The progress made by boys requires improvement especially, but not only, in mathematics, where over time too few boys have attained the higher Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Leadership and management require improvement. The strong leadership of the headteacher and senior staff are improving the quality of teaching but the ways of analysing data are not robust enough. This has caused the school to judge pupils' progress over time to be slightly better than it actually is.
- There has not been enough consistently good or better teaching over time to ensure that all groups of pupils, especially boys, make at least good progress.
- In too many lessons tasks are not matched closely enough to the needs of all pupils and the pace of learning is not brisk enough to ensure good progress by all groups.
- There are some inconsistencies in the way the mathematics curriculum is organised and it does not always ensure a systematic development of key skills. The school has also identified that the current curriculum does not provide enough opportunities to develop mathematics in other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Achievement is improving, girls are making good progress and the current Year 6 is on track to attain higher standards this year.
- The changes to the way writing is taught are starting to prove effective, although it is too soon to see the full impact on attainment in Year 6.
- The school provides a calm and supportive atmosphere in which pupils say they feel safe and secure and are taught how to stay safe.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Good quality marking with clear comments helps pupils improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed seven teachers in the course of visiting 19 lessons or parts of lessons, including short visits to observe the provision for teaching reading.
- Discussions were held with staff, groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The responses of the 21 parents and carers who filled in the online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. Parents and carers were spoken to at the beginning of the school day and questionnaires from 13 staff were also analysed.
- Documentation studied included the school's self-evaluation; the school development plan; the school's records on pupils' attainment and progress; reports on the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs; documents relating to safeguarding and child protection; and the minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- The work in pupils' books and folders was examined in partnership with teachers and senior staff.

Inspection team

Stephen Lake, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Nebesnuick

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than most primary schools and serves mainly the surrounding area, although a few pupils come from farther away to choose a faith-based school.
- Almost all pupils are White British, with only a few from other ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language.
- Slightly more pupils than usual leave or join the school other than at the normal time.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, children of service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is broadly average. The school does not have any children from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average, with an average percentage of pupils supported at school action. The proportion supported at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is below average. The most common areas of need are moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher is in place since the last inspection. She is currently on a temporary secondment to a nearby local school but was present during the inspection. One of the assistant headteachers is also on a part-time temporary secondment to lead another local small school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further to ensure that the large majority is good or better so that attainment, especially that of boys, rises, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that information on what pupils already know, can do and understand is used more consistently to plan tasks that meet the needs of all pupils and challenge them to achieve their very best
 - making sure that all lessons proceed at a brisk pace
 - providing more activities that engage boys in learning.
- Review the organisation of the curriculum, especially in mathematics, to ensure that:
 - all subjects are taught in the most effective way that enables all pupils, especially boys, to learn effectively
 - more opportunities are provided for developing mathematics through other subjects.
- Improve the systems for analysing and interpreting data on pupils' attainment and progress so that senior leaders and governors have access to good quality information on how well all pupils, including different groups, are performing compared to other schools nationally.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Parents and carers who expressed a view believe that their children make good progress. This is true for some, especially girls, but there are too many inconsistencies at present. Achievement requires improvement because over time too few pupils make rapid progress, particularly in mathematics, and not all those capable of it, especially boys, attain the higher Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2. Progress is improving but not rapidly enough to ensure consistently good achievement because too little of the teaching has been consistently good or better over time.
- Achievement over the school varies with pupils making significantly better progress in Years 5 and 6. This is changing and progress by the end of Year 4 is improving with those pupils currently in Years 3 and 4 on track to make good progress this year and attain higher standards than in previous years. However, the progress of boys by the end of Year 6 is below that of girls.
- Attainment in all subjects is rising, with all pupils in Year 6 on track to attain higher standards than in previous years. Nevertheless, girls' attainment is above that of boys to a greater extent than is found nationally. This situation is continuing and in the current Year 6 girls are on track to attain much higher National Curriculum levels than boys.
- Attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 is consistently slightly, but not significantly, above that of other schools nationally but again girls are achieving better than boys to a greater extent than that found nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, together with the very few who speak English as an additional language, receive suitable support to keep them included in lessons and they make similar progress to other pupils with some making accelerated progress.
- In the most recent published national assessments the average National Curriculum levels of those pupils supported through the pupil premium are around a year lower in English and mathematics than all pupils nationally. Strong leadership and management of this area are ensuring good use of pupil premium funds, for example through extra one-to-one teaching of this group of pupils. This is enabling accelerated progress and in the current Year 6, the gap in attainment has been closed considerably with these pupils attaining at a similar level to all pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good over time, despite improvements, because pace drops in some parts of lessons, some tasks are not pitched at the right level for pupils, and the needs of boys are not met as well as those of girls.
- A key factor influencing the improvement taking place is a better understanding of what pupils already know, can do and understand through the good individual assessments. This is enabling most teachers to plan tasks that challenge and extend the learning of pupils. Nevertheless, this is not fully in practice yet and some inconsistencies continue especially, but not only, in mathematics. As a result, in some lessons the tasks set are aimed too much at the middle of the class. Although disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn effectively in these lessons due to the support they receive, for other pupils tasks are either too demanding for some or too easy for others. This slows learning, especially for more able pupils.
- Teachers share the learning objectives of the lessons with the pupils but in a small number of lessons the targets for learning for each group are not clear enough. In some lessons teachers spend too long explaining to the whole class what each separate group has to achieve or stop the whole class while they explain something to just one or two pupils. In these cases, learning is slower for some groups.
- The quality of teaching is improving as teachers start to implement the new strategies for improving writing and as a result of good quality support from the headteacher and senior staff. Teachers have opportunities to see best practice and are applying this experience to their own

teaching.

- A focus on using a story board with pictures as preparation for writing is encouraging pupils to write at greater length, with more interesting texts that engage the reader. As part of this work, teachers challenge pupils well through the use of open and thought-provoking questions that not only assess what pupils already know but extend their learning further.
- Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to present lessons for pupils. Older pupils use computer programs confidently to practise and consolidate their vocabulary skills but less use is made of such programs to extend pupils' mathematics skills. Across the school, pupils are given good opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills.
- The marking policy is understood well by pupils and many good examples of its use can be seen, especially in Years 5 and 6. Teachers make useful comments that show pupils how to improve their work and the next steps in their learning although these are not always closely linked to pupils' individual targets. The school has identified this as a possible area for improvement and is trying out new systems of setting targets linked to National Curriculum levels.
- The school takes great care to ensure equality of opportunity for those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well through one-to-one sessions with teaching assistants or by continuous support as appropriate. Good additional support for these pupils is provided by a learning mentor.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils, staff, governors and parents and carers all agree that behaviour is good. The school is a friendly, calm and welcoming environment in which to learn. The vast majority of pupils are polite and courteous and behave well, showing positive attitudes to learning. On the playground pupils mix together well and the vast majority show respect for adults and for each other.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of bullying, including cyber-bullying, discriminatory language and prejudice-based bullying. They say that very little occurs in the school and all adults would deal with it effectively. All spoken to said that they felt they could go to any adult in the school if bullying or other problems arose.
- Observations and discussions with pupils and staff show that a small number of pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration in lessons and misbehave a little. This is usually confined to activities such as moving around the classroom or talking but they can distract the teacher and slow learning a little.
- A small group of pupils, including some of those who misbehave, do not have secure independent learning skills and do not remain on task unless an adult is near them. This can also slow learning but all adults work very hard with the pupils concerned to develop their independence. Strategies such as the support of a learning mentor are proving effective in ensuring they remain engaged in learning. As a result, the large majority of pupils are making the most of the effective learning now taking place in many lessons.
- Attendance is average and has improved due to the work of the school in partnership with the local authority's education welfare office and the parent support adviser.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Most parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree the school is led and managed well. Leadership and management have many strengths. However, they require improvement because the pace at which attainment is rising is not rapid enough although it is beginning to accelerate. The improvements in pupils' achievement in the last year are a result of the ambition to improve the school that is shared by all staff and governors.
- School systems for analysing data are not robust enough to give accurate information. Senior staff use the data on individuals to check on the progress of vulnerable groups. They have

identified the inequality in the attainment of boys and girls but have not taken enough account of how different this is to the national picture and, due to errors in the data, had not realised the full significance of the differences.

- The quality of teaching is monitored frequently and the headteacher has taken robust action to strengthen the teaching team. Observations of lessons are used effectively to identify how teaching can be improved and good quality training is provided to teachers to support improvement. The local authority has provided 'light touch' support as it is confident that senior leaders are now demonstrating the skills required to improve achievement.
- The broad curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Strong links with the local Secondary Science and International Academy provide good opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of the wider world through good links and projects. Activities such as looking after the school's chickens provide opportunities to learn how to care for others. Changes to the way writing is taught have made the English curriculum more effective and visits and visitors are used well to stimulate writing. Too few opportunities are taken to integrate mathematics into the curriculum. The school is correctly reviewing the organisation of the teaching groups for mathematics to take into account the increase in the number on roll for the coming year.
- The needs of those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are met well through effective links with a range of local authority agencies and with parents and carers. Safeguarding meets requirements and the training of all staff and governors in this area is up to date.
- Good systems are in place to engage parents and carers in supporting their children's learning. Frequent opportunities to visit the school and strategies such as a parent support adviser strengthen the links between the school and parents and carers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body monitors the budget well. The additional funding available through the pupil premium is used to provide good support to those pupils targeted by this funding. The governing body is well aware of the quality of teaching and how this impacts upon teachers' pay. It understands clearly how performance management is used to reward good teaching or identify areas for professional development. Governors undertake relevant training, including that for new governors, safeguarding and the interpretation of data. However, the data that have been available to them have not been accurate enough and this has limited somewhat the effectiveness of the governors' challenge to the school's performance. For example, not enough attention is given to monitoring the relative performance of girls and boys and how this compares with other schools nationally. Governors monitor the school development plan and the minutes of their meetings show that they regularly question the headteacher about performance. The information gained is used well to set challenging targets for the headteacher through performance management, although this work has also been affected a little by the lack of accuracy in the school data. Governors are exploring opportunities to collaborate more closely with several other local schools to form an Academy group that will allow greater cooperation and economies of scale.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 112006 |
| Local authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 403167 |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 157 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jane Emery |
| Headteacher | Samantha Jones |
| Date of previous school inspection | 28–29 November 2007 |
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