

Stratton Primary School

New Road, Stratton, Bude, Cornwall EX23 9AP

Inspection dates	13–14 July 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the time of the previous inspection, leaders have not maintained a good standard of teaching. As a result, pupils' progress has slowed and their attainment has fallen.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning are not thorough enough to ensure that teaching improves and pupils make good progress.
- Governors' work to hold leaders to account has not been sufficiently rigorous. Governors do not obtain accurate information about the quality of teaching or pupils' learning.
- Training for teachers has not equipped them with the subject knowledge necessary to meet the full requirements of the new national curriculum.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. In particular, lower-attaining pupils are given work that is too easy. Activities do not stretch and challenge the most able pupils so that they make the progress of which they are capable.
- The teaching of mathematics over time has not enabled pupils to make good progress.
- Teaching does not push boys to make good progress in their writing. Teachers give insufficient emphasis to boys' grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting.
- Teaching assistants are insufficiently directed to support pupils' academic progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' actions to reorganise the curriculum, teaching and provision of the early years foundation stage are proving successful.
- Children in the Reception Year achieve well and make good progress from their different starting points. Adults work well together to ensure that all children receive a good start to their education.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite, welcoming and friendly to each other and visitors.
- Leaders' action to restructure the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has been effective. The teaching of phonics is now strong. Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2016 are well above the national average.
- Pupils with additional needs receive effective care and support. Relationships with parents are strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it enables pupils to make at least good progress from their starting points by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly for lower-attaining pupils and the most able
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge of the requirements of the new national curriculum, particularly with regard to mathematics and writing
 - using additional adults in the school to improve the academic progress pupils are making.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that systems for monitoring teaching over time focus on the impact of teaching on the academic progress pupils are making
 - using the findings from monitoring and evaluation to plan improvements to the quality of teaching and regularly checking that these plans are working
 - holding teachers to account for the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making
 - ensuring that governors have accurate information on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to enable them to hold school leaders to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of the school's work may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not secured consistently good or better teaching over time across the school. Building work, the expansion of pupil numbers at the school and frequent staff changes have impeded leaders' ability to remain focused on improving teaching.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have not resulted in higher standards, particularly for lower-attaining pupils and the most able in key stage 2. Records from monitoring activities are often incisive in their evaluations, but identified weaknesses are not followed up routinely by leaders to secure improvements.
- Teachers do not receive specific guidance and feedback from leaders in order to improve their practice, particularly in mathematics. They are keen and eager to improve their teaching and welcome opportunities to observe other practice and share strategies. However, these are not focused sharply enough on the priorities identified for improvement.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers' expectations of pupils' academic achievement are consistently high enough, particularly at key stage 2. As a result, pupils' progress is erratic as they move through the school.
- The system for checking pupils' progress and attainment is not fully understood and used by all staff. Leaders can offer case studies that show their awareness of the progress made by particular pupils. However, the information collected on pupils' overall academic performance is not always analysed to identify patterns and trends, such as the performance of boys in writing, or used to inform plans and bring about improvements.
- Teachers' subject knowledge of the new national curriculum is insecure. The changes in practice and the improvements in teaching necessary to enable more pupils to reach the new, raised expectations are not evident across the school. Planned activities are not geared to the new requirements closely enough, particularly to accelerate the progress of the most able and lower-attaining pupils.
- A welcoming and caring culture exists across the school. Parents are supportive and value the personal attention their children receive. Relationships are strong. A collective sense of teamwork and willingness to improve ensures that pupils are provided with good-quality care. Pupils are proud of their school and morale is high.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils on the elected school council play a highly active role in planning developments. School leaders and governors listen carefully to their views and provide responsibilities for council members to put into practice what they have learned. Pupils' involvement in the democratic process develops their understanding of this British value well.
- The community-based approach to the curriculum promotes the school's aims to provide a broad range of experiences. Plentiful opportunities for pupils to work with local businesses and project work foster a strong sense of local identity. Effective liaison with other schools within the Bude Communities' Schools' Trust is providing additional learning experiences that would otherwise not be available to pupils.
- The appointment of the 'pupil premium champion' has had the effect of broadening disadvantaged pupils' horizons and raising their awareness of the wider world. For example, cultural experiences such as theatre visits and residential trips develop pupils' cultural awareness. Much credit should be given to the school's approach for 'getting beyond the school gate' to work with parents and families. Such actions ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive good-quality care, guidance and support. However, this strategy is yet to have a strong positive impact on the academic achievement of this group of pupils, which is similar to that of other pupils in the school.
- The sport premium funding is used well to promote pupils' standards in sport and improve their health and fitness. The increased range of sports being offered after school is increasing levels of pupils' participation and performance. Local sports competitions, such as the Bude Area Sport event, enable gifted and talented athletes to compete against the best in the region.
- Good use has been made of action research to inform practice in the teaching of phonics. Training and staff development resulted in a complete reorganisation of the way phonics is taught across the school. As a result, the teaching of phonics is now of a consistently high quality and pupils' progress is rapid.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors have not challenged leaders with sufficient rigour to ensure that the quality of teaching improves and that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress. Governors are knowledgeable about their role and the contribution they should be making to the overall leadership of the school. However, governors have not gained sufficient information to evaluate the impact of actions, such as those being taken to improve the quality of teaching. Governors have not ensured that action plans have specific targets, timescales and benchmarks to enable comparison of pupils' performance against other schools nationally.
- Governors are aware of their accountability for the expenditure of additional funds received. However, no evaluation has taken place to check the impact of the use of pupil premium funding, including the appointment of the 'pupil premium champion', on improvements to the academic achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Effective leadership ensures that staff are up to date with the relevant training. Record-keeping is well maintained and meets all current requirements. Support for vulnerable pupils is highly detailed and personalised. Close liaison with outside agencies ensures that all pupils are catered for with care and attention to detail. Staff are well trained and experienced in dealing with complex issues. A high priority is given to e-safety through assemblies and the curriculum. Risk assessments are comprehensive, including for those pupils who have specific learning or physical needs. Staff act as effective role models for pupils: in turn, pupils follow these examples in the way they talk, act and treat each other.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations of pupils' academic capability are not always high enough across the school. Therefore some planned activities are too easy, especially for the most able pupils and those in key stage 2.
- Teachers and other adults do not routinely and carefully check pupils' learning and intervene quickly where necessary. As a consequence, pupils sometimes move on to new knowledge or concepts before they are fully confident, secure and ready to do so. This results in gaps in their learning. Pupils' progress is more rapid when teachers identify misconceptions and take action to correct them.
- Teaching does not consistently meet the new requirements for the national curriculum. This is especially the case in mathematics, where pupils' fluency in number is not built upon to develop their conceptual understanding. Questioning to develop reasoning skills, associated with the new national curriculum, is not evident in pupils' books or lessons planned over time.
- The school has a marking policy but it is not followed consistently. Pupils are therefore sometimes unclear about how to act on teachers' comments to make their work better.
- Teaching is insufficiently rigorous in its attention to pupils' accuracy in handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar, and to the presentation of work, especially for boys in key stage 2 and lower-attaining pupils. Teachers' planning and assessment do not pay close enough attention to these aspects of pupils' work to bring about rapid improvement.
- The teaching of phonics in Reception and Year 1 is of high quality. Teachers use precise questioning to check pupils' knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds that they make. Regular checks on pupils' understanding are used to adapt activities so that they meet the needs of pupils well. Consequently, pupils make rapid progress.
- Outdoor teaching adds considerably to pupils' experience. Pupils are encouraged to develop their imagination and knowledge of nature and science when den building, studying nesting and pond dipping, for example. They learn about safety when collecting firewood or lighting fires.
- Other adults play an important part in supporting pupils across the school. They provide good-quality pastoral guidance and care for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, helping them to develop the habits and strategies necessary to approach new situations. Around the school, they also support pupils during lunchtimes, assist with supervision at break and run additional clubs. However, they are not directed enough to support pupils' good academic development over time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to be a successful learner, joining in discussions in a considered and thoughtful manner and listening carefully to the views of others.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Pupils continue to demonstrate good learning habits even when levels of challenge are low. They engage in the school's approach to learning with enthusiasm, wanting to be 'super sparks' and not 'give up grumps'.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) reported that they feel their child is safe in school. Pupils also report that they feel safe at all times. Pupils spoken to showed a deep understanding of what it means to be safe, referring to aspects of safety that feature strongly in the school's curriculum, such as how to climb safely when learning outdoors. They have been taught how to keep safe when using new technologies and are confident about what to do and who to talk to if they feel unsure about something. Many older pupils have a deep understanding of water safety in order to keep themselves and others safe on local beaches.
- Care for those pupils who need additional support, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is thorough and well documented. Strong working relationships with a range of outside agencies, such as social care, help to ensure the safety of these pupils.
- Pupils can explain how to keep themselves healthy, including through healthy eating and physical exercise. Sport plays an important part in the life of the school. An increasing number of pupils participate in healthy activities and competitive sports.
- Pupils play their part as caring and active citizens within the school and in the local community. For example, pupils responded keenly to the proposal from the school council to build a climbing wall by campaigning and raising funds. This contributes strongly towards their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well during the school day, including at break and lunchtime. As they move around the school, most pupils are orderly, calm and polite.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is typically good, reflecting teachers' high expectations of the way they should behave. It is unusual for lessons to be interrupted by incidents of disruptive behaviour. Occasionally, when activities do not link well to previous learning or lack sufficient challenge, a few pupils lose interest and drift away from their learning.
- Pupils, including children in the early years, display positive attitudes to learning across a range of subjects. Those who spoke with the inspectors in lessons, around the school and in meetings were positive about their experiences at school.
- The inclusive school culture and ethos permeates all aspects of the school's work. Pupils develop a mature approach to managing their own learning behaviours. Reflection skills are encouraged; teamwork and an ability to cooperate with each other play a strong part in the school's work to support pupils' personal development.
- Incidents of bullying are few. Pupils and parents are confident that any issue, no matter how minor, will be dealt with. A close working relationship with parents and effective liaison with outside agencies provides strong support to manage the behaviour of pupils who find this difficult.
- School leaders' work to improve pupils' attendance and reduce rates of persistent absence is proving successful, with attendance now close to the national average. Leaders recognise that work remains to be done in this area.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- There has been a downward trend in pupils' attainment between 2013 and 2015. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is in line with the national average for reading and writing but below average for mathematics. A high proportion of pupils in this relatively small year group have significant additional needs or challenging personal circumstances. These challenges, combined with a decline in the quality of teaching over time, has meant that they have not made good or consistent progress through the school.

- A high proportion of children arrive at school with skills lower than those found typically, especially in language and communication skills. Historically, pupils with low starting points have not been able to accelerate their learning to reach the standards expected for their age. This is changing, especially for current pupils in Reception and Year 1.
- School assessment information and analysis of pupils' work indicate that the proportion of pupils making expected and better than expected progress from their starting points is broadly in line with the national average. However, gaps in the learning of lower-attaining pupils are not addressed early enough in the school. Consequently when pupils reach Years 5 and 6 they have too much ground to make up.
- Across the school, the small number of the most able pupils are not challenged academically to reach their full potential. Some good examples exist, such as in Year 6 where the most able pupils persevered and thought hard when presented with a taxing mathematical problem. In other year groups the work set and teachers' marking in pupils' books illustrate that much of the work is too easy.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for and gain in confidence as a result of the close support they receive. However, not all make good progress academically because the quality of academic guidance and support they receive varies across the school. At times not enough is expected of them.
- In 2015, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 making the expected progress was higher than for other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. However, a lower proportion made more than the expected progress. School leaders make innovative use of the pupil premium funding. For example, the school has sought to broaden the horizons and raise the awareness of the most able disadvantaged pupils. For example, enrichment activities such as falconry, public speaking competitions and success in winning the national Film Club Award reflect leaders' commitment to such enrichment activities. However, this same level of challenge is not always evident in day-to-day lessons.
- In mathematics, pupils become well versed in their knowledge of number and calculation but lack the deeper knowledge necessary to meet the new and increased demands of the national curriculum. This is because they are not required to reason and solve more complex problems during mathematics lessons. The most able pupils repeat work that they have already mastered.
- Pupils' progress in writing is inconsistent between year groups and boys' writing is much weaker than that of girls. Some interesting topics stimulate pupils' ideas when writing. In Year 4, for example, pupils' understanding of minibeasts in science was enhanced through writing explanatory leaflets for their Year 1 reading buddies. Pupils use this information well to construct 'bug cities' as stages and for play scripts to be composed. However, not all teachers provide pupils, particularly boys, with clear enough expectations regarding the amount and quality of written work expected.
- Over time, a higher proportion of pupils have reached the expected standards in reading than other subjects. The progress made by pupils in reading by the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with other pupils nationally. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. They say that they enjoy the stories teachers read to them as part of their topic work and when using the well-equipped school library.
- The good foundation that pupils received during the early years is built upon substantially during Year 1. Here, the foundations for potentially higher achievement later in the school are being embedded. Programmes to overcome social and emotional barriers to learning during the early years and Year 1 are also successful. As a result, pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics check is well above average. In reading, writing and mathematics it is average and improving quickly.

Early years provision

is good

- The 'root and branch' overhaul of all areas of the early years by leaders and governors is enabling children now in Reception to flourish. Improvements to the curriculum, the physical environment, the organisation of teaching, and the use of adults all contribute well to this effective area of the school's work. Teamwork is strong and morale is high. The proportion of children who reached the expected standard by the end of Reception in 2016, including those who are disadvantaged or supported by additional funding, was above the national average. Children's progress throughout the early years is therefore good and they are well prepared for Year 1.
- The leadership of the early years is good. Leaders ensure that children get off to a smooth start through effective liaison with local pre-schools. Close working and sharing of information using consistent policies and procedures means that the transition process for children who join Reception and on into Year 1 is seamless.

- The teaching of reading and writing is effective. Children grow in confidence and keenly tackle irregular 'tricky' words using their knowledge of phonics. Adults take great care to model correct letter formation when using whiteboards or presentation devices during whole-class teaching sessions. Children then emulate the adults' high standards. Adults check children's pencil grip and accuracy when handwriting. Adults weave in aspects of grammar and punctuation thoughtfully to ensure that children not only receive a good grounding in their understanding of phonics but also the basic literacy skills needed to write well.
- Staff are careful and thorough in safeguarding children. They work closely with parents to make sure that children's personal and emotional needs are developed just as effectively as their academic learning. Children's attitudes when tackling new activities and learning are impressive.
- Staff develop supportive relationships with and between children. As a result, children enjoy the chances they get to learn with and from each other. This underpins their successful progress during the early years, especially in developing their communication, language and literacy skills from starting points below those typically found. Activities planned to promote these aspects through topics such as 'Pirates' and 'Seaside Adventures' engage boys as well as girls. They are proving successful and improve children's outcomes quickly.
- Children also make gains in developing their self-confidence and readiness to learn. Children enjoy their learning and behave and play well together. This is because they are included equally in a wide range of indoor and outdoor learning experiences.
- Adults ensure that children are able to make their own choices and they support their learning by watching and listening carefully to each child during activities. If necessary, staff adapt an activity, prompt a further challenge or move on to a different activity to restore or maintain children's interest.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use the information they have about children to adapt plans and promote the next steps in learning. For example, staff noticed that children's outcomes in number, shape, space and measure were lower than other areas of learning and developed activities to promote this area of learning; overall, however, provision for mathematics is not as strong as that for language development.

School details

Unique reference number	111983
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10005710

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Sillifant
Headteacher	Philip Aldis
Telephone number	01288 353 196
Website	http://www.stratton.cornwall.sch.uk
Email address	admin@stratton.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 July 2012

Information about this school

- Stratton Primary School is larger than the average primary school.
- The early years comprises two Reception classes of four- and five-year-olds who attend full-time.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government money to support pupils in care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is similar to the national average. A very small number of pupils receive service premium; this is additional funding to support children with parents in the Armed Forces.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor target, which sets out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Pupils' learning was observed across all classes jointly with the headteacher or other senior leaders. A series of short visits to classes was undertaken to observe the teaching of phonics, mathematics and writing across the school. Inspectors looked in depth at a range of work in pupils' books. In addition, inspectors listened to several children reading.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other senior leaders and three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Inspectors met with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and spoke informally with many pupils during lessons and around the school.
- The views of 89 parents and carers expressed through the online questionnaire (Parent View) were analysed. Discussions were held with a number of parents when they brought their children into school. Inspectors also analysed 49 pupil and 29 staff responses to Ofsted's questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including information on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's improvement plans and minutes of governing body meetings. The school's records of the monitoring of teaching and information on the management of teachers' performance were analysed. Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including records relating to the behaviour and exclusions of pupils, were examined.

Inspection team

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