

# Mithian School

Buckshead, St Agnes, Cornwall, TR5 0XW

**Inspection dates** 3–4 July 2014

<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.

- All groups of pupils achieve well. Attainment is rising across the school as pupils are making faster progress.
- Most pupils are making good progress now in writing as well as in reading and mathematics. Consequently, standards in writing have improved over the past year.
- Pupils benefit from teaching that is consistently good. Teachers are particularly effective in devising activities that engage pupils' interests. They use new technology well to enhance pupils' learning.
- Reading is taught well so that pupils quickly become fluent readers and develop a love of books.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy all the activities the school has to offer. They have positive attitudes to their learning and try hard in lessons.
- Pupils feel safe in school because the school provides a caring and safe environment in which to learn.
- The dedicated headteacher, subject leaders and governors are an effective team. They have been successful in making improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils have many memorable experiences, including those in art and sports events. These contribute strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding. Sometimes pupils do not have challenging enough activities to extend their thinking and skills to the full.
- Checks on the impact of teaching by subject leaders do not focus sharply enough on how well different groups of pupils learn.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a wide range of teaching across the school in a variety of subjects, including several observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to classrooms, the dining hall, the breakfast club and the playground.
- Meetings were held with pupils, governors and the school's leaders. The inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 40 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as consulting informally with parents before the start of the school day and looking at written correspondence. She took account of the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- She observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans. She examined a range of documents, including information on pupils' current progress, minutes of the governing body meetings and the plans for the use of the school sports fund.
- The inspector heard pupils read, talked to them in lessons and evaluated samples of their work.

## Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are organised in four classes, some with mixed-age groups. The very large majority come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is the additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after. Currently there are no children who are looked after in the school.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is also below average.
- The school runs a nursery class in the morning. It provides continuous care for pupils through a breakfast and an after-school club.
- The school is part of the Richard Lander collaboration of ten local schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that pupils are provided with sufficiently challenging activities in order to extend fully their thinking and skills.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that all leaders evaluate the teaching in terms of its impact on the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils of different abilities.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children join the school in the Reception Year with the skills that are typical for their age. They make good progress, especially in reading. They start Year 1 as confident learners, with the very large majority having the skills and understanding expected for their age, with some exceeding these.
- Over the past year, pupils have made faster progress in all subjects across the school, including writing. The school has successfully reversed the dip seen in attainment in Key Stage 2 in 2013, and current groups are on track to attain well. Attainment is rising in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to above-average levels.
- Pupils are keen to succeed and find the learning activities interesting. They are usually clear about the purpose of their learning. They like the way teachers help them to know what they have to do next to improve their work.
- Across the school, the most able pupils are making faster progress because of the increased levels of challenge in the learning activities. However, sometimes these activities do not extend their thinking and skills to the full. This limits the extent of their learning overall.
- Disabled pupils and those with special education needs make at least the expected progress as a result of the effective help they receive.
- Pupils supported by additional funding are making good progress overall. The numbers are too small to compare their attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6 with that of others in the school. However, any remaining gaps in attainment are decreasing because of the specific extra help these pupils are given.
- Pupils have performed better in the recent Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) check than in 2013. This reflects the greater emphasis the school has placed on the teaching of these skills so that pupils are becoming fluent readers more quickly. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about different authors and read across a wide range of literature with good understanding.
- Greater numbers of pupils are taking part in a wider range of sports and competitions than was previously the case, supported by the new school sports funding. They have improved their skills and performances through activities such as cardio-tennis, cross-country running and 'Funky Feet' dancing.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good. It is not yet outstanding as, in a few instances, teachers do not provide the right level of challenge to extend pupils' thinking and skills. As a result, not all pupils are achieving as well as they could.
- Overall, pupils learn effectively because teachers plan purposeful learning activities that interest them and motivate them to succeed. For example, children in the Reception Year were enthralled when reading the clues 'written' to them by the knight in their class storybook, leading them to find the 'missing kittens'. This inspired them to persevere and read to good standards.
- Teachers check on pupils' progress regularly in lessons, often adapting the activities to speed up the learning. Pupils know how to improve their work as teachers give them detailed and clear guidance about how to do this and time to act on their suggestions. This is particularly effective in writing and so pupils have made faster progress over the last year.
- Teachers and additional adults are skilled at providing the right amount of support and challenge needed for pupils to overcome any difficulties. The work for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is set at the correct level and this is helping them to make at least the expected progress.
- Pupils supported by additional funding are benefiting from the extra guidance and small-group

work. This means they are making good, and sometimes faster, progress than their classmates.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children enjoy the attractive and well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning environments. They are encouraged to explore and develop their own interests and activities. The systematic teaching of the sounds that letters make is ensuring that children develop their reading skills well.
- Pupils benefit from expert teaching in a range of subjects. For example, skilled teaching in art ensures pupils are developing their abilities in a variety of media, and they produce work of a high standard. Pupils are enthused by the school's range of new technology and the way teachers use this to enhance their learning in other subjects.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Typically pupils are polite, friendly and considerate of each other. They are cooperative, settle to work quickly and appreciate all the school has to offer.
- Relationships throughout the school are effective and secure. The school is successful in fostering good relations and tackling discrimination. The playground is a harmonious place because pupils make good use of a range of play and sports equipment.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because of occasional lapses in concentration in lessons by a few pupils when they fidget and waste some time.
- Pupils enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities, such as school councillors and music monitors. They respond well to the behaviour management systems as they are keen to take part in the enrichment activities or 'Golden Time', set up to reward good behaviour.
- School records show that instances of poor behaviour are few. A small number of pupils who have behavioural or emotional difficulties are managed well. These pupils benefit from carefully tailored support and have become more confident and resilient learners.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school because the adults look after them well. Parents who completed the online questionnaire, or who spoke to the inspector, agree.
- Pupils are clear that bullying is rare, although they are aware of some of the different forms that this can take such as cyber or physical bullying. Pupils have complete confidence in the adults to help sort out any problems or occasional disagreements that may occur.
- School leaders have worked hard with parents to encourage regular attendance and reduce any unnecessary absences. As a consequence, current rates are above average, showing an improvement over recent years.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The dedicated headteacher has instilled a strong sense of ambition in the school, supported well by all staff and governors. Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be done to improve it further.
- The headteacher and subject leaders work well together to drive forward the necessary improvements. They check pupils' attainment and progress regularly and use this information to ensure that teachers promote faster rates of progress. Effective steps taken to improve the quality of teaching, especially in writing, have helped to raise standards across the school.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because leaders have not secured a high enough proportion of outstanding teaching. This has not enabled all pupils to achieve as well as they should.
- Subject leaders have helped staff improve their work by providing a range of training activities and support. However, they do not evaluate the quality of teaching precisely enough. This means they are not clear about the impact on the achievement of different groups of pupils of differing abilities.

- Teachers have clear targets for improving their performance which focus well on raising the achievement of different groups of pupils. They know what constitutes good practice and how their pay progresses only when their targets have been met.
- The local authority has provided light-touch support for this good school over recent years. Good collaboration with colleagues from local schools has ensured teachers' judgements about pupils' attainment are rigorous and accurate.
- Pupils' learning experiences across a range of subjects are varied and memorable, such as the arts week linked to Cornwall's mining heritage. The school provides a wide variety of enrichment activities that contribute strongly towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Checks on the plans for the use of the school sport fund show that more pupils are participating in a wider range of sporting activities than previously. There is an increase in the opportunities for pupils to take part in competitions, such as cross-country running races and sports tournaments. Staff are able to develop their skills alongside specialist teachers to help sustain these activities.
- Parents are very positive about the work of the school. They are appreciative of the openness of staff and the opportunities to become more involved in their child's learning.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted at all times and there have been no recorded incidents of harassment in recent years. The school tailors support well for those pupils supported by additional funding in order to raise their achievement.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. School systems are managed efficiently and checked regularly.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils. They receive detailed information from the school's leaders about how well pupils are doing. As a result, they have a clear understanding of how the school's performance data compares with that of similar and all schools nationally. This allows them to ask challenging questions about pupils' achievement. They are involved fully in checking the progress made on improvement plans through their frequent visits to school. These visits also enable them to know about the quality of teaching. They develop their skills through good-quality training provided by the local authority. They know how the performance of staff is being managed and how support is provided to develop good practice further. They are fully aware of the way teachers' pay is aligned to good performance and how this links to pay progression.
  - Governors manage their budget effectively, including the additional funds to support eligible pupils and sports development. They know how funds are allocated and the impact they are having on pupils' achievement and physical health.

## 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>	111867
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	439616

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

<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>	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lorna Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda Garbett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 June 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01872 552711
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