

St Martin's CofE Primary School

Lake Lane, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 3DE

Inspection dates

2–3 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Changes to staffing and leadership since the school opened have affected the school's improvement journey. Leaders are bringing about substantial improvement, but their actions have not yet led to consistently good outcomes across the school.
- Too few pupils meet the academic standards that are expected of them by the end of key stage 2. Differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally remain wide.
- Directors have not yet been effective in holding leaders to account for raising standards across the school. Some recent improvement is evident but the impact of this work is yet to be determined.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. Teaching does not always build on what pupils already know. Not all pupils receive the challenge they need, particularly middle-attaining pupils and the most able.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is uneven. There are too few opportunities for pupils to reason and problem-solve. This limits pupils' opportunities to apply and deepen their understanding.
- Tasks are not consistently well planned to meet the needs of all groups of pupils. In some year groups, pupils are not able to write for sustained periods. This results in inconsistent progress over time and too few pupils meeting higher standards.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders and directors have not shied away from making difficult decisions; strong appointments have been made. Consequently, subject leadership is developing well.
- The head of school is a determined leader. As a result, the legacy of pupils' underachievement is being tackled quickly.
- The school's core values are central to all aspects of school life. This results in a whole-school culture where pupils display positive attitudes to learning and behave well.
- Provision in the early years is good.
- Teachers target pupils' gaps in learning and this is helping pupils to catch up; consequently, more pupils are now on track to meet expected standards than previously.
- Leaders' actions to improve attendance have been effective. Attendance is now in line with the national average.
- Teaching in Year 6 and Year 2 ensures that pupils make swifter progress towards the end of each key stage.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - directors hold leaders to account so that all pupils make consistently good progress from their starting points, including disadvantaged pupils
 - directors ensure that leadership structure and use of external support across the school have greater impact on raising pupils' standards
 - senior leaders work more closely with parents and carers in ensuring that their concerns are acted on and resolved successfully.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils' achievement is consistently good by ensuring that:
 - tasks planned for all pupils build on what pupils already know and provide sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils, including middle-attaining and the most able
 - differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally diminish quickly so that these pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education
 - pupils know how to apply writing skills across the curriculum and are able to write at greater length and depth
 - pupils have sufficient opportunities to reason, problem-solve and apply their understanding of mathematics in a wide range of contexts.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not acted quickly enough to raise attainment in mathematics, reading and writing. Too few pupils meet the academic standards that are expected for their age. As a result, some pupils are not well prepared for secondary school because their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are not secure. In 2016, leaders' robust actions ensured that progress across Year 6 was rapid, but this did not fully make amends for the weak teaching pupils received further down the school. Therefore, academic standards for this year group remained too low.
- Leaders actively track the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Additional teaching staff are funded to ensure that pupils' gaps in learning are filled. Forest school, breakfast club and additional homework clubs also ensure that pupils' emotional needs are met well. While improving, the difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally remains wide, particularly in reading, mathematics, and grammar, punctuation and spelling. As a result, too few disadvantaged pupils are well prepared for secondary school.
- The academy principal provides timely strategic leadership for the school. For example, she has prioritised strengthening leadership in mathematics across the trust. As a result, all staff have been trained in an approach to deepen pupils' understanding in mathematics. The work of subject leaders within the trust is beginning to take hold at this school and teachers' subject knowledge is improving. As a result, the teaching of mathematical calculations across the school is also improving. However, opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills to solve problems are too limited.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's performance is precise. Leaders are working on the right aspects for improvement; however, their actions have not yet led to outcomes that are consistently good. The academy principal and her team know what needs to be done next to strengthen teaching so that pupils catch up quickly and outcomes become consistently good.
- Clear systems are in place to check the performance of staff. The academy principal and head of school ensure that staff have support to further improve their practice. Consequently, teaching is improving and more pupils are on track to meet expected standards across the school than previously. However, a sharper focus on checking the progress of pupils from their different starting points is required so that inconsistencies in progress are fully ironed out.
- Parents' views of how well the school is led and managed are mixed. The majority of parents spoken to during the inspection were supportive of the school. However, responses through the online Parent View questionnaire and text messages were more variable. Some parents raised issues around the quality of teaching and progress their children are making. A number of parents raised concerns about the effectiveness of communication to parents and how quickly issues raised are resolved. Inspection evidence confirms that senior leaders and governors are resolute in their aim to raise standards across the school. Nevertheless, senior leaders are keen to strengthen communications with parents and carers to ensure that their improvement strategies are explained clearly and that all parental concerns are investigated thoroughly and

resolved quickly.

- Subject leadership is developing well. For example, leaders' checking of pupils' work in books and planning scrutiny enable them to measure the impact of school policies such as using success criteria in lessons and the quality of feedback. However, their checks on teaching and learning are not tightly focused on raising pupils' achievement from their different starting points. Consequently, inconsistencies are not picked up quickly enough. This results in progress in books that is uneven for some groups of pupils, including middle-attaining pupils and the most able.
- Pupils experience a wide range of subjects. For example, inspectors observed pupils producing work in the style of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Pupils were captivated by this work and showed resilience to tackle the challenges set for them. Visits and visitors are used creatively to capture pupils' interest and provide a hook into topic work.
- The school's curriculum promotes fundamental British values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. The school's core values are very securely embedded and played out in all aspects of the school's work. Consequently, pupils show mutual respect for one another and a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils talk very positively about the voice of pupils and how the school models skills such as democracy through school council elections. Sports premium funding is used to good effect and results in higher engagement of pupils in a wide range of sports.

Governance of the school

- Directors have not challenged leaders robustly enough to raise academic standards across the school. Determined efforts have been made to balance support and challenge across a very turbulent time in recent years. A collective commitment from current directors is ensuring that strong teaching appointments have been made, and pupils' progress is now quickening.
- Recent planned changes to increase directors' challenge and raise accountability are in their infancy. Consequently, it is too early for their impact in this respect to be determined.
- Additional funding is tracked by leaders in the school. However, there has been insufficient focus on ensuring that pupils make strong progress from their different starting points. This results in too few disadvantaged pupils meeting standards that are expected of pupils nationally.
- Positive decisions have been taken to employ external support for the school. However, a clearer focus on raising pupil achievement is required. External challenge visits are not yet regular enough or sufficiently focused on ensuring that teaching and pupils' achievement is consistently good.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. However, some aspects of training and recording could be strengthened. The school is thorough in recording concerns and leaders work in close cooperation with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the right support. Staff take their duty to report concerns very seriously. They articulated to inspectors very clearly about the importance of following up and checking that everything is being done to support vulnerable pupils and their families in a timely way.

- The monitoring of progress for pupils in local authority care is meticulous. The attendance of vulnerable pupils is tracked effectively and, as a result, attendance for this group of pupils is high.
- Staff have completed training appropriately. However, some aspects of training need to become further embedded across the full staff team. For example, records confirm that all staff have completed recent safeguarding training, but a small number of staff were less secure in the school's approach to keeping children safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, or sexual exploitation.
- Any pupils taken off the school's admissions register are quickly referred to the local authority and procedures followed. Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving. However, inconsistencies in teaching have not been fully overcome so teaching is not yet good overall. The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is too variable.
- The quality of work in writing books is inconsistent. In some classes, teachers do not plan tasks to precisely match pupils' needs. This is because teachers do not sufficiently take pupils' starting points into account when planning work. Sometimes work is too easy for the most able pupils. Sometimes expectations for middle-attaining pupils are not high enough or work on offer for lower-attaining pupils does not sufficiently support next steps in learning. Spelling is a weakness in some classes. As a result, progress in books is uneven for some groups and year groups. Pupils' books show that their writing skills are under-developed and this hinders the progress that they make.
- The school has developed a clear system for providing feedback to pupils about their learning. Many teachers provide feedback effectively to address misconceptions and so pupils learn from their mistakes. However, inconsistencies remain; sometimes teacher feedback is not focused on the right aspects for development or it is not matched to the needs of pupils and so pupils are not helped to move forward in their learning.
- Access to whole-class learning time for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not consistently effective. Sometimes pupils find it difficult to access tasks because they are not well matched to their needs. Conversely, small-group intervention results in pupils making strong progress because activities are precisely matched to their needs. However, because whole-class teaching is too variable overall, some pupils make uneven progress, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Well-thought-out visits support the curriculum on offer. However, these are not fully maximised to deepen pupils' learning and provide a stimulus for further learning back at school. Pupils are not able to write for sustained periods, especially at key stage 1 and lower key stage 2.
- Recent work to develop fluency and consistency in calculating strategies in mathematics is developing well. However, teachers provide too limited opportunities for pupils to reason and to apply their knowledge and understanding to problem-solving scenarios. Consequently, too few pupils receive work that enables them to be working at the highest levels across the school.

- Teaching assistants provide a range of effective support, for example in small-group interventions. However, there are occasions when teaching assistants are not fully utilised within lessons to maximise learning for pupils, and this can hinder the progress they make.
- In some lessons, phonics teaching is precise and helps pupils to move on quickly and apply learning to their early reading and writing. In other lessons, teaching is not always precisely matched to pupils' needs. This hinders the progress that some pupils make within individual lessons. Overall, inspectors found that pupils read widely and apply their phonics skills well. Most pupils demonstrate a good understanding of texts. Developing pupils' skills in comprehension remains a key focus across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school offers a wide range of activities to support pupils' personal development and welfare in lessons. Pupils are encouraged to talk about the process of their learning and explore how to be resilient and resourceful in lessons. This results in a whole-school culture where pupils display strong attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe in a range of contexts that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. For example, e-safety training has taken place this term. Consequently, pupils know how to keep safe and articulate this clearly.
- Pupils confirm that pupil voice is respected by staff through the school council system. They are proud to be prefects. Year 6 pupils also value their adult mentors who help them design an aspirational career plan. This helps to prepare them to make a positive contribution to society.
- The very popular breakfast club provides a calm start to the day. Pupils engage in a variety of activities, benefit from emotional and social support and enjoy the healthy breakfast on offer. Consequently, pupils have a positive start to the day and are ready to learn.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well mannered and considerate to each other. They articulate how behaviour systems are used consistently across the school. Any incidents of poor behaviour are tracked closely by leaders. Pupils' challenging behaviour is well managed. Timely and nurturing support helps pupils with social and emotional difficulties to thrive.
- Overall, pupils have a real sense of pride in their work and most relish every opportunity to maximise their learning in lessons. However, on occasions, when learning is not specifically matched to needs, individual pupils' concentration can decrease. Consequently, this slows progress in parts of lessons.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average. Historically, a few pupils have not attended school regularly enough. Leaders' monitoring of this group of pupils is robust. This, along with specific effective external support, has resulted in attendance rising.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Historical weak teaching has resulted in pupils' underachievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders are taking action to reverse this prior underachievement. Consequently, academic standards across the school are improving. However, in 2016, Year 6 pupils achieved considerably less well than other pupils nationally, particularly in mathematics, resulting in too few pupils being well prepared for secondary school.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than their peers in a number of year groups. However, too few disadvantaged pupils reach expected standards at the end of key stage 2. Differences in attainment for disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally remain stubbornly large.
- Recent intervention to support middle- and higher-attaining disadvantaged pupils is talking hold well. However, too few disadvantaged pupils achieve the highest levels of attainment.
- Standards in punctuation, grammar and spelling are low when compared to standards nationally. Although leaders are tackling this, for some pupils poor spelling is a weakness and this inhibits the quality of sustained writing outcomes.
- At key stage 1, published outcomes are in line with the national average in reading and mathematics and above for writing. However, previously lower-attaining pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are not catching up quickly enough and this inhibits these pupils from reaching the expected standards.
- The school's specific focus on raising pupil achievement in mathematics is resulting in pupils developing greater fluency in mental and written calculations. However, opportunities to develop reasoning and apply mathematical understanding are too limited.
- In 2014 and 2015, the proportion of pupils meeting the required standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 was above the national average. However, in 2016 attainment dipped. Boys' progress in phonics from their high starting points was less secure. The gap between boys' and girls' attainment is wide.
- The school's own assessment information shows that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making strong progress, particularly in language development and reading. However, some pupils' learning in whole-class situations is less successful because work is not planned at the right level for them. Consequently, these pupils find it difficult to access tasks. Sometimes, feedback from teachers does not help these pupils move forwards and this hinders the progress they make, particularly in writing.

Early years provision

Good

- Outcomes by the end of Reception have been above or in line with the national average for the last three years. Children's progress is checked regularly, and assessment information is used precisely to plan new learning. As a result, children make at least typical progress across their time in early years. However, in 2016, differences between boys' and girls' achievement were evident. Leaders are steadfast

in their work to ensure that any prevailing gaps diminish quickly.

- The Nursery provides children with a positive start to school life. The curriculum here is impressive, the environment is hugely exciting and a sense of adventure prevails for children as they journey through their days. Adult intervention is precise so that children's learning moves on quickly. Children relish every opportunity on offer and they show a genuine eagerness to learn, investigate and explore. Levels of children's independence are high because adults model these skills effectively. Inspectors saw children absorbed in their learning. Effective planning also incorporates a sense of awe and wonder for children as they explore. For example, inspectors saw children squelching in the mud in their wellington boots and explaining their feelings using descriptive language.
- In Nursery, adults skilfully prompt and support children in their language development. As a result, children's progress from their different starting points is good. In particular, children who enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills below their chronological age catch up quickly.
- Reception is a nurturing environment. Children form positive relationships with adults and other children in Reception and so they feel safe and enjoy school. Children benefit from a wide range of activities across all areas of learning in the classroom and outdoors. Well-thought-out planning ensures that children are excited and well motivated to learn. Small-group, teacher-led work is precisely matched to pupils' needs and so helps children move on in their learning. Occasionally, additional adults do not consistently make use of opportunities to support and deepen children's understanding and thinking during their play.
- Leadership of early years is good. Leaders are focused on ensuring that the proportion of children making consistently high rates of progress from their starting points and the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard at the end of Reception in reading, writing and mathematics increase still further.
- The leadership of the child development centre is good. Leaders are highly effective in managing children's transition to their school placements. Excellent relationships between children and staff, precise individualised planning and consistently high expectations ensure that children's progress is good and children's individual targets are met. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and precisely meet the needs of individual children.

School details

Unique reference number	140347
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10019940

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Sponsored academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	304
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Father Michael Brown
Principal	Julie Simpson
Telephone number	01579 344042
Website	www.st-martins.cornwall.sch.uk/
Email address	crose@stbarnabasmat.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school. Some classes are mixed age.
- The school converted to academy status in December 2013 and is part of the St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust. This is a group of six schools. There is a board made up of six directors. There is a central team within the multi-academy trust that is responsible for human resources and staff management, budget management, premises and resource management, and health and safety.
- The academy principal oversees the school's work along with that of the other five schools in the trust. She has overall responsibility for pupils' outcomes and reports directly to the board of directors. The head of school at St Martin's has responsibility for the daily running of the school.
- The child development centre on site is a specialist assessment nursery for up to 12 pre-school aged children with additional needs. It draws from a catchment across East Cornwall. This centre runs in-reach and out-reach support by a multidisciplinary team

of professionals and supports the transition process for children starting school.

- There is a nursery on site and a breakfast club; both are managed by the trust.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receiving support is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with a statement or education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standard which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning across the school. Many lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the academy principal, the headteacher, the leader of the child development centre, subject leaders for English and mathematics, the mathematics leader for the multi-academy trust and the leader of the early years.
- Meetings took place with three of the six directors and the academy improvement adviser.
- A telephone conversation took place with the director of Truro Diocese.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of school documents, including the school action plan and the school's self-evaluation document. Records relating to behaviour and safety, attendance and safeguarding were also reviewed.
- An inspector attended two acts of collective worship.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to two groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtime.
- 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 and development.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books to establish the current quality of pupils' work and progress over time.
- Inspectors considered 15 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspectors also considered comments provided by parent text messages and spoke to parents during the inspection. The response from one member of staff to the online questionnaire was also analysed. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sally Olford	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Ackers	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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