

St Maddern's Church of England School

Bellair Road, Madron, Penzance, TR20 8SP

Inspection dates

1–2 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- St Maddern's is an effective school that lies at the heart of its community. It has improved well since the previous inspection. The school is regaining its popularity and increasing in size as parents acknowledge the high-quality care, and refreshed and raised expectations of pupils' achievement.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has provided strong leadership to bring the school through a challenging period of change.
- The headteacher shares her expertise and utilises the skills of other specialists across a cooperative of schools to bring good improvement. She is supported well by capable governors in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Parents and pupils appreciate the school's welcoming atmosphere that strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's extensive links with other schools sustain a stimulating curriculum for the pupils. It includes frequent opportunities for them to learn well with a wider number of pupils of their own age.
- Pupils behave well. They share very friendly relationships with each other and with adults.
- The school's work in keeping pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All staff provide exemplary care.
- Teaching is good. It is typified by the staff's supportive relationships with the pupils, which help them to behave and work well in lessons. Some teaching is outstanding, especially in securing the children's self-confidence and promoting the expressive arts.
- Pupils make good, and sometimes better progress from their different starting points. The above average levels of attainment reached by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics represent good achievement.
- Early years provision for children in the pre-school class, and in the adjacent Reception and Years 1 and 2 class, is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times, pupils' weaker handwriting restricts their ability to write fluently and, on occasion, masks the quality of their expressive writing.
- Occasionally, pupils are not moved on to harder work quickly enough when they find tasks too easy.
- New teachers are not yet experienced enough to fully undertake middle-leadership responsibilities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 14 lessons and saw the work of four teachers. He was accompanied by the headteacher during these visits to lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's analysis of how well it is improving. The inspector examined the school's systems for checking progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their work, and listened to individual pupils read. He also looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes, especially writing.
- The inspector held meetings with members of the governing body. Meetings were held with school staff, mainly senior and middle leaders. He also met with members of the school council. The inspector spoke to many individual pupils in lessons and around the school. The inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. He also had a telephone conversation with an external adviser.
- There were not enough responses to register on Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire. The inspector took note of the school's own survey of parental views completed in 2014. The inspector gathered the views of some parents during informal meetings at the school during the inspection. Questionnaires completed by nine members of staff were also analysed.
- The inspector considered the school's use and impact of the primary physical education and sport funding, and the pupil premium.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. The number fluctuates considerably from year to year.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is well above average. However, given the size of the school, this represents a small number of pupils in receipt of free school meals. Currently, there are very few pupils in Year 6 in receipt of free schools meals and this was also the case in 2014.
- An above average proportion of pupils join and leave the school other than at normal times. The very small number of pupils in each year group across the school varies and fluctuates significantly.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of Year 6.
- Children start the school's early years provision on a part-time basis in a pre-school class. Most of these children continue their early years learning on a full-time basis in the Reception and Years 1 and 2 class. Other pupils in the school are taught in a mixed-age Years 3 to 6 class.
- The school became a member of the Penwith Education Trust in July 2013. This is a group of schools that work as cooperative partners. This school retains its own headteacher and governing body.
- There have been significant changes to the staffing of the school, including at a senior level, and in the membership of the governing body since the previous inspection. The two class teachers who commenced their duties at the school in September 2014 are newly qualified.
- The school is a Centre of Excellence in Financial Education. The headteacher is an Education Champion, and provides support in financial education to other schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding so that it enables all pupils to make as much progress as possible by:
 - strengthening the teaching of handwriting
 - moving pupils on to harder work when it is clear that they are ready for it.
- Improve the leadership of the school to outstanding by developing the skills and middle leadership roles of new staff, at the earliest opportunity, so they can contribute more fully to school improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors have improved the school well since the last inspection, but especially in recent years. The curriculum has been widened and the issues raised at the previous inspection, for example, in strengthening the use of computers to aid pupils' learning, have also been addressed effectively.
- Leaders make sure that the safeguarding of pupils is given the highest priority. They carefully check staff to ensure their suitability to work with children and undertake appropriate risk assessments to keep pupils safe on school trips as well as around the school. Their safeguarding procedures fully meet statutory requirements.
- The headteacher, in particular, provides strong and determined leadership. She is well supported by capable governors who work well as a team. Together, leaders ensure that there are regular checks on the quality of teaching throughout the school. They ensure that staff salary progression is linked with, and leads to, pupils' good progress.
- Leaders have helped the school to emerge well from a period of significant change and to secure a culture where good teaching and pupils' behaviour not only thrives, but also continues to improve.
- The headteacher openly shares her expertise, especially in financial education, with schools across the co-operative trust and wider afield. In turn, this has enabled her to call upon skilled colleagues from other schools in her drive to move St Maddern's forward.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because middle leadership is not fully developed. Currently, leaders from other schools aid the headteacher in checking work in specific subjects and in assisting with staff training. For example, this has helped to support new teachers and improve the quality of their marking of pupils' work. It is also sustaining good leadership during a period when developing middle leadership roles is limited until new teachers have completed their induction year.
- The school is a harmonious, inclusive community where pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are warmly welcomed and enabled to learn successfully together. All staff provide high levels of care to secure equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination for all the pupils.
- The number of pupils attending the school is rising. This is because parents and representatives of the community note and value the refreshed and strengthened leadership and learning opportunities now provided at the school.
- The headteacher works tirelessly and very effectively to sustain a broad, well-balanced and highly stimulating curriculum for the pupils. She is fully supported by governors and staff in making full use of links across the cooperative trust and with other local schools to widen the activities provided for the pupils.
- The school enhances pupils' learning through a strong focus on financial education, which includes helping them to plan events and raise funds for various charities. Pupils also experience a range of exciting trips, visits and clubs that they much enjoy, often with pupils of their own age from other schools. These also ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain because they learn to meet, work and co-operate with others. Pupils learn about tolerance and respect in assemblies. They learn well about British values and take part in elections to the school council and discuss democracy, the rule of law and citizenship within class topics.
- The curriculum provided by the school significantly enhances the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, fair play in sports events with other schools extends pupils' social skills. The school invites specialist teachers in music and drama, and members of different faith communities such as a Sikh resident as well as the local vicar, to raise pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural awareness. Pupils also take part in community and school events such as Mazey Day and the planned 'Peace Child' performance respectively, to further extend their understanding.
- The local authority has provided effective and supportive guidance to the relatively new headteacher in addressing the areas that required improvement at the last inspection. Alongside other external advisers, the local authority also provides specialist training for new staff and governors.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium is spent effectively. They ensure that disadvantaged pupils are fully included in all school activities, such as sports clubs, and achieve at least as well as other pupils. At times, also because of the extra adult support they receive, pupils enjoy a boost to their self-confidence, which enables them to progress even better than other pupils.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding to promote sport and physical education is spent effectively. For

example, money is spent to provide more opportunities for pupils to swim so that pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 now swim all year round. Funding is also used to widen the range of sports offered to the pupils, including after school, and these now include tennis, dance and tri-golf. The school links closely with schools in the cooperative trust to employ specialist sports coaches to train staff and develop pupils' skills. This has increased and continues to raise the percentage of pupils participating in sports, for example, from 95% in 2014 to 97% this year.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are well organised, well led and are effective. They work very closely with the headteacher in fully meeting statutory requirements, including safeguarding pupils. Governors are ambitious for the school and fully support the headteacher in cooperating with other schools to widen the learning experiences provided for the pupils. Governors have improved their skills and effectiveness, especially in checking the work of the school, since the previous inspection. For example, they ensure effective use of the pupil premium and know that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 continues to compare well with pupils in other schools nationally. Governors frequently visit the school and provide good assistance to the headteacher in aspects of the day-to-day leadership and management. This is being given particular emphasis by governors until newly qualified teachers have completed their induction year. Governors receive detailed reports from the headteacher, and from the local authority and external advisers, about the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. As a result, governors consider staff performance effectively and, when appropriate, reward good teaching and ensure that underperformance is rectified quickly. Governors have assisted the headteacher in making sure that newly appointed staff have the skills that best suit the school and pupils' needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show good attitudes towards learning and these are having a good impact in quickening their progress.
- Pupils work hard to complete their work and strive to please their teachers. They listen attentively in lessons, and contribute very enthusiastically and purposefully to class discussion and when exchanging ideas in pairs with their 'talk partners'.
- Pupils undertake their duties diligently, for example, during lessons as 'lead learners', demonstrating good learning and explaining their strategies.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because, at times, a few pupils lose concentration when not supported closely by adults and the quality of their learning is reduced.
- Even so, most pupils behave well around the school and enjoy very supportive relationships outside of lessons. They are proud of their school and use equipment such as handheld computers respectfully.
- With the exception of a widespread period of ill health during the spring term, attendance has improved steadily in recent years and generally matches the national average. This stems from the school's strengthened checking of attendance, closer links with parents and pupils' improved enjoyment of school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school's health and safety procedures, which include assessing risks, vetting staff and checking that facilities are safe and secure, are rigorously implemented by all staff. Pupils are kept very safe. All the parents, pupils and staff who spoke with the inspector fully share this view.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of different types of bullying, such as physical and verbal abuse. They are especially well informed about cyber-bullying.
- Pupils use their very good understanding of e-safety to help each other to stay safe when using computers. In assembly, the pupils' well-considered explanations of how to respond when meeting strangers also illustrates their particularly secure understanding of how to keep safe.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe at school 'because we have lots of friends and teachers look after us very well'. Pupils are very considerate of each other. At break times, older pupils are swift to help younger children to stay safe whenever the need arises.
- Behaviour records show that bullying is rare and that there have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils warmly welcome those arriving from other schools and show very good levels of care and understanding in helping them to settle happily into school routines. School records also show that the few pupils in need of closer support for their emotional and behavioural development respond well to the guidance that they receive to improve their behaviour.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- The quality of teaching is good. It has improved since the previous inspection, especially the management and promotion of pupils' good behaviour for learning.
- At times, teaching is outstanding, particularly as in music for example, when pupils are challenged and enthused in equal measure to think carefully and concentrate. The pupils' excellent learning is clearly evident in their harmonious and joyful singing.
- Teachers and skilled teaching assistants are particularly diligent in ensuring that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully included in activities and make good progress.
- Pupils learn well when sharing ideas and exchanging views during discussions. They reply courteously and thoughtfully to the teachers' questions. Pupils' interest, and consequently progress, often quickens when they respond enthusiastically to challenges set by their teachers. This is especially the case when pupils share their ideas with their 'talk partner' classmates. This was clearly evident, for example, in the confident way that pupils in Years 3 to 6 expressed their ideas during drama when practising for their 'Peace Child' performance.
- On occasion in the Years 3 to 6 class, when adults are busy supporting other groups, a few pupils chatter instead of getting on with their work and their progress slows.
- The headteacher, aided by specialists in the local authority and from local schools, has secured improvements in the way teachers check pupils' developing skills and progress. Teachers have also improved the way they mark pupils' work. There is consistent and effective practice across the school now, with teachers giving particularly detailed and helpful guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. As a result, pupils work hard and respond well to teachers' advice and this has quickened their progress.
- A scrutiny of pupils' books shows good teaching in English and mathematics. For example, pupils are using a widened range of descriptive vocabulary to improve their writing and are specifically self-checking and correcting work in their mathematics books.
- Teachers across the school now ensure that pupils have very good opportunities to learn well by using computers. More recently, this has been by using handheld electronic tablets to undertake research, either individually or in pairs. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection that is having a very positive impact in raising pupils' interest and resilience in learning.
- At times, when pupils have already demonstrated their understanding, teachers and teaching assistants do not always move them on to harder work quickly enough and this slows progress.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Pupils' basic skills on entry and across the school are subject, at times, to wide variation across the very small and different-sized year group. Even so, evidence of pupils' improving performance in national assessments, and in school, and evaluation of their work reflect good achievement during their time in school.
- Pupils make good progress during in the early years and Key Stage 1 class and derive much benefit from the supportive and often individual adult guidance that they receive.
- Standards were above average at the end of Year 2 in 2014, especially in reading and writing. Most pupils currently in Year 2 are again demonstrating higher than expected skills for their age reflecting an improvement in mathematics.
- An above average proportion of pupils also reach, and often exceed, the expected standard in the Years 1 and 2 phonic (letters and the sounds that they make) screening checks in response to good teaching. Pupils build well on this good start and develop good reading skills by reading frequently at school and at home, and by increasingly using handheld computers to learn for themselves.
- The above average levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics evident at the end of Year 6 in national assessment in 2014 represented much better outcomes than the previous two years. School and inspection checks of pupils' responses in class, and work in books, show that they continue to benefit from close adult assistance to ensure that pupils make good gains in their learning as they move through the school.
- Pupils, especially the most able, become confident learners and respond very conscientiously when chosen to be 'lead learners' and explain how their ideas help solve problems. As a result, increasing numbers of pupils across the school now demonstrate higher than expected levels of skill for their age. This is

especially the case in Years 2 and 6 this year, reflecting pupils' better progress, especially in writing, in response to challenging teaching. In relation to their often widely different starting points, pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school.

- A rising number of pupils are arriving from other schools later than the normal time of entry, mostly into Key Stage 2. They too benefit from good teaching, respond well to carefully planned extra adult help and make good progress over time.
- In recent years, through class discussions and by sharing ideas with each other, pupils have extended their vocabulary well and this is enabling them to write more expressively. At times, though, weaker handwriting skills restrict their ability to write fluently and with even more expression.
- Pupils develop their mathematical understanding well because of an effective focus on examining the meaning of technical terms, often through practical work. For example, children in Reception and Year 1 investigated terms such as higher and lower and bigger and smaller. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 also deepened their understanding by making mud towers during 'International Mud Day' to explore the concept of ratio.
- Pupils in receipt of free school meals are supported well by pupil premium funding. Consequently, they make at least good, and sometimes better, progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils to make valid comparisons between their attainment and that of other pupils in the school and nationally. Nevertheless, because they often benefit from extra adult help and carefully chosen additional activities, most disadvantaged pupils make better progress than their classmates and other pupils nationally. This is equally the case in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also receive extra adult assistance, which includes high-quality specialist guidance. These pupils have their specific needs suitably identified and addressed at an early stage and also often make excellent progress in addressing to their complex needs.

The early years provision

is good

- Children's skills on entering the pre-school class and the adjacent Reception and Years 1 and 2 class vary significantly from year to year. Mostly, over time, they reflect the skills typical of children for their age.
- Children make a good start in the pre-school. They derive much benefit from close adult attention. They also have good opportunities to mix and play with older children in Reception that help them to transfer happily when the time comes.
- Children continue to make at least good progress during their time in Reception. On entry to Year 1, the above average proportion of children reaching a good level of development illustrates their good achievement and readiness for future learning.
- Strong strategic leadership by the headteacher and governors has reintroduced pre-school provision to the school over the past year. This means better and more effective use is now being made of the school's spacious, well-equipped indoor and outdoor facilities to enrich the children's introduction to school.
- The headteacher continues to oversee the early years provision and, by working closely with the new teacher and pre-school leader, sustains good leadership and management. For example, it has led to strengthened use of the outdoor facilities to help children learn by finding things out for themselves.
- The children also benefit from the skilled teaching of visiting specialists in music and drama. These enrich children's enjoyment of school, boost their self-confidence and promote their excellent personal development.
- Children in pre-school and Reception behave extremely well and relate very warmly to each other and other children, who rapidly become close friends. This is because all staff provide exemplary care and diligently adhere to school procedures to safeguard and keep the children very safe.
- Staff also liaise very supportively with parents. This helps the children to settle quickly into the established routines that support their ability to learn and play well together. For example, children in Reception respond diligently and respectfully to the teacher's questions and speedily put their equipment away after use when told to do so.
- Teaching is good because staff cooperate well together to ensure an effective balance between the range of activities led by adults and those chosen by the children themselves. As a result, children are able to learn, practise, and use and apply their developing skills successfully. For example, children in the pre-school had fun and learned well, initially by drawing their own pictures of lollipops, and then by making real ice lollies assisted by an adult.
- At times, opportunities are missed to promote children's early writing skills more effectively during outdoor activities. Even so, children enjoy their work and develop their phonic understanding, and early writing and number skills, effectively. This is because staff check the children's progress well. They do this by

supporting children's work and activities closely, and by questioning and challenging them at the right level in relation to their understanding.

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	111996
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	449586

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Jenkin
Headteacher	Helen Pearce
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2010
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Email address	secretary@st-maddern's.cornwall.sch.uk

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