

Gunnislake Primary School

Chapel Street, Gunnislake, Cornwall, PL18 9NA

Inspection dates

5–6 March 2014

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		Requires improvement	3
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 school has had three executive headteachers over the last two years. This has resulted in a lack of consistency in leadership.
- The school's leaders have not acted quickly enough to improve the quality of teaching to ensure that it is good enough.
- The progress of all pupils is not yet consistently good across the school.
- Standards in all subjects are not high enough at the end of Key Stage 1 and are not high enough in writing at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils do not always behave well in class. In a few lessons, they chat too much and become restless when they do not understand their tasks, this leads to some low-level disruption.
- Pupils are not always given clear enough guidance about how they can improve their work.
- Not all teachers ensure that lessons are planned to build on pupils' previous learning, and on occasions pupils are often not sufficiently inspired to want to learn.
- In the year groups where teaching is not good adults do not have high enough expectations of the level of work that pupils can produce.

The school has the following strengths

- Due to some excellent teaching the progress made by the youngest children, and by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, is very good.
- Pupils behave well where teaching is good or better. They are usually keen to learn. In the playground, at lunchtime and in assemblies behaviour is good.
- Senior and middle leaders have accurately identified areas for improvement. They know their school very well and are keen for the school to rapidly improve.
- Pupils who receive additional support through pupil premium funding make very good progress, and their attainment often exceeds that of other pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited six lessons. Three lessons were observed jointly with the acting executive headteacher.
- The inspector heard pupils read, examined work in their books, attended an assembly and observed activities in the playground and dinner hall.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, the acting executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspector examined a range of documents including a summary of the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, minutes of governors' meetings, and the report the headteacher regularly provides for governors. He also looked at documents showing how the quality of teaching is evaluated, the school's information on pupils' progress, and records relating to pupils' safety, behaviour and attendance.
- Although a small number of parents shared their views about the school using the online Parent View questionnaire the number was too small for the results to be published. The inspector spoke informally to parents to seek their views.
- The views of pupils were gathered from discussions and from the meeting with representative pupils.
- The views of the 11 staff who returned questionnaires were also considered.

Inspection team

Chris Chamberlain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school. The pupils are organised in three classes in the morning and in the afternoon they work in two classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children with a parent in the armed forces) is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is similar to the national average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- All pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6.
- The school is part of the Delaware and Gunnislake Federation with a single governing body and an acting executive headteacher leading both schools. Day-to-day management is provided by deputy headteacher based at the school.
- The school has had three executive headteachers since the last inspection in July 2011.
- The school became part of the Caradon Co-operative Educational Trust on 1 January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - lessons are planned effectively so that they build on pupils' previous knowledge and skills
 - pupils are given clear, regular and consistent guidance on how they can improve their learning
 - pupils' work is set at the right level so that it is suitable for every pupil's needs
 - teaching is inspirational so that pupils are keen to learn and want to make progress.
- Appoint a permanent executive headteacher to give the school stability in leadership.
- Increase the progress pupils make, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 4, so that the standards of attainment for pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are consistently in line with or above national averages in all subject areas.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they could because progress slows down in Years 2, 3 and 4. This has resulted in standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 being lower than the national average for the last two years. Evidence from the school's tracking of pupils' progress, lesson observations and work scrutinies show that standards in these year groups are still too low.
- The achievement of younger pupils is better. Children enter Reception with knowledge and skills in line with those expected of children at that age and make very good progress. By the time they finish their Reception year their attainment is above average in all areas of the curriculum.
- This good progress continues in Year 1 where the teaching of phonics (the knowledge of letters and the sounds they make) has improved in the school. In 2013 a higher proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in phonics than in 2012, ready to enter Year 2 with a strong knowledge of phonics.
- The slower progress made by pupils in the middle year groups improves in Years 5 and 6. This is due to excellent teaching. Consequently, pupils catch up, and their attainment reaches national averages in reading and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. However, attainment in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 remains lower than the national average.
- Recently the school has had a large proportion of pupils join from schools in the local area. When they join the school these new pupils are often working at lower levels of attainment. Parents are happy because these pupils make rapid progress.
- Pupils who are entitled to the pupil premium make very good progress because of the additional support they receive, and their attainment exceeds that of all other pupils in mathematics and English.
- The progress made by disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and more-able pupils is good. The support that the school organises for pupils with special educational needs is very effective and ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed in school.
- Pupils generally read well and use a wide range of skills when reading. For example, they use their phonic skills to help them to pronounce words they cannot read, and then to re-read sentences that do not initially make sense to them. Adults ensure that pupils experience a wide range of authors and types of book.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching in Years 2, 3 and 4 is not good enough. Evidence from the school's own data shows that this has been the situation for the last two years.
- In these year groups pupils are not given enough guidance on how they can improve their learning. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to respond to the guidance and to practise their weaker areas of learning.
- Teaching is sometimes uninspiring, so that pupils are sometimes unmotivated and become less enthusiastic to learn. Where this occurs, activities for pupils are not always linked to previous learning, and consequently do not build upon the concepts already learnt. Pupils then become confused and progress slows.
- Teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge to enable pupils to learn as well as they could. For example, pupils in Year 4 were asked to improve simple sentences by adding connectives, but were not then able to demonstrate that they could apply it their writing.
- Pupils make more rapid progress where teaching matches their needs and interests. This is seen in good, and often outstanding, teaching at the beginning of Key Stage 1, and towards the end of Key Stage 2. For example in Year 1 the skilful teaching of phonics ensured that all pupils in

the group made progress at their own level. Pupils were encouraged to remain focused on their learning throughout the session, to learn from their peers and to persevere when they were unsure.

- Examples of outstanding teaching were seen where teachers responded rapidly to the differing needs of the class, ensuring that pupils of all abilities made much better progress. For example, in a lesson where pupils were using tablet computers to draft persuasive letters about deforestation the class teacher monitored progress effectively and re-taught concepts such as paragraphing and the use of specific persuasive vocabulary, but then also extended the learning of more-able pupils by teaching them how to write a balanced argument about the destruction of the rain forest.
- Teaching assistants are skilled, have strong subject knowledge, and understand fully the progress that pupils are expected to make in their sessions with them. Because of this pupils make very good progress in lessons where teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support either individuals or small groups of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Where they are not sure what they have to do, and are not sufficiently challenged or inspired to learn, they lose interest. They chat to each other, call across the class to their friends and consequently do not make the progress that they should.
- Where teaching is more successful pupils are thoroughly involved in their learning, show maturity, are sensible and keen to work well, and make good progress.
- Pupils behave better at playtime, during assembly, and at lunchtime, when they are polite and well mannered. Pupils play with others from different age groups, help each other if they have a problem, and are given opportunities to develop skills of self-organisation. They enjoy being given responsibility when they lead 'wake and shake' for all of the Key Stage 2 pupils, organise playtime equipment, or ring the bell for the end of playtime.
- Pupils respond well to the positive reinforcement of the weekly 'golden tickets' for good effort as well the 'always good' award for consistently good behaviour.
- Pupils say that instances of bullying are extremely rare and they are confident that if it should occur it would be extremely effectively dealt with. There have been no exclusions in the last two years.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is very good. Staff are appropriately trained in child protection; pupils understand the importance of e-safety and appreciate how adults in school keep them safe. For example, before their recent walk to Delaware Primary School, pupils knew that they should remain on the pavement, and adults wore reflective jackets so that everyone could be seen and be safe.
- The school has well-established systems for monitoring the absence of pupils. Because of this attendance is improving and now in line with the national average.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- This school has suffered from very little consistency in leadership, and a lack of clear focus for school improvement, having had three executive headteachers appointed to lead the federation in the last two years. Consequently, senior leaders have not worked quickly enough to improve the quality of teaching.
- Although senior and middle leaders are keen that the school provides the very best education for the pupils in the local community they have yet to ensure that standards of attainment at the

end of Key Stage 1 are in line with national averages.

- There have been some improvements. Pupils' progress is tracked regularly, and those pupils who are not making expected progress are given additional support from teaching assistants. The impact of this support is evaluated to ensure that pupils' progress accelerates. Middle leaders monitor their areas of responsibility effectively, develop action plans centred accurately on the needs of the school, and lead training sessions across the federation.
- The school strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, and their commitment to equal opportunities makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Since the last report the school has made strong links with a school in Ethiopia. Pupils have shared letters and seen their pen pals using a video link. The school has also improved pupils' knowledge of the United Kingdom. For example, in the class where the youngest pupils are taught they use a map of the British Isles to identify their own location and that of several other towns and cities across Britain.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils fully meet statutory requirements.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is focused closely on the interests and the needs of pupils. The sports grant is used successfully to improve pupils' participation in sport and encourage an awareness of healthy lifestyles. The school now has a wider range of after-school sports clubs which are oversubscribed. There are also increased opportunities for pupils to take part in a number of tournaments and festivals.
- The deputy headteacher ensures that teacher appraisal objectives are closely linked to the needs of the school and also to each individual teacher's developmental needs. Pay decisions are based on the outcomes of a well-developed monitoring system. Appraisal procedures are also in place for support staff.
- The school engages well with parents: the school regularly invites parents into school for events such as the recent St Piran's Day celebration. Parents are encouraged to share their child's successes at home with the school when they are in the youngest class. The school also liaises effectively with families if there are concerns about pupils' attendance. Parents who spoke to the inspector agreed that they were happy with the support they receive from the school.
- Through the Delaware and Gunnislake Federation and the Caradon Co-operative Educational Trust the school has developed strong links with other local schools. This has enabled the sharing of training, expertise and resources.
- The local authority has provided low-level support for this school and has been actively involved in appointing executive headteachers for the federation.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection nearly half of the governing body are newly appointed. They have received consistent support from the local authority to help them develop their role. The local authority has provided support and training and so governors have a clearer view of their role and are better able to provide challenge; for example, they better understand the information on pupils' progress. Governors are concerned about the lack of sustained and consistent focus for school improvement and aim to appoint a permanent executive headteacher in the very near future. They regularly receive very clear and informative reports from the deputy headteacher at Gunnislake, but are not sufficiently challenging in seeking evidence of their own through links with subject leaders or year groups. Governors are keen to listen to the views of parents, and have organised opportunities for parents to share their opinions with them. Governors have also organised joint events for the federated schools to promote a closer working relationship. Following recent training governors are able to compare school data with national averages and identify areas for improvement. Governors use headteacher appraisal to set appropriate objectives for the executive headteacher linked to the needs of the federation. However, these have been difficult to monitor due to the rapid turnover in executive headteachers. Governors have an overview of standards of teaching in the school. They know how teachers' performance is monitored and supported, and how teachers' pay is directly related to their performance. They are aware of fluctuations in the budget due to increases in the school roll and have begun to plan appropriately for these changes.

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	111952
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	443649

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Scoles
Acting Executive Headteacher	Lynn Nash
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 July 2011
Telephone number	01822 832685
Fax number	01822 832685
Email address	secretary@gunnislake.cornwall.sch.uk

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