

# St Petroc's Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Athelstan Park, Bodmin, Cornwall PL1 1DS

<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 June 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The relatively new headteacher and his 'no excuses' approach have driven the pace of improvement. His strong steer has ensured that everyone's efforts are sharply focused on improving pupils' progress.
- Leaders of the Saints' Way Multi-Academy Trust provide effective guidance and training to ensure that pupils receive a good education.
- School leaders' united and determined commitment to improve outcomes for pupils is quickly raising standards where it is needed, in writing and mathematics.
- An engaging curriculum inspires pupils to want to learn and improve.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching are leading to a rise in the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels in early years and in the Year 1 phonics checks.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has successfully helped pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to make good and often swift progress. As a result, the gap between these pupils and others is closing rapidly.
- The school is a safe place for all of its pupils. Specially trained staff work closely with individual pupils, their families and external agencies to ensure that pupils are happy and safe.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' overall attendance is improving rapidly and fewer pupils are regularly absent. However, leaders need to redouble their efforts to ensure that even fewer pupils are absent during term time.
- The youngest children do not develop their writing skills as rapidly as other areas of learning.
- Pupils' conceptual understanding and reasoning skills in mathematics are less well developed.

## **Full report**

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

- Continue to develop and embed the recent improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
  - teaching fully develops pupils' conceptual understanding and reasoning skills in mathematics
  - children in the early years develop their early writing skills at a more rapid rate.
- Continue to improve pupils' attendance so that even fewer are absent and miss out on the good-quality teaching and learning in school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The new headteacher provides precise and well-focused direction to the school's work. As a result, he has created a positive culture where all staff understand their role in providing a good education for pupils. After a period of instability, staff have embraced the change and morale is high. Parents speak positively about the new headteacher. 'He is very visible around the school and welcoming' is a comment typical of many parents.
- The headteacher, with the strong support of the principal of the Saints' Way Multi-Academy Trust, is driving improvement at the school. Senior leaders have robust systems to check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. School leaders provide teachers with good advice and guidance. As a result, previous weaknesses in the teaching of writing and mathematics have been eradicated so that more pupils make good progress.
- Plans for improvement are focused and provide clear actions aimed at achieving ambitious targets. Middle leaders receive high-quality training from the trust leaders. This is helping them to achieve a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In particular, middle leaders are sharply focused on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Historically, the gaps in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and their peers had been too wide. As a result of carefully planned support, these gaps are closing and pupils' progress is quickening.
- Senior leaders use information on pupils' attainment and progress well to guide the school's priorities and targets. Leaders' meticulous analysis of the progress that groups of pupils make is ensuring that any barriers to learning are identified swiftly. Pupils receive the support they need in a timely manner and this support has resulted in achievement that is much improved.
- The leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Strong team work, combined with detailed identification of pupils' gaps in learning, is helping pupils catch up quickly. Academic and social or emotional support programmes are successful in helping these pupils improve their progress.
- Leaders have developed an engaging curriculum, central to developing pupils' good attitudes and behaviour. Teachers modify activities in the light of pupils' needs and interests. For example, topics are chosen to engage both boys and girls and good use is made of the local area. Pupils have recently visited a Cornish castle, a museum in Truro and completed a 'sleepover with the sharks' at Plymouth aquarium.
- School leaders use the sports premium funding effectively to increase teachers' expertise in teaching physical education. The school provides a broad range of clubs to encourage pupils in sporting activities. Clubs such as netball, football, yoga and self-defence ensure that there is something for 'team' players and those who prefer a more individual challenge. The new badminton club has proved particularly popular, with more than half of the Year 6 pupils taking part. Similarly, the key stage 1 physical education club is well attended.
- The school's motto and values permeate its work. The nurturing and caring ethos aligns closely with British values. Older pupils shared their thoughts about welcoming new children to the school, demonstrating great respect. Pupils confidently and freely debated their views about the referendum on the European Union.
- Leaders are not complacent. They look beyond the Trust to quality assure their own practices. The local diocesan school improvement officer has provided effective support for the school.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Typically, comments praise the inclusive nature of the school, confirm how quickly concerns are dealt with and refer to the 'fantastic teachers, so approachable'. A few parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed concerns that, since the school has grown, communication is not consistently good. Leaders acknowledge this and have plans in place to make improvements to ensure that parents are fully involved in their child's learning.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The local board governs the school increasingly effectively. Governors now rigorously analyse the school's performance and ask searching and challenging questions of leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve. Minutes of meetings demonstrate the meticulous approach to analysing pupil outcomes. Governors have developed an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are assiduous in holding leaders to account for the quality of teaching and learning.
  - The trust board monitors the school's strategic work in aspects such as finance effectively. Governors bring a wide range of professional skills and are highly committed to ensuring the success of this

growing school. Their challenge and support has enabled leaders to overcome a period of unrest and achieve a period of stability and progress.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are vigilant and aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe from risk and potential harm. Senior leaders and governors make sure that everyone is suitably trained and that training is regularly updated. Parent support advisers work closely with a range of agencies. They are persistent in following up referrals to ensure that everything is being done to support pupils in a timely manner when they need it. This work has led to much-improved attendance for those pupils who were persistently absent from school.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- The school's information about how well pupils are achieving and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teaching over time is good.
- Teachers are encouraging, supportive and know their pupils well. Relationships are strong and based on mutual respect. Teachers offer suitable challenge to pupils and have high expectations of behaviour. Staff create an atmosphere in lessons where pupils are confident to tackle activities and know what to do if they are not sure.
- Teachers' more effective use of assessment information is contributing significantly to the improvements in the quality of learning, particularly in writing and mathematics. Pupils respond well to the helpful verbal and written feedback they receive, which is helping them to improve the overall quality of their work.
- Teachers instil a 'no limits' approach. Pupils' emotional well-being is well supported; consequently, this is improving engagement and outcomes for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.
- The teaching of reading remains a strength of the school. Teachers engender a love of books. The improved teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has led to pupils becoming increasingly proficient in reading.
- Well thought out literacy activities are promoting a love of writing. For example, in Year 6 in response to a video clip of 'The Piano' the teacher engaged pupils in reflection and discussion, challenging their thoughts and teasing out ideas. As a result, pupils developed an exciting choice of vocabulary to express their thoughts. For example, 'The keys tiptoed on the command of the old man's wrinkled fingers.' A small group of boys told inspectors that they would love 'a whole week of writing'.
- Displays around the school demonstrate the high profile staff give to developing pupils' writing. Care is taken to share and celebrate writing successes. High-quality pieces of writing across all year groups reflect teachers' high expectations.
- Support staff play a key role in pupils' learning. They show a good awareness of their roles and responsibilities because of the effective training and support they receive. As a result, support staff are clear about what they need to do in lessons to support pupils in making good progress.
- Teachers ensure that pupils practise their mathematical skills throughout many curriculum areas, for example through the creation of board games based on books and when planning stalls for the summer fayre. However, book scrutiny showed that some sequences of lessons do not develop pupils' reasoning skills deeply enough. On such occasions, pupils' progress wavers.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff record all concerns meticulously and continually seek ways to support individual pupils. This results in pupils being ready to learn and achieve well.
- Parent support advisers and staff are on hand to welcome pupils at the beginning of the day. Parents of children who have particular anxieties, special educational needs and/or disabilities confirmed that 'staff go out of their way to make their child feel safe and happy'.
- Breakfast club provision provides a sociable and positive start to the school day. Club leaders have completed their food hygiene training and provide a healthy range of breakfast foods for the pupils in their care. Pupils who attend confirm that, 'There are fun activities to do, we get on well and have a nice, fresh breakfast.'

- The school's work to promote respect and tolerance is well established. Pupils are clearly proud of their school and say that everywhere is safe. Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare. The school's behaviour records and parents' comments support this view. Parents and pupils both agree that on the rare occasions where bullying occurs, the headteacher responds immediately; issues are resolved and do not reoccur.
- Pupils feel valued and well supported. They understand the teachers' expectations for good work and behaviour. The high-quality support given to the most vulnerable pupils and their families is making a positive contribution to developing pupils' self-esteem, well-being and the progress they make.
- When moving around the school, pupils do so safely and sensibly, even when they are not directly supervised.
- Pupils know the measures that they can take to avoid risks, particularly in regard to their use of the internet.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are courteous and polite and demonstrate the school's values of caring and sharing.
- In lessons, pupils settle down to work quickly so that no time is lost in lessons. They organise themselves well and show a desire to learn. Generally, pupils demonstrate pride in their learning by presenting their work neatly. They respond well to teachers' feedback.
- Pupils are friendly to one another, supporting and encouraging each other in lessons. They listen to one another and show respect for each other and adults. Pupils told inspectors how they are currently working on 'perseverance'. They feel that they are getting better at concentrating when work gets tricky.
- Incidents of misbehaviour are rare. Records show that the number of incidents has reduced over time. Pupils articulate well the many rewards they get for good behaviour and the sanctions for any misbehaviour.
- The proportion of pupils who regularly miss school has previously been much higher than the national average. Effective work with families and external agencies has seen a dramatic improvement in the attendance of many of these pupils. Parent support advisers are not complacent in addressing this; they are aware that there is more to do to ensure that the school's overall attendance improves further.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **are good**

- Outcomes for current pupils are now good and have improved from last year's published data. Accurate assessments show that for significant groups of pupils, such as the disadvantaged, many are making accelerated progress. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates is closing rapidly.
- Pupils who need to catch up, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good progress as a result of teachers' better assessment. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress. Pupils are supported well in lessons and receive well-targeted extra support out of class.
- This year, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1 is in line with the national average. This represents a continued trend of improvement over the last three years.
- Attainment in reading remains strong. In 2015, attainment in reading was above the national average at both key stages. This trend is set to continue. From the time children join the school in Reception, teachers immerse children in rich language and promote a love of books. This continues throughout pupils' journey in school.
- Historically, progress in writing has not been good, particularly in key stage 2. Work in books now shows that the content of pupils' writing is improving rapidly. 'Non negotiables' set high expectations for the quality and quantity of pupils' writing in key stages 1 and 2 and have led to much-improved outcomes. Teachers in key stage 2 plan lots of opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English. Pupils enjoy writing and achieve well.
- Progress in mathematics at key stage 2 has not been good in the past. In particular, not enough pupils made good enough progress to achieve at the higher levels by the end of Year 6. Currently, pupils are making strong progress. The legacy of underachievement is being whittled away. Leaders recognise that the implementation of the new mathematics curriculum is not yet fully established. Pupils are not fully adept at reasoning and explaining their mathematical thinking.
- The most able pupils achieve well because improved teaching is providing pupils with the challenge they need. Historically, in key stage 1, fewer pupils attained the highest levels compared to others nationally.

Pupils' books and assessments show that more pupils are now exceeding age-related expectations across all aspects of the curriculum.

- Good transition arrangements with the secondary school ensure that pupils feel confident to move on. Pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education by the time they leave the school in Year 6.

## Early years provision

is good

- The early years leader has provided clear and firm leadership to develop the provision and improve the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment across all Reception classes. Consequently, the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development has improved steadily and is now in line with the national average. Good partnerships with the on-site pre-school, home visits and parental 'Ready for School' workshops all support children's smooth start to school.
- Teachers place great emphasis on children's personal and social development. Rules and routines are established quickly so that children settle promptly and rise to their teachers' high expectations of behaviour. As a result, children feel safe. They communicate positively with one another as they learn. Children listen well to each other, maintain concentration and demonstrate resilience in completing their tasks.
- Children's learning and development are nurtured effectively in all areas of learning. Teachers plan exciting and engaging learning opportunities in the well-resourced and bright indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- Children learn to do things for themselves; their independence is encouraged. The learning environment is stimulating and resources well organised and accessible. Children enjoy their 'Busy bee' time during which they are productive and confidently access the resources available. Pupils are encouraged to choose for themselves when they have their snack. They choose from a healthy selection of fruit and are careful to wash their hands before eating.
- The strong emphasis on language and literacy supports children's creativity and imagination well. A small group of boys and girls were developing their language and literacy skills through imaginative role play, pretending they were camping and on the look-out for something to catch for their tea.
- Teachers are well skilled in teaching phonics. Children respond confidently when asked to identify letters and sounds. The most able children can read and write simple sentences. However, children's writing skills are less well developed than in other areas of learning. This is slowing down the progress that children make as writers.
- Parents appreciate the way that the school keeps them informed about their child's progress. Parents contribute to children's 'learning journey records' sharing 'wow' moments. They help their child with 'home challenge activities' and are encouraged to attend a weekly assembly.
- A high regard is given to safety. Staff carry out detailed risk assessments. Children move safely around the reception unit and are able to articulate how they keep themselves safe.
- The early years leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weakness of the provision. She makes good use of the information to address any gaps in children's learning. This has contributed to the improvement in outcomes. Effective training and support have been implemented to extend staff skills. As a result, disadvantaged children achieve at least as well as others in school and others nationally. This prepares them well for the start of Year 1.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	1001130
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	139091

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	520
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Rita Watkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Dave Rushton
<b>Telephone number</b>	01208 725 26
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-petrocs.org">www.st-petrocs.org</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:head@st-petrocs.org">head@st-petrocs.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- St Petroc's Church of England Voluntary-Aided Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2015.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average. This is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- Pupils in the early years are taught in three Reception classes and attend full time.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club that is managed by the governing body.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on pupils' progress on its website.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2015, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 15 visits to lessons across the school, all but one of which were joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed an assembly.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, governors, and the principal and school improvement adviser of the Saints' Way Multi-Academy Trust. A telephone conversation took place with the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including minutes from governors' meetings, school improvement plans and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspection team carried out work scrutiny in mathematics and writing with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to a group of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes, breaktimes and around the school.
- An inspector conducted a walk around the school with pupils to look at curriculum displays, the promotion of British values and to find out how they feel about their learning.
- The 49 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also spoke to parents informally at the start of the day.

## Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Ackers	Ofsted Inspector
Anthony Epps	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Swait	Ofsted Inspector
Aisha Waziri	Ofsted Inspector



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