

St Maddern's Church of England School, Madron

Bellair Road, Madron, Penzance, Cornwall TR20 8SP

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards fell sharply following the previous inspection. Until the appointment of the executive headteacher, leaders had not done enough to tackle weaknesses in teaching. Consequently, although improving rapidly now, pupils' learning has been disjointed.
- Teaching is inconsistent. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are sometimes too low. In particular, the most able are not challenged consistently.
- The teaching of mathematics is not as strong as it should be. Teachers are not systematic enough in their approach and in their use of assessment. This means that work is not well enough matched to pupils' needs, particularly the most able.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average. Too many pupils are persistently absent.
- Provision in early years is not effective enough. Staff do not use assessment well enough to ensure planned provision meets children's needs consistently. The outdoor environment is not used as effectively as the indoor provision to promote learning.
- Although getting better, historic weaknesses in teaching and learning have led to some pupils having varied attitudes to learning. Too many pupils find it difficult to work on their own or to tackle work when it is challenging.
- Pupils' progress varies in different subjects and across year groups. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make the same variable progress as their peers.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher has reversed the decline in standards. Her determined leadership has brought about significant improvement to provision in a very short time.
- The curriculum has a number of strengths. British values are promoted well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and moral development is good, as is the use of additional funding.
- Systems for checking and monitoring teaching focus appropriately on learning. Performance management is very effective.
- The new federation provides strong governance. Leaders have utilised collaborative opportunities well. Consequently, leadership and management are securely good and safeguarding arrangements are rigorous.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good, by:
 - ensuring that learning is planned systematically and lessons build on what pupils already know and can do
 - making sure that basic mathematical skills are taught effectively
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able.
- Raise pupils' achievement further, by ensuring that:
 - pupils are more confident to use their mathematical skills to solve problems for themselves
 - more pupils attain greater depth at the end of each key stage
 - pupils make consistent progress in a greater range of subjects and across year groups.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - improving pupils' attendance
 - tackling weaknesses in pupils' ability to work independently.
- Improve provision in early years, by strengthening the use of assessment so that learning across the curriculum is purposeful, particularly in the outdoor environment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher leads with compassion, enthusiasm and determination. She has taken effective action to reverse the declining standards that were identified early by the local authority following the previous inspection. Consequently, she has driven rapid improvement in the school, while navigating a number of significant challenges with sensitivity and precision.
- Leaders have successfully pulled the community together following significant turbulence in July 2017. The executive headteacher, governors and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) have worked effectively together to establish a clear vision for the school and the newly formed federation. This has been shared among staff and has resulted in all members of the school community pulling in the same direction to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders' monitoring of the school is rigorous and effective. The executive headteacher checks the quality of teaching and learning regularly. She provides coherent and useful feedback to teachers to help them improve their practice. New systems to track the progress pupils make are being used to identify what is going well and where extra focus is needed. This helps ensure that leaders' evaluations of the effectiveness of the school are accurate and useful to plan further improvements.
- The performance management of teachers is now robust and has helped bring about improvements in the quality of teaching. There is an appropriate link between the performance of staff and their pay. Teachers are held to account to improve the progress pupils are making and are given the appropriate support to succeed.
- Opportunities offered by the development of the federation to improve the leadership of subjects at St Maddern's have been utilised. For example, the leader of English from the partner school has led initiatives that have rapidly improved the quality of teaching in writing. Both schools now share the SENCo, who has helped bring about improvements to the quality of provision for pupils with SEND.
- The curriculum is effectively designed to meet pupils' needs and captures pupils' imagination well. For example, pupils report very positively about the trips and visits, such as to Gwennap Pit, and how these help them to learn across subjects. Opportunities to develop pupils' self-awareness and self-esteem are very well developed. This is particularly effective in the outdoor learning opportunities that make up a key element in the school's curriculum.
- Pupils rightly report positively on the strong sense of community at the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is catered for well. They understand and learn to value other people's differences, including their faiths, beliefs and abilities. Pupils are included and valued by staff, and this helps pupils to understand that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and that there should be equality of opportunity for all. Consequently, British values are promoted well.
- School leaders have made very good use of timely and precise support provided by Cornwall School Improvement Service and the diocese. Bespoke packages of support have helped to improve the effectiveness of early years and the quality of teaching.

Leaders have also brokered the collaboration with St Mary's Primary School. As a result of the rapid improvements that have been made, the federation is very well placed to continue to improve provision further in the future.

- The use of external funding is effective. Upon her arrival, the executive headteacher reviewed and amended how the pupil premium and physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used. Consequently, both funds are now used in the way they are intended. The pupil premium has been carefully shared out to meet the precise needs of each eligible pupil. Leaders are tracking the impact of the new initiatives that have been developed diligently. As a result, pupils who receive the pupil premium are making more rapid progress and the differences between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally are diminishing. Similarly, the PE and sport premium has led to increased rates of participation in sport. Swimming has been maintained for pupils in key stage 1 and teachers participate in sessions led by specialist coaches to improve their subject knowledge and practice.
- The leadership of provision for pupils with SEND is strong. The SENCo has a good understanding of the needs of each pupil on the SEN register. She ensures that teachers and teaching assistants know what they need to do to ensure that these pupils are supported well. Consequently, pupils with SEND are making better progress.

Governance of the school

- The newly federated governing body provides robust challenge and support to leaders. New governors have successfully taken over from the interim executive board (IEB), building on the improvements that had been made. This transition was facilitated by the chair of the IEB taking on the chair of the governing body role. He has brought about much greater efficiency in how the governors monitor the school and hold the executive headteacher to account. Consequently, governors ensure that changes to leadership and the development of the federation are focused on improving leaders' effectiveness, improving the progress of pupils and making sure that pupils are safe.
- Governors receive useful and detailed information from school leaders on how well teaching supports learning. Governors are also well informed about the impact leaders are having and the rate at which the school is improving. They follow this up effectively by regularly carrying out focused visits.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The appointment of the executive headteacher, supported well by the local authority, has led to a systematic approach to tackling historic weaknesses in this area. Safeguarding policies and procedures are now robust. Leaders and advisers from the local authority have reviewed all aspects of safeguarding. This has helped ensure that those who are responsible for safeguarding have focused their energy well on areas that had not been done well in the past. For example, the implementation of child protection processes is now led effectively and so these work well. Staff receive appropriate training, including that completed by the designated and deputy designated safeguarding leads.
- School leaders work effectively with other agencies to protect children. They are

tenacious in following up concerns when necessary. All staff keep accurate records, following school policies and procedures. Safer recruitment is taken very seriously. Checks on new staff are completed in a timely manner and recorded appropriately on the single central register. The effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements is checked carefully by members of the federated governing body.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school is too variable and not consistently good. It requires improvement because teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and achieve, particularly the most able, are too low. This means that some pupils are not sufficiently challenged to do their best and so do not learn as well as they could in some lessons and over time.
- Teachers are not consistent in their use of assessment to ensure that work meets the differing needs of pupils. Some pupils find the work they are asked to do too easy and others are not supported well enough to catch up with their peers.
- The teaching of mathematics is too variable. Where it is less effective, teachers' modelling of new concepts is not well enough linked to what they want pupils to learn. This means that some pupils are not able to tackle work without extra support and time is wasted. Where it is stronger, teachers use questioning effectively to help pupils solve problems for themselves. However, many pupils lack the foundations in their learning to understand some of the most challenging concepts. This means that, despite lessons improving, pupils' ability to make use of what they are being taught remains limited.
- Leaders have introduced a number of effective strategies to improve the teaching of writing. Teachers ensure that there are useful links between what pupils are learning about in their topic work and what they are asked to write about. Teachers also ensure that writing lessons allow pupils to explore new language to improve the effect of their work. Regular oral rehearsal of writing structure has also helped pupils to be more organised when they are composing text. As a result, pupils' enjoyment of writing has increased and they are achieving more success.
- Teachers apply the school's policies that relate to teaching and learning consistently. For example, all lessons are clear about what pupils should learn and how they can be successful. Teachers use the school's feedback policy diligently. However, the impact of these policies is variable and teachers are not always systematic enough about making sure that what they do allows pupils to apply their learning independently. Consequently, particularly in key stage 2, pupils continue to be over reliant on adult support and guidance in lessons and do not apply what they have learned as well as they should.
- The teaching of reading has some strengths, but it is not consistent. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. Texts studied in class engage pupils and are helping to develop their love of reading and improve the quality of their writing. The teaching of phonics has improved and is now effective. However, in key stage 2, the teaching of reading is too varied in its impact. In particular, not enough is expected of the most able pupils in reading lessons.

- Teachers' deployment of teaching assistants and other adults is effective. For example, teaching assistants' time is used well to support the organisation of lessons in the mixed classes within the school. Some teaching assistants are very skilled and successfully help to include pupils who find managing their own anxieties and behaviour for themselves difficult.
- Teaching in some subjects is very effective, for example in history, religious education, art and music. Where this is the case, expectations are higher, planning is more precise and staff make much better use of time and the new curriculum to engage pupils. Pupils make good progress in these areas because teachers elicit their enthusiasm. They allow pupils to apply what they have learned in the core subjects to a much higher standard. This was particularly evident in the amount of writing that pupils undertake in their topic work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Although there are many strengths in how well pupils' personal development is promoted, leaders have not had time to tackle a legacy of low aspiration and expectation. For example, historic weaknesses in approaches to promoting independence mean that some pupils lack the skills to approach new concepts with alacrity. Pupils do not make good use of time when they are asked to work on their own, particularly in key stage 2.
- Pupils are polite and play well together. Most say that they enjoy school and feel they are well supported to learn how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Leaders take effective action to tackle issues with friendships and the rare occasions that bullying has been reported by pupils. Leaders and teachers use opportunities to talk and listen to the pupils well. They know and understand the needs of individuals very well. Pupils are welcoming to people they do not know. They are proud of their school and of their work.
- Leaders have successfully secured a nurturing and safe environment for pupils to learn and play together. There are a number of elements to the school curriculum that promote pupils' personal development and welfare effectively. For example, the introduction of more structured outdoor learning and the use of local resources have met the emotional needs of the pupils very well. Pupils believe that these experiences are useful, and recognise that they have helped develop more positive relationships among the school community.
- Pupils speak positively about their experiences at school. In particular, pupils report that the staff are supportive and look after them well. Pupils look to make a helpful contribution to the school and recognise their place as members of the local community. For example, pupils supported a recent march in the village to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the First World War.
- Opportunities offered by the new federation have been utilised well. For example, pupils now have greater access to competitive sport. Pupils have been able to mix with pupils from the partner school to widen their social group before the transition to

secondary school. Year 6 pupils get the chance to visit London as part of their key stage 2 experience. This has helped pupils develop a broader understanding of what it means to live in a multicultural country.

- Pupils rightly say that they feel safe and that they are well looked after. They enjoy excellent relationships with committed and supportive staff. Consequently, they are clear about whom they can speak to if they have a concern.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Approaches to managing behaviour have been significantly improved recently and expectations are now higher. However, there is a legacy of poor attitudes to learning that continue to be a challenge, particularly in key stage 2.
- Pupils speak positively about the trusted relationships they enjoy with staff. Good relationships are evident and this permeates the often calm and orderly lessons. Staff work well together to model positive behaviour and show pupils how to work and play together the right way. Pupils often respond well to this. For example, at playtime, staff were seen joining in and showing pupils how to engage in games properly. However, pupils do not consistently try their hardest when they are asked to work on their own. Sometimes they lack the resilience to 'have a go'. At other times, when staff do not expect enough of pupils, they become restless and there is low-level disruption in lessons.
- Pupils' attendance is lower than the national average and has been for some time. Owing to the very small numbers of pupils at the school, overall attendance data is significantly skewed by a group of persistently absent pupils. Effective action has been initiated to tackle this. For example, all families now get detailed information about their child's attendance on a regular basis. There are much better links between the school and parents and carers. Together, this is leading to the improving attendance of the majority of pupils.
- Leaders record and follow up on serious incidents diligently and appropriately. Systems and processes for logging and reviewing behaviour are appropriate. Leaders can show how they have improved behaviour over time for a number of individuals. However, when the executive headteacher arrived, higher expectations did result in a number of fixed-term exclusions, which have now reduced. The school is now calm, orderly and a positive place for pupils to be.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- After the previous inspection, pupils' achievement declined sharply because of weaknesses in teaching. Leaders have now taken effective action to reverse this declining trend, so that pupils are now making much stronger progress. However, a legacy of poor achievement remains. Despite pupils making much better progress, many still have a long way to catch up, particularly in key stage 2.
- Pupils have attained below-average levels in the past, particularly in 2018. Small cohorts and high mobility mean that results can fluctuate widely for different year groups. For example, in 2016, key stage 2 results dropped to below average in

reading, writing and mathematics compared with the above-average results for the previous year. In 2017, pupils in key stage 2 attained results that were broadly average. Despite these variances, leaders have rightly identified that, although now improving, too few pupils make the progress they should from their starting points. Consequently, pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage in their education as they should be.

- Pupils are currently achieving better in reading and writing than in mathematics. This is because work to improve achievement in English has been effective. For example, the new approach to teaching phonics led to a sharp improvement in results in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018. However, improvements to the teaching of mathematics have had more varied impact. For example, many younger pupils are working at age-related expectations because they have not fallen behind or developed misconceptions in the way some of the older children have.
- Work seen in pupils' books shows that pupils are now making strong gains in their literacy skills and improving in their numeracy skills overall. The standard of work has been much better over the last year since the arrival of the executive headteacher. There is clear evidence of the impact of the recently revised curriculum. For example, pupils make good use of local visits and outdoor learning to write with purpose, structure and effect. Pupils are also given useful opportunities to apply their skills in writing across other parts of the curriculum.
- The majority of different groups of pupils, including those with SEND, make similar progress. Where improvements to teaching are more established, all groups make better progress. Conversely, where expectations of what pupils can do remain low, all groups do not do as well. However, the challenge for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, remains underdeveloped across the school. Leaders have rightly identified this as a next step, but have yet to take notable action to address it.
- The achievement of the small number of disadvantaged pupils varies. In 2018, disadvantaged pupils attained better than their peers at the end of key stage 2. Their stronger attainment was a consequence of the more effective use of the pupil premium to meet individual needs.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Provision in early years, although improving, is not as effective as it should be. Assessments of children's learning are not used consistently well. As a result, the outdoor environment and some lessons when children choose activities do not build on what children know and can do.
- Activities led by adults are generally more effective and help children to make stronger progress. Positive relationships in both early years environments are a strength. Teachers and other staff are engaging and know children well. They engage children successfully and develop their language skills appropriately through talk. However, this is more effective when adults have planned the learning for children.
- Lessons where children choose from a selection of activities are not planned with the same level of sharpness. The activities on offer to the children in these sessions do not

link well enough with what children can already do. Furthermore, the outdoor environment is not tailored in response to assessments about the children, particularly for the most able. This means that learning in these sessions does not promote progress as well as it could and the most able children do not make as much progress as other children in early years.

- Owing to the very small size of cohorts, the proportion of children who enter Reception Year with the skills expected for their age can vary widely. The school serves an area of significant deprivation and so cohorts often have children with barriers to learning. As a result, outcomes by the end of Reception also vary widely. Overall, over the last three years, children have made reasonable progress from their starting points and are, therefore, sufficiently well prepared to move into Year 1.
- Leaders are taking robust action to improve the quality of provision, including investing significantly to improve the offer within the inside and outdoor environments. Leaders' evaluations of the quality of provision are accurate. They have ensured that safeguarding is effective and that the use of assessment is much stronger and more systematic than in the past. Staff work hard to ensure that children are safe and feel safe. Children interact well with each other and enjoy playing together.

School details

Unique reference number	111996
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10086879

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeff Davis
Executive Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Tyreman
Telephone number	01736 364845
Website	www.st-madderns.cornwall.sch.uk/website
Email address	secretary@st-madderns.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 July 2015

Information about this school

- St Maddern's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school's most recent inspection of denominational education and the content of the school's collective worship under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 was on 27 March 2018.
- The school is organised into two mixed-age classes, with children from Reception to Year 6. There is a small pre-school for children aged two to four. Between this inspection and the last, leaders changed the registration status of the pre-school so that they could admit children from two years old, instead of age three. Small cohorts and high mobility mean that results can fluctuate widely for different year groups.
- The majority of pupils are White British. There are very few pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is high and above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is just above the national average.

- The school makes use of two alternative providers. This provision is delivered at BF Adventure and Penwith Alternative Provision Academy.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to the leadership structure at the school. The executive headteacher was asked to lead the school in July 2017 by the local authority. She is also the executive headteacher for St Mary's Church of England Primary School in Penzance. Both schools share the executive headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the now federated governing body. During the period of transition, both the local authority and diocese provided formal support to leaders.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons across the school, all jointly with the executive headteacher. He observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, and at breaktimes and lunchtime. He analysed records of pupils' achievement, talked with a group of pupils from Years 4 to 6, and scrutinised information about pupils' attendance.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, leaders responsible for special educational needs and early years, and the chair of the governing body and vice-chair of the governing body separately. The inspector also met with a representative from the local authority and some leaders from the partner school in the federation.
- The inspector looked closely at school documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings and the recently disbanded IEB, the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and assessment information about pupils' achievement.
- The inspector took account of one response from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, one response to Ofsted's free-text service and 11 responses to the school's own parent questionnaire completed in July 2018.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

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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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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