

Probus Community Primary School

Ladcock Road, Truro, Cornwall, TR2 4LE

Inspection dates 27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not been consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils are not developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics well enough through Key Stage 2.
- The most-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently or moved on to harder work effectively when they find it too easy.
- At times, teachers' marking does not give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- Improved teaching and earlier and more effective additional support for pupils have not been in place long enough to fill all gaps in pupils' previous learning by the time they leave the school.

The school has the following strengths:

- Strengthened leadership now at all levels, including governance, is significantly quickening the pace of improvement.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and supports their good attitudes to learning.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 make good progress in response to good teaching.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents and carers work well with staff to ensure pupils' above average attendance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 16 lessons and were accompanied by the headteacher and deputy headteacher for most of these observations.
- The inspectors observed morning playtime and lunch breaks, visited breakfast and after-school clubs and attended two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with members of the school council and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and break times.
- Inspectors also met with governors and the lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors held meetings with school staff, including senior leaders.
- The inspectors took account of 24 staff questionnaires and spoke informally with a number of parents and carers as they brought their children to school.
- The views of parents and carers were also gathered from 88 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, lesson planning and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors also examined records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding policy, procedures and practice. The inspectors also considered the school's sports premium action plan.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Venning

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school at other than the normal times is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- There is a below average proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for children in local authority care, children from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are accommodated in a Reception class. Other pupils are also taught in single-age classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The pre-school, which shares the school site, is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school has experienced significant changes in senior staff and teaching staff since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement and improve teaching so that it is never less than good by:
 - ensuring that the most-able pupils are fully challenged and moved on to harder work when it is clear that they find tasks easy
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations in mathematics are always high, particularly in Key Stage 2, so that there is consistent challenge and emphasis on improving pupils' skills.
- Strengthen the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work, in particular by:
 - making sure that teachers show pupils exactly what they need to do to improve their work, give them time to act upon the advice given and check that this is done.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because inconsistent teaching over time in Key Stage 2 has not enabled pupils to make the good progress of which they are capable. Observations of pupils' responses in lessons and a scrutiny of their work also show that progress by some more-able pupils, and in mathematics, is not good enough.
- Inspection evidence and the school's own checks of pupils' skills show that where there have been recent improvements in teaching, pupils are making faster progress than in previous years and are rapidly closing gaps in previous learning. Pupils' attainments in Year 6 are still average in reading, writing and mathematics, but across the school more pupils now have a secure knowledge and understanding of their learning.
- Children's skills on entry mostly match those expected for their age. Children make a good start and do well in Reception, especially in developing the self-confidence and very positive attitudes that support success in learning. For example, they eagerly talk about the 'dinosaur dens' they make with sand.
- Most pupils continue to make good progress through Key Stage 1. This is the result of well-planned teaching and additional support, which effectively develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Pupils' responses in lessons show that progress is improving. An increasing number of pupils are now making good progress through Key Stage 2, including those who have arrived later than the normal time. Progress is sometimes rapid, as in Years 2 and 5, in response to consistently strong teaching. Occasionally, progress varies with gaps in previous learning still apparent in Year 6 where some pupils lack confidence in tackling new work without additional adult help.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are providing earlier and more effective additional support for pupils if progress, especially in reading, slows. Staff are also teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make) more effectively to underpin pupils' quickening and now good progress in reading through the school.
- Adults provide good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, which enables them to progress as well as other pupils.
- Staff are providing strengthened and earlier adult assistance for pupils supported by additional funding. This is also helping most of them to make quicker progress than their peers. Pupils in Year 6 currently assisted by the extra funding are still about two terms of attainment behind their peers in English and mathematics. However, this represents positive improvement, especially in reading.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because its quality has varied too much over time and has led to gaps in pupils' learning, especially in mathematics and by more-able pupils.
- Teaching is consistently good across Reception and Key Stage 1. Teaching continues to improve across the school. However, it has not been sustained long enough at the consistently good level needed across Key Stage 2 to enable all pupils to make up lost ground and achieve well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants continue to manage behaviour effectively and to sustain pupils' good attitudes and contributions to learning. In Reception, children are taught to happily share equipment and exchange ideas, for example, managing 'The Shoe Shop'. As a result, they develop the good social skills needed to underpin future learning.
- All staff provide good quality care and include disabled pupils and those with special educational needs fully in all learning activities. Talented assistants show particular sensitivity when supporting pupils with complex needs.

- Senior leaders have given teachers clear guidance in helping them to significantly improve the way they check pupils' progress. All teachers use this information well to set relevant activities and to make good use of additional funding by providing adult support when pupils need it most.
- Adults now model and teach speaking and listening, reading and writing skills effectively and question the pupils well to encourage them to think about their work. Pupils are also checking for themselves how well they are doing and this is quickening their progress. For example, in Year 5 pupils set their own targets when writing about Theseus and the Minotaur and this improved their use of descriptive vocabulary.
- Teachers have also improved the way they mark pupils' work, especially to praise pupils for their efforts and to identify what needs to be improved. There is less consistency, however, in showing pupils how to make the necessary improvements and giving them the opportunity to respond and advance their learning.
- This academic year, senior leaders have also strengthened the way teachers teach and organise pupils' learning in mathematics. Pupils are learning better and responding more enthusiastically to the variety of activities presented to them. At times though, when expectations of more-able pupils are not always high enough, pupils are not fully challenged and make no better than adequate progress.
- Teachers develop lively topics across subjects and use displays imaginatively to celebrate pupils' efforts and enthuse pupils further. For example, pupils make puppets for historical plays and their displays of mirrors and dinosaurs promote science and creative skills respectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well mannered, friendly and happy in school. Their behaviour in and around the school is never less than good. Pupils are extremely polite and courteous to staff and visitors. They express pleasure in the way staff value their efforts and pupils say, 'Staff look after us.'
- Parents and carers also appreciate the way staff 'go out of their way' to care for their children and agree that pupils behave well, feel safe and enjoy school. The school's records show that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare with pupils responding well to additional adult support.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning and demonstrate a strong desire to learn. They reply eagerly to teachers' questions and this enlivens their learning. Pupils work well together in lessons, particularly when discussing their ideas and sharing their thinking with their partners. Pupils often show excellent attitudes to learning, especially when investigating in science or researching topics using computers.
- Very occasionally a few pupils lose interest for a short period of time. This is either because the learning activity does not challenge them or because teachers have not given them enough information about how to improve.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents and carers strongly support this view with responses to the questionnaire fully recommending the school. Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They say, 'There are lots of adults to care for us.' Pupils specifically appreciate 'The Friendship Stop' in the playground where 'there's always someone offering help'.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and each other safe and understand the different forms that bullying might take, for example cyber bullying. Pupils say that bullying is very rare at the school and are confident that adults are quick to 'sort it out'.
- Attendance is much improved and is above the national average. This reflects the rigour of school leaders in setting high expectations and in working effectively with parents and carers to check and ensure that improvement is achieved.

The leadership and management are good

- The relatively new headteacher promotes an effective team approach to leadership. Over the past year, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked closely together to inject a determination to drive standards forward. They are well assisted by governors.
- Strong leadership is assuredly rebuilding the work of the school following a period of staffing instability since the previous inspection, which reduced the school's effectiveness to promote improvement.
- Senior leaders undertake rigorous checks of the quality of teaching to increase its impact on pupils' progress. They have made well-considered staff appointments and have used focused staff training to improve middle leadership and ensure that teaching continues to improve.
- Senior and middle leaders take part in supportive but also challenging discussions with staff. Senior leaders ensure that considerations of staff salary progression and training and school development needs are closely linked and focused on raising standards.
- With staffing stability now restored, the pupils' faster progress and increasing skills in reading and writing further demonstrate the school's capacity to sustain improvement into the future.
- Leaders have sharpened the way teachers plan their work and this too is quickening pupils' progress as they move through the school. Senior staff acknowledge that leadership is not yet outstanding because some improvements have not been operating long enough to rectify all gaps in pupils' previous learning.
- Leaders also make sure that additional funding, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is also used earlier and more effectively to lift pupils' skills.
- The school uses sports funding effectively by using existing staff skills and bringing in specialist coaching, for example, in rugby and cricket, to lift staff expertise. This is extending the school's impressive range of sports and performance in sports competitions. An increasing number of pupils participate in sport and are improving their health and well-being. For example, most pupils attend at least one club and almost half of all pupils attend two clubs.
- Leaders, well supported by diligent staff, value pupils equally and do not tolerate discrimination. They make sure that all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are treated with respect. However, leaders are aware that some more-able pupils could achieve better and are addressing this issue.
- The school strongly promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff extend pupils' learning across a wide range of stimulating activities, which include regular community events and links with other schools. Staff also use assembly themes such as 'Inspirational People' and motivating topics, for example 'The Vikings', to further promote the pupils' interest and reflection.
- The local authority has assisted in settling new staff, but the light touch support provided since the previous inspection has not sufficiently strengthened the work of the school in Key Stage 2.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very conscious of their role in supporting the school and are particularly active in driving improvement. The governing body has significantly strengthened its procedures and effectiveness in recent years. This has included visiting the school regularly, not only to see teaching and learning at first hand, but also to question staff, pupils and parents and carers closely. As a result, governors have a good understanding of teaching and learning and how different groups of pupils make progress across the school and in relation to pupils in other schools. By these means governors hold the school to account and expect senior leaders to justify their actions in bringing improvement. The governing body manages finances effectively and makes sure that the school meets all safeguarding requirements. Governors take proper heed of teachers' performance when considering their deployment and salaries. This has supported continued improvement in teaching and the use of additional staffing. For example, governors ensure that pupils benefiting from additional funds are helped to achieve at least as well as other 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

Unique reference number	111865
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	440991

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Davies
Headteacher	Annie Lapham
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 February 2011
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