

# St Issey Church of England Primary School

Gardeners Way, St Issey, Wadebridge, Cornwall PL27 7RN

## Inspection dates

3–4 November 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	Requires 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

- The school's results in national tests in 2016 showed that too few pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- In key stage 1 in 2016, pupils did not make sufficient progress in writing, mathematics and science to reach the expected standard.
- The quality of teaching in key stage 1, and historically in key stage 2, has not prepared pupils well for the next stage of their education.
- Teachers' expectations have been too low in the past and pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding in English and mathematics. Pupils also have some gaps in knowledge in other subjects, such as science.
- Teachers are not secure in their knowledge of the national curriculum. Hence, the curriculum lacks the breadth required and pupils do not have the background knowledge to help them with understanding the texts they read
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress has been inaccurate. They have an overgenerous view of the progress pupils make.
- Teachers have not planned learning sufficiently well to take into account the omissions in, or fragility of, pupils' past learning.
- There have been many changes in the governance of the school. In the past, governors have not ensured the stability in staffing and effective leadership needed to improve outcomes.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new interim leadership team have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have quickly begun to address the shortcomings.
- Pupils are safe and well cared for. Staff are vigilant in their monitoring of pupils' emotions and swift to take appropriate action if they have any concerns about pupils' safety or care.
- Children in the early years make strong progress as a result of good teaching and the stimulating environment.
- The teaching of phonics has improved over the last three years. This good grounding means that pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 are starting to read fluently and write with accuracy.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' progress so that it is at least good, particularly in reading and mathematics, by:
  - making sure that pupils experience a well-planned programme of study that fully meets the requirements for the national curriculum
  - developing pupils' better understanding of the texts they read
  - using the information about gaps in pupils' learning effectively to plan the next steps in their reading, writing and mathematics
  - using assessment information to ensure that work is not too easy or repeated.
- Improve teachers' knowledge of the requirements of the new national curriculum and the expected standards so that they can ensure that pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects and are well prepared for the next step in their education.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - monitoring more accurately the progress that pupils make
  - using the findings from monitoring and evaluation to plan improvements to the quality of teaching in key stage 1
  - strengthening the membership of the interim governing board to ensure that they have the range of skills required to support and challenge leaders
  - ensuring that the interim governing board protects the school's fragility and maintains the continued rapid improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Over time, leadership has not been good. The high turnover of staff, including headteachers, has not led to a stable environment where pupils' outcomes are where they should be. Governors have made interim arrangements with Venture Multi Academy Trust to provide an interim executive headteacher and interim headteacher. However, these arrangements are temporary for the remainder of the academic year and do not provide stable or sustainable leadership needed for the long term.
- The curriculum does not have the breadth or depth that is required. There is insufficient evidence in school to show that there is a clear understanding of the national curriculum. Subjects such as science, geography and computing do not cover all that is required or develop the skills that pupils need.
- Performance management is not strong enough to ensure that improvements will result in outcomes in line with pupils' abilities. Leaders have, historically, set targets for teachers which are not ambitious enough to ensure that teaching and outcomes are good.
- The interim executive headteacher has arranged for a suitably qualified special educational needs coordinator from the multi-academy trust to work with St Issey. This builds on work done previously to identify pupils' specific needs and provide tailored support to ensure that they make good progress.
- The local authority and the diocese have worked together to secure interim leadership after a very turbulent past. They have clear plans in place to bring about improvement which are already bearing fruit.
- The strong partnership with Venture Multi Academy Trust is bringing about rapid improvement and very quickly raising standards. The new leaders have been swift in grasping the challenges of poor past leadership and a culture of low expectations. They have taken rapid, decisive action to address these. As a result of this, improvements can already be seen in these very early days.
- The school spends its pupil premium funding well. Staff adopt a highly personalised approach to their planning for disadvantaged children, and this was seen to be having a positive impact on their progress. Similarly, the sport premium is used well to improve pupils' health and fitness. The professional sports coach works with pupils to improve their sporting abilities, while teachers work alongside the coach to develop their teaching skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well. Pupils have a thorough understanding of British values and link these well to school rules. They are clear about the need to treat people with respect and can explain what this means.
- Parents who spoke to the inspector and those who responded to Parent View were all positive about the school and its caring ethos. They look forward to stability and consistency in leadership going forward and have confidence in the newly appointed interim headteacher.

## Governance of the school

- The governing body had to be dissolved by the local authority. The interim governing board has seen some change itself. Minutes of governors' meetings paint a picture of some confusion in the messages they received from different advisers. As a result, until recently, governors may have had a false impression of the progress that was being made. They now have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and are taking effective action to address shortcomings.
- In the past, governors have not demanded detailed explanations or a clear rationale for actions taken by senior leaders. Sometimes they were too slow in their actions to arrest decline. More swift, decisive actions are now being taken.
- Governors have ensured that pupils are safe and have invested funds in staff training and made sure that the fencing around the site is complete and in good order.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The vetting of staff and volunteers before they start to work at the school is robust and ensures that pupils are kept safe.
- All staff are clear about their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They have undertaken relevant training to ensure that they have the necessary skills and understanding. There is some further work, following staff training, to convey to pupils some of the risks they may face, such as the extreme views that some people hold.
- There are some administrative aspects of record-keeping which require improvement. The interim executive headteacher is aware of these and has plans in place to remedy the shortcomings.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teachers have not been accurate enough in their assessment of what pupils know understand and can do in order to accurately plan learning. As a result, there are some gaps in pupils' learning. These are only recently, but rapidly, being addressed in key stage 2 as the new class teacher has identified them and planned learning to address the gaps. Some key gaps still exist in pupils' mathematical knowledge, their skills in picking out important information and ideas when reading and in their punctuation in key stage 1.
- Until very recently, teachers' subject knowledge has not been secure enough to allow them to adapt their teaching to ensure that pupils are sufficiently challenged or adequately supported. Some teaching staff still have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of the national curriculum in some subject areas, such as science.
- Feedback does not identify the most urgent priorities to improve pupils' learning. Marking, especially in key stage 1, does not help pupils to learn from their mistakes. This is particularly the case with pupils' punctuation and spelling, which are not good enough.

- Expectations have been too low for too long. Expectations are now much higher in all classes; even in these early days the positive impact on improving standards is already being seen.
- Historically, teaching has not been well matched to the needs of the most able pupils. In key stage 2, the new class teacher has a clear understanding of their needs but there is much ground to catch up on. In key stage 1, the needs of the most able pupils are not identified and so planning does not provide opportunities for them to deepen their understanding.
- The information provided to parents about their child's progress is overgenerous in Years 1 to 6. It gives parents a misguided appreciation of what their child knows, understands and can do. The new leadership team agree and are quickly reviewing the information which they intend to share with parents so they have a more accurate picture. Assessment in early years is very accurate.
- Pupils work with positive attitudes and focus well on the tasks they are given. However, these are too often too easy or repeat work that they have done before.
- Homework is used effectively and is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' fluency in arithmetic operations and in their spelling. Parents comment that this can be overburdening at times but they are happy to persevere as they can see the benefits for their children.
- In all classes, the vibrant and stimulating learning environment helps pupils develop their thinking. The good resources available, including the new reading books, which better complement the teaching of phonics, are helping pupils to make better progress.
- The teaching of phonics is consistently strong across the school. This is helping current pupils improve their reading skills and be more accurate in their spelling. Pupils who read to the inspector used their phonic knowledge with a systematic approach to unfamiliar words. Consequently pupils in Year 2 were able to read complex words such as 'myxomatosis' correctly and in Reception they were confident in the use of the '-ight' sound in words such as 'night' and 'sight'. Pupils enjoy their phonics work as a result of the good teaching they receive.
- Pupils are given opportunities to improve their work. They redraft their stories and take on board the comments teachers have made. However, in key stage 1 this is often copying the corrections made by the teacher. This does not help pupils to learn from their mistakes and they go on to make the same errors in later work.
- Learning in the early years is well planned and structured to give children the opportunities to develop the skills they need.

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

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. Year 6 pupils spoke with authority about the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Pupils are aware of the characteristics of a good citizen. The school's religious character is used to good effect to help pupils develop respect for each other and the

environment. They show a good understanding of other faiths and celebrate festivals such as Diwali.

- Pupils are sensitive to the needs of other pupils. Pupils of different ages play together sensibly on the playground at lunchtime and during 'wet break', when they stay indoors.
- Older pupils greatly value the additional responsibilities they are given. The head boy and head girl are very proud ambassadors for the school and the recently reinvigorated house captain role allows more pupils to take on leadership responsibilities, which they relish. Pupils are taking a very active role in the current fundraising campaign for Hospicare, including running their own events such as the 'Santa Express'.
- Pupils' welfare is a strength. Staff are tenacious in recording changes in pupils' behaviour and any concerns they raise are closely monitored. Where necessary, further action is taken swiftly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well catered for. Staff have a detailed understanding of their specific needs and make sure that these are taken into account when they are planning activities.
- Both pupils and parents comment that there is bullying. However, it is rare. All the pupils and almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaires noted that, on the rare occasions when it occurs, bullying is quickly resolved.
- Pupils' understanding of some of the risks they may face in society are underdeveloped, for example being aware of the extreme views some people may hold.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their work are positive. Once they begin on a task they are keen to ensure that it is completed. Until recently, teachers have not capitalised on these good attitudes to ensure that pupils make good progress over time. In the past, there is evidence of much incomplete work which pupils have not gone back to complete. This is less common now.
- Pupils are punctual, well prepared to learn and value their education. This is seen through the good and improving attendance at school and the dramatic reduction in persistent absence over the last four years.
- Pupils conduct themselves well during the school day, including during 'wet breaktime' and at lunch. They eat with good manners and behave sensibly in the dining room.
- The school is an orderly environment. Pupils respond quickly to the requests of staff. They are polite to staff and visitors.
- Staff are quick to respond to any occurrences of behaviour that is not in line with the school's expectations. They are firm and will not tolerate any indiscipline. Incidents are rare. Pupils agree that behaviour around school is good, although they comment that last year there used to be poor behaviour in classes but it has got much better this year.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes in key stage 1 and 2 fell below national averages in 2016. In key stage 1, pupils did not reach the expected standard in writing and were well below in mathematics and science. In key stage 2, pupils made insufficient progress in reading

and mathematics and fell well below the expected standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Until the recent change in leadership, staff had insufficient understanding of the expectations of the new national curriculum. Consequently, pupils were poorly prepared. They were not taught the comprehension skills to understand in sufficient depth the texts they were reading or the skills to solve problems in mathematics.

- The school's own assessment information gives an overgenerous view of pupils' abilities in key stage 1 and 2. In many cases, pupils are working approximately one year below the standard teachers assessed them to have reached in October. The new leadership team are aware of this and have an accurate understanding of pupils' attainment. Work has already been done in key stage 2 to review this and there are plans for this to happen in key stage 1.
- Pupils continue to have gaps in their knowledge and understanding, though these are being more robustly tackled this year. Pupils' spelling has improved. However, their punctuation skills are still below expected standards. Very recent examples of pupils' writing show that they are improving in the range, length and complexity of their writing. For pupils in Years 5 and 6 there is more ground to catch up on to help them become well prepared for secondary school.
- Boys lag behind girls in most areas of the curriculum. Their comprehension skills in reading are underdeveloped. This is, in part, due to the narrow curriculum they experience, so, for example, they are unaware of where places they read about are.
- The most able pupils do not make the progress that may be expected of them. For too long, teaching has not been sufficiently challenging to provide the opportunities to achieve at the higher levels.
- Achievement in the early years is much stronger and a higher proportion of children achieved a good level of development.
- Standards in phonics have risen year on year. The percentage of pupils who achieve the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check is improving and in 2016 was in line with the national average. Pupils in Year 2 who read to the inspector showed strong knowledge of letter sounds and blends. They sounded out tricky words correctly but their skills in comprehension remain underdeveloped.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. One parent who has children with special educational needs spoke highly of the school's work to overcome the barriers her children face and the enthusiasm that the staff have generated. As a result the children 'don't want to miss a day'.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with their peers, but this is still below others nationally. However, work seen by the inspector from this term shows that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in all years are making strong progress. This is most rapid in key stage 2.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years leader, who has been seconded from the partner school, shows strong leadership and has a very accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years. The curriculum is carefully planned and meets the needs of children well.



As a result, children get off to a flying start.

- The good relationships that have been built with the pre-school, which operates on the same site, allow staff to share information and plan to ensure that there is a seamless transition into school.
- Assessment in the early years is rigorous and accurate. Baseline information provided by school is accurate, and progress is mapped out carefully from their starting points. This allows staff to check easily if children are on track to meet the early learning goals. Staff build a comprehensive picture of what children know, understand and can do in each child's learning journal and in the online system, which they update regularly. Children cherish their learning journals; they are proud of their achievements and are motivated to keep adding high-quality work. As a result, children achieve well during their time in the early years and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Safeguarding is effective. The site is safe and staff know the signs to look for when a child is distressed. They engage early help services when necessary.
- Parents engage well with the school, often contributing to the online recording system. Staff are adept in making sure that learning at home is complemented by activities in school. Parents value being able to see the progress their child makes online.
- The early years learning environment is well resourced and children have unrestricted access to welfare facilities. Staff ensure that children understand the importance of good personal hygiene and make sure that the children adopt good habits. Without fail, children wash their hands after they have been to the toilet.
- Teaching in the early years is good. So far this year, the children have made good progress from their varied starting points. The same was true last year, when more children than the average reached a good level of development. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make very strong progress as a result of high-quality teaching.
- The outdoor space and resources that are available to the children, while expansive, do not provide the full range of opportunities for children's physical development.
- There has been strong reliance on the early years leader from the partner school as there is no specialist early years practitioner at St Issey. However, the level of expertise in the school is improving and staff are much more confident in teaching in the early years. The new leadership team is aware of this and has begun to reduce the reliance on the specialist input.



## School details

Unique reference number	112017
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10005712

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	Interim governing board
Chair	Mrs Jo Osborne
Interim Executive Headteacher	Mr Sean Powers
Telephone number	01841 540232
Website	<a href="http://www.st-issey.cornwall.sch.uk">www.st-issey.cornwall.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@st-issey.cornwall.sch.uk">head@st-issey.cornwall.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	5–6 March 2012

## Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The number on roll has fallen markedly over recent years.
- Pupils are taught in two mixed-aged classes. Children in the Reception Year are taught with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Children in the Reception Year attend for full days.
- The percentages of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are well below national averages. Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportions of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs are below national averages.
- The school works in partnership with Venture Multi Academy Trust, who currently provide the interim executive headteacher and the interim headteacher as well as additional support for the early years and for special educational needs and disabilities.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about safeguarding or the curriculum on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was originally a short inspection, lasting for one day. This is standard for schools that were graded good at their previous inspections. The lead inspector converted the inspection to a full inspection, lasting two days, in order to gather further necessary evidence.
- The inspector observed lessons and looked at pupils' books in both classes and at evidence of children's work in the early years. The interim headteacher and other members of staff from the partner school joined the inspector for these activities.
- Meetings were held with the interim executive headteacher, interim headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead, the chair of the interim governing board and an officer from the local authority.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including information on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's plans for improvement, reports on school effectiveness from the partner school and the local authority, minutes of the interim governing board, behaviour logs, attendance reports, examples of reports to parents and records relating to safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspector spoke with many pupils during visits to classes and met the Year 6 pupils to hear their views of the school. Several parents were spoken to when picking their children up from school; their views were taken into account, along with the four responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The views of the 10 pupils who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils were also considered as part of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Iain Freeland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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