

St Mewan Community Primary School

St Mewan, St Austell, Cornwall, PL26 7DP

Inspection dates

30 April – 1 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. They start school with skills and knowledge that are similar to those usually found in children of their age. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils have attained high standards in reading, and above average standards in writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those eligible for additional funding make equally good progress. Pupils also make very good progress in almost all years, especially in learning to read.
- Teaching is effective because teachers have high expectations of their pupils, know their strengths and weaknesses and use marking and assessment effectively. Teaching assistants provide good support to those who need help.
- Pupils are polite, hard-working and are exceptionally keen to learn. There is plenty of evidence that bullying is very rare and that pupils know of its dangers. Attendance has improved significantly and is above average.
- As parents and carers recognise, school leaders are highly effective in ensuring that pupils are safe. This includes when they are off the school site or being cared for in the childcare provision.
- Pupils enjoy the wide-ranging curriculum which includes excellent opportunities to take part in sporting and musical activities. This contributes well to their excellent behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- School leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have rectified shortcomings in teaching through mutual challenge and effective management of staff performance, leading to overall improvement in achievement and teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics and to a lesser extent in writing is not as good as it is in reading. Writing is less well developed than reading in Years 1 and 2.
- When compared with reading and writing, pupils have fewer opportunities to use mathematics in a range of subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the teaching of 16 teachers in 25 lessons. About half of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. In addition, briefer visits were made to a number of lessons in order to pursue a theme. These included the quality of support for pupils with special educational needs and to observe pupils learning the letters and their sounds.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' written work in order to analyse their achievement over a period of time, and the quality of teachers' marking.
- Inspectors reviewed school documents, including those relating to pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and with members of the governing body.
- The views of 143 parents and carers who submitted them on the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and of 26 staff who completed a questionnaire, were analysed and taken into account.

Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Robert Arnold	Additional Inspector
Julie Jane	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2011. When its predecessor school, also called St Mewan Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It serves part of the town of St Austell and a number of surrounding villages.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is also below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who have a parent or carer in the armed services.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school includes a Nursery class for children aged three to four. It also provides childcare both before and after school in the form of breakfast and after-school clubs, and during the school holidays.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing matches the high levels already found in reading by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to apply mathematics in a wide range of subjects and situations
 - enabling pupils in Years 1 and 2 to widen their range of strategies for effective writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- At the end of Year 6 in 2013, pupils attained standards in national tests that were well above national averages in reading and were above average in writing and mathematics. Tracking of current pupils' progress shows that Year 6 pupils are likely to attain similar standards in 2014.
- Pupils' progress from the end of Year 2 to Year 6 shows a similar pattern. In reading, the proportions making good or very good progress are well above the national average. In writing and mathematics, these proportions are a little above national averages.
- Children make very good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. They quickly develop the social and other skills, such as listening and taking turns, that are needed to learn. The skills for learning in more formal situations, such as the knowledge of letters and their sounds, continue to develop very well through the Reception classes.
- The most-able pupils make very good progress throughout the school. In Year 6, a relatively high proportion of pupils are being prepared for the most challenging papers in the national tests in English and mathematics. The school is developing a good record of success in these papers.
- All groups of pupils make equally good progress, demonstrating the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good, and often very good, progress. They receive good quality support from staff to enable them to do this.
- Pupils who receive additional funding through the pupil premium generally achieve in line with other pupils. Numbers are small so data analysis must be treated with caution, but any gaps that emerge represent less than one term's learning and are quickly spotted and tackled because of the school's effective tracking of pupils' progress and the action taken to accelerate it.
- All pupils make rapid progress in reading throughout the school and read widely for their age. From the national check on reading standards in Year 1 to the national tests in Year 6, pupils' achievement is high. They particularly enjoy the 'Reading Karate' challenge, where pupils win coloured wristbands showing the amount and range of their reading.
- Pupils make good progress in writing and by Year 6 produce work which is of a very high quality. A display of writing on the importance of family to pupils produced much that was sensitive and engaging. However, in Years 1 and 2 the range of pupils' writing is more restricted and this is shown in national assessment results that are around the national average.
- Pupils also make good progress in mathematics, with above-average proportions achieving the higher levels at the end of Year 6. While basic skills develop well, pupils have more limited opportunities to apply their knowledge to solving mathematical problems in a wide range of situations.
- Pupils achieve very well in many other subjects, for example in music where the school community is rightly proud of its choral and orchestral performances.
- Pupils have an unusually wide range of opportunities to take part in sport, including many team and individual events, and all participate at a level appropriate to their age. There are many teams and competitions against other schools. Pupils are well aware of the importance of exercise and a healthy diet, which they put into practice. This aspect is a growing strength of the school.
- Pupils' extremely positive attitudes to learning are an important factor in ensuring their good or better progress in many subjects and aspects of the curriculum.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is routinely good, and some is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve, and they respond well to the challenges they are given. This was seen for example when Year 5 pupils were asked to write poetry with the theme of 'Space'. The

teacher used assessment extremely well to give pupils increasingly difficult individual challenges.

- Teachers know their pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses and plan well to meet them. This is especially the case for pupils who have different degrees of special educational needs. For example, pupils who are mildly dyslexic are given exercise books with coloured pages, which make writing easier for them.
- Pupils are prepared well for secondary school. For example, the school has recently purchased tablet computers similar to those used at the secondary school to which most pupils transfer, so they are able to learn to use them effectively.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is consistently good. Children are introduced to clear routines and quickly learn to accept guidance from adults.
- Pupils regularly assess their own and each other's work which deepens their understanding of how to improve.
- In Years 5 and 6, pupils are very clear about what they need to improve and how to do so, but in Years 1 and 2 their understanding is less secure.
- Additional adults give very good support to pupils who need extra help. For example, they will rearrange a mathematics problem to make it more readily understood by the pupil. Most classes have plenty of such help.
- Teachers' specialist knowledge and skills are used very well to enhance pupils' learning. Examples include music, religious education and particular sports. In the latter case, the government's additional funding for primary school sport is broadening pupils' opportunities as the school can make greater use of teachers' specialist knowledge.
- On a few occasions, pupils' writing skills in Years 1 and 2 are not developed as well as they could be. This is because they do not always write at length about a range of topics they have been studying or reading about.
- Most teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' literacy skills, especially their reading, in many different subjects. However, they do not always make sure that pupils apply their mathematical knowledge to solving problems in a wide range of situations.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are very polite and well mannered. They are exceptionally keen to learn and delight in telling adults about their achievements such as in sporting success, or how many 'Reading Karate belts' they have gained.
- In lessons pupils settle quickly and always respond immediately to adults' requests. They collaborate very well and enjoy learning together. Pupils report that learning is never slowed because of others' behaviour. This demonstrates the school's undoubted success at fostering positive relationships, and at least in part reflects the rapid establishment of positive routines in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils also greatly enjoy the homework they are set and are proud to describe the research they have undertaken to learn about a new topic such as the myths and legends of ancient Greece.
- Pupils also say that bullying is very rare and that 'silly behaviour' is always dealt with effectively by adults. The school's records confirm this, for example there have been no exclusions for many years. Parents and carers also are content with the lack of bullying and the way any that does occur is dealt with, many saying they have no experience on which to base a judgement.
- Pupils delight in telling adults about the work of the school council and their collections for charity. They are proud of their Global Issues Club and its links with a school in Mozambique. They also have a good understanding of a range of faiths and cultures. This demonstrates the school's success in tackling intolerance and discrimination.
- Year 6 pupils act as 'governors' who help pupils and staff in the younger year groups. They enjoy these responsibilities that give them an insight into the needs of younger children.
- Pupils' attendance has improved following a drive by school leaders to reduce absence,

especially persistent absence. Attendance figures now exceed national averages.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All necessary checks on adults are carried out, and staff are well trained in child protection procedures, taking their responsibilities in this field very seriously.
- Pupils are taught about the dangers of various types of behaviour such as the misuse of electronic media, bullying and substance abuse. They respond very well by discussing these dangers with maturity and common sense.
- The many outdoor and adventurous activities are carefully assessed for risk and are led by adults with any specialist skills that may be required.
- The childcare provision managed by the governing body is of good quality. Children attending are safe and secure and enjoy the range of activities, which has recently been enhanced.

The leadership and management are good

- The experienced headteacher has built an effective team of senior and middle leaders who have a clear vision to make the school even better. As a result, this is a school in which excellent behaviour and good achievement brought about by good teaching can flourish. Leaders recognise the current areas of weakness and already have plans to rectify them. They are determined that, through excellent teaching, pupils' writing and mathematics should be as high in quality as their reading.
- Leaders and governors have successfully established the Nursery class as an integral part of the school, it having been a privately-run pre-school until relatively recently. The Nursery and Reception classes together are well led and provide a very effective start to children's education.
- Leadership of literacy, reading, special educational needs and the sports development programme are other strengths of the school. Leadership of mathematics has recently changed and the new leader has a good plan for what needs to be done.
- Teachers' performance is managed well through regular checks. The results are used appropriately to decide on their pay and responsibilities. There is good evidence that teaching has improved since the school became an academy in 2011.
- The curriculum offers pupils a very wide range of opportunities and is a strength of the school. It is enhanced by an extensive programme of additional activities. There are many outdoor and adventurous opportunities, for example pupils from Years 3 to 6 take part in residential experiences that enhance their independence and contribute well to their excellent behaviour, attitudes to learning, and hence to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents and carers rightly have a high degree of confidence in the school, with more than 19 in every 20 that responded to the Parent View questionnaire saying they would recommend the school to other parents or carers.
- The school collaborates effectively with other local primary and secondary schools and with external agencies.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good knowledge of the school and its locality, and are passionate in sharing the headteacher's vision for the provision of high-quality education. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and use data well to analyse performance, understanding where the school stands both locally and nationally. They provide an appropriate degree of challenge to senior leaders, for example to raise achievement in mathematics.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching across the school and how the management of teachers' performance links to staff pay and responsibility. They manage resources well, for example they understand how the pupil premium is used and check its impact on the relevant pupils' achievement. Governors have put effective systems in place to manage both the nursery and the childcare provision, and ensure that all their statutory duties, for example to keep pupils safe, are met in full.

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	137402
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	439609

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michele Taylor
Headteacher	Paul Towe
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01726 74887
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