

St Mary's C of E Primary School

Higher Trehaverne, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 3RJ

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Due to outstanding teaching over time, all pupils make rapid progress. They consistently reach standards well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The most able pupils reach very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have the highest possible aspirations for each pupil. Their rigorous checking of the school's work has ensured that it is rapidly improving.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have vigorously tackled the necessary improvements. They have created a dedicated team of staff who are equally determined to improve their own practice. This has resulted in outstanding teaching.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning contribute to their outstanding achievement.
- Pupils behave extremely well in class and outside at play. The school's procedures for keeping them safe are also outstanding.
- Subject and middle leaders contribute strongly to improving provision for pupils in all year groups, including those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- The governing body has challenged the school's leaders to do even better. Through regular visits to school and links with subject and senior leaders, governors have a deep understanding of the achievement of each pupil.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Children are nurtured from the outset, and given exciting activities which motivate them. As a result, progress during the Reception year is rapid and the children are well prepared for Key Stage 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons or part lessons taught by seven teachers, four of them jointly with the headteacher. One inspector also visited a series of shorter teaching sessions with the deputy headteacher to observe the way the school teaches children phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their books during lessons, as well as in a sample of books from pupils throughout the school.
- They analysed information provided by the school regarding the progress pupils are making and the standards they are reaching, as well as looking at the results of statutory tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6 in 2013 and 2014.
- The inspectors held meetings with all school leaders, including subject leaders for mathematics and English and the assessment coordinator. They also spoke frequently to the headteacher and deputy headteacher about a range of school activities.
- One inspector held meetings with the leader of the early years provision and the physical education leader.
- An inspector held a meeting with the Chair of Governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of pupils were sought during informal lunchtime conversations, as well as in a more formal meeting.
- Both inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- They also scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and reports from the local authority about the work of the school.
- They examined the school's records of behaviour incidents.
- The inspectors took account of the 60 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, as well as to the views of parents they spoke to in the playground. One letter received from parents was also taken into account.

Inspection team

Anne Newall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Caroline Bond

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school with seven classes, one for each year group. The youngest pupils are taught full time in a Reception class.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin.
- The school was awarded the Artsmark Gold in 2014.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support through the additional government funding, which is provided to support pupils eligible for free school meals or those in the care of the local authority, is lower than average. There are very few eligible pupils in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- A breakfast and after-school club is provided every day, and is managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations set by the government for pupils' progress and standards at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure better communication with parents so that all understand the reasons for steps taken by the school's leaders and managers.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have created a strong staff team who shares an ethos of ambition and pride, which enables staff and children to flourish. They tackled the issues arising from the previous inspection with urgency, which has resulted in dramatic improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- They have taken decisive and effective action to improve any aspect which did not meet their high standards. This has resulted in an outstanding quality of teaching and rapid progress for pupils. As a consequence, the achievement of pupils is outstanding.
- Middle leaders have helped ensure these improvements by rigorously checking the work of pupils and staff, identifying any gaps in children's learning, and helping teachers plan suitable activities to fill them. The school has made excellent use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, which has ensured that they make the same, and sometimes better, progress than others. In general, the standards they reach in reading, writing and mathematics are very similar to other pupils.
- The school shares expertise within the local cluster of schools as well as outstanding schools elsewhere to aid improvement. In turn, this school is also visited by teachers from other schools to see how effective the quality of its marking and feedback to pupils is and the powerful impact it has upon pupils' progress. This exemplary practice was confirmed by inspectors who saw excellent marking in pupils' books, and discussed feedback with the pupils.
- The broad and balanced curriculum is enriched by 'dazzling starts' for topics which enthuse pupils from the outset. It is enriched by numerous visits and visitors, including well known authors and artists, for example, which enhance learning. Excellent use is made of links across different subjects to give pupils opportunities to apply skills; for example, pupils regularly use hand held tablets in mathematics or their literacy skills in music lessons.
- Innovative homework tasks are designed to give pupils choice and responsibility for their completion, and they make a strong contribution to the pupils' excellent learning. The tasks cover many different subjects including design and technology, history or geography, and are available on the website so that parents can be involved in their children's learning.
- Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is wide ranging and results in pupils who are well prepared for life in modern Britain. As they grow up, they gain a sound understanding of British values. They learn about democracy through electing their school councillors, and about rights and wrongs when discussing school rules.
- Participation in events such as the city's Festival of Lights, which took place during the inspection, also teaches children about their local culture and what it means to be Cornish.
- The school has used the funding provided by the government to increase sports provision very well by increasing the range of activities available and the skills of staff. Participation rates have increased and pupils say they 'can try out lots of new sports'.
- The vast majority of parents are highly satisfied with their child's experience in school. A small minority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, felt the school was not well led or managed. Inspectors found no other evidence to support this opinion, but it is clear that not all parents understand the reasons behind actions taken by the school.
- Pupils spoken to are overwhelmingly happy with their experiences in school. They say that they have many opportunities to try different activities, and that no one is ever left out. This confirms the school's commitment to equal opportunities.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school. This has reduced recently, which is a sign of its confidence in the school's ability to sustain its outstanding provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is excellent. Governors are knowledgeable and well informed. They visit school regularly to see the day-to-day work of staff and pupils. They receive detailed reports from their linked subject leaders, and contribute to school self-evaluation through first hand experience. Governors undertake training appropriate to their role, which enables them to ask pertinent and challenging questions about standards in school. They know that systems to manage the performance of teachers are rigorous and have improved the quality of teaching. Governors ensure that teachers' pay is linked to successful achievement of targets for their pupils' progress. Their understanding of the impact of teaching upon pupils' progress is thorough. They know exactly how each group of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those eligible for support from additional funding, is progressing in relation to each other group and how the standards pupils reach compare to national averages. Governors fulfil all

their statutory requirements relating to safeguarding, and manage the school's finances soundly. They also manage a successful and busy breakfast and after-school club, which is a valuable resource for parents.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their desire to learn makes a strong contribution to their outstanding achievement. They take pride in their environment and look after their belongings and school resources very well.
- Their attitudes to learning are consistently positive, and pupils of all ages behave exceptionally well in lessons. This is because the activities are exciting, matched very closely to their needs with an appropriate level of challenge which keeps them motivated.
- Pupils show very respectful behaviour to each other and to all adults around the school. Children speak very positively about the staff, saying, 'They help us.' 'They sort things out.' 'Teachers are always kind and friendly.'
- Pupils demonstrate excellent manners at all times, saying please and thank you during lunchtimes, and routinely holding doors open for each other and adults.
- Pupils also behave extremely well when moving around the school and when playing outside. Older pupils take care of younger ones, and all play happily and considerately.
- The school maintains a behaviour and bullying log, but there are rarely any incidents to record. The pupils spoken to say that behaviour is excellent, and are adamant that there is not any bullying, but 'just sometimes some girls fall out, but the teacher quickly sorts it out'.
- A small minority of parents responding to Parent View or spoken to by inspectors do not think the school deals effectively with bullying. Inspectors found no evidence at present of any alleged bullying that was not known about and dealt with by staff.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- All policies relating to safety and safeguarding are specific to the school, regularly reviewed and consistently implemented. They are checked by senior leaders and governors. Staff are appropriately trained in a range of safeguarding areas, including child protection and safer recruitment.
- Health and safety are an agenda item at each governors' meeting, which ensures safeguarding is kept in high profile throughout the year, with weekly checks carried out.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, including inappropriate name calling and e-bullying. They are taught how to deal with these in the curriculum, as well as in assemblies and anti-bullying week. For example, the pupils know that the computers have 'blocks' on them, but if they see something they think is wrong they 'press Hector, and call the teacher'.
- Pupils know that some situations are safe and others are not. They regularly contribute to risk assessments, either in lessons or for outdoor activities, learning to take care of themselves and others in different situations. Regular talks from the fire service or the police also contribute to the pupils' outstanding sense of safety.
- The attendance of pupils is above average.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The school's records of the quality of teaching show that it has improved dramatically in reading, writing and mathematics as well as in other subjects. This is why the achievement of pupils is so high.
- Pupils read well, and with enjoyment, because of the close attention given to ensuring they learn how to read and blend letters systematically. In addition, visits by authors such as Jill Murphy who showed the pupils how she writes, edits and illustrates her books, spark their enthusiasm for reading. Many children can read independently by the time they leave the Reception class. By the end of Year 6 most pupils read at a very high standard and can talk about the different writing styles of various authors.
- Teachers use their thorough understanding of each pupil's ability to plan exciting and motivating activities which enthuse pupils to learn. Wall displays are stimulating and are well used by pupils to help them learn.
- Teachers have an in depth knowledge of each pupil, including those with disabilities or special educational needs, and routinely know their needs. This enables them to plan and teach extra activities, where

necessary, to fill any gaps in learning. This contributes to the pupils' outstanding achievement over time.

- The precisely planned activities ensure that pupils of all abilities, including the most able, are constantly challenged to reach even higher standards.
- A particular strength of teaching, which has contributed to rapidly increased rates of progress, is the quality of marking and feedback. Throughout pupils' books in all year groups and in writing and mathematics, teachers diligently mark all work and set pupils clear developmental points. As a result, pupils understand exactly what they have to do to improve, and use this information in subsequent work.
- Staff have high expectations of the pupils' work. The presentation of work is of a consistently excellent standard across the school, and is evidence of the pride that teachers and pupils have in their work.
- Within all the teaching observed, the quality of questioning by teachers and teaching assistants made a strong contribution to pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, the teaching assistant drew out a pupil's thinking by asking 'so the dilemma is ...', and, 'you need to think about ...', rather than providing an answer. One boy said, 'I really like writing, because the teacher gives me lots of help to get better.'
- Pupils are expected to respond to questions using whole sentences and the correct vocabulary. For example, in Year 5, when discussing the translation of shapes in four quadrants, pupils referred to the vertical axes as the 'y' axes, and horizontal as 'x' axes, and used the word vector to describe direction.
- Resources are extremely well prepared and often innovative. Pupils routinely use hand held tablets to help them learn, and make use of voice recorders to help learn French. Pupils were often seen using these voice recorders on a wall display of a poem in French, when they pressed the buttons to hear other children's recordings.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils are making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- A similar proportion to that found nationally met the standard set by the government in the Year 1 phonic screening check in 2014. Already this term, many pupils currently in Year 1 have met the standard.
- Virtually all pupils who had not met the standard in Year 1 had achieved it in their Year 2 recheck, which confirms the improvements made by the school in teaching letters and their sounds.
- Consistently well matched activities and close attention to their needs mean that, by the time pupils leave Key Stage 1, they are reaching standards above the national average in each subject.
- This excellent progress continues through Key Stage 2, and in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in both 2013 and 2014, pupils reached standards well above the national average.
- The excellent provision for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs means the progress they make is similar to that of other pupils. They reach higher standards than similar pupils nationally, and similar standards to all pupils nationally.
- The few pupils supported by the additional funding also make outstanding progress. The gap between the standards they reach in reading, writing and mathematics are less than one term's work compared to other pupils nationally in 2014, and around one term compared to other pupils in school. This gap has narrowed considerably compared to previous years.
- The most able pupils constantly rise to the challenge of harder work and, as a result, more are reaching the higher Level 6 in writing and mathematics in the national assessments.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The outstanding teaching and support from staff in the early years provision mean that the majority of children make rapid progress to meet or exceed their early learning goals. As a result, the children are exceptionally well prepared to enter Key Stage 1.
- A much higher proportion of children met the early learning goals than found nationally last year, showing an improvement on previous years.
- The early years leader liaises closely with parents and with pre-schools or nurseries that the children attended, to learn about their abilities, interests and needs before they start school. She identifies early in the year exactly what the children can already do, and plans activities which interest and encourage them to explore and learn both indoors and out.
- Staff skilfully observe the children's learning, and intervene when necessary to sustain their interest or challenge them to try something new. This encourages the children to use their imaginations, as was seen

when some boys built houses in the sandpit whilst another made chocolate cake with the same sand. Others enjoy role play or matching pictures and words.

- Photographs of the children's activities and examples of their work are kept in Learning Journeys, which parents see during parent-teacher meetings. The early years leader has plans to involve parents more by contributing examples of home learning to these during the year, so that a fuller picture of each child's development is built up.
- Children socialise well together, and behave respectfully towards each other and staff. They know that the staff expect them to be kind and thoughtful, and they are.
- Safety is paramount in Reception, and children know the rules. For example, in a physical education lesson, they were able to explain why only a few children could use the apparatus at any one time. Children are encouraged to take risks in a safe environment, as could be seen when some climbed high wall bars and hung upside down, being watched by staff.
- The early years leader and headteacher, together with the linked governor, rigorously check that all possible steps are taken to ensure the children are safeguarded during the early years. Children are closely supervised, they understand the safety routines, including hand washing before eating, and they play very safely outside.

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	111990
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	451606

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Machin
Headteacher	Dianne Jones
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 June 2013
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