

Stratton Primary School

New Road, Stratton, Bude, Cornwall EX23 9AP

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders have brought about rapid improvements to the standard of education. All those at the school work together under a shared vision. The quality of teaching is now good. Consequently, current pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Governance at the school is effective. Governors hold leaders to account diligently for how well pupils are doing and how quickly the school is improving.
- Some leaders are new to post or developing in their roles. Consequently, some checks by leaders are not focused enough on the impact made on pupils' learning. Some improvements need more time to embed.
- The focus on improving teaching and learning in writing and mathematics has ensured that many more pupils are now better prepared for the next stage of their education at the end of key stage 2.
- Teachers are effective. They ensure that the majority of lessons are interesting, calm and purposeful. Pupils learn with enthusiasm.
- Some pupils do not attend well. Leaders' actions to improve this are new and so have not had the time to make the difference that is needed.
- Behaviour is almost always good and sometimes better. Pupils enjoy the school and rightly say they are safe. They show good attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are promoted well. There is a strong sense of community at the school. Pupils contribute to the positive atmosphere by looking out for each other and being responsible.
- Leaders and governors ensure that pupils experience an effective, broad and balanced curriculum. Outdoor learning, trips and visits enhance pupils' learning. Opportunities for pupils to apply skills across subjects are plentiful.
- Staff make sure pupils are safe. They undertake their responsibilities well to ensure that concerns are acted upon.
- The teaching of reading is good, but not as effective as in writing and mathematics. This is hindering raising standards at the end of key stage 1.
- Parents and carers rightly have renewed confidence in leaders.
- Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the early years.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by implementing a more systematic approach to the teaching of reading.
- Embed leaders' new systems to improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism.
- Further secure improvements to pupils' achievement, so that their progress and attainment is consistently good, particularly at key stage 1.
- Ensure that leaders' monitoring and evaluation are more rigorous and focus more precisely on pupils' outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and the two assistant headteachers make up a dynamic team. They all lead with warmth, energy and determination. They have driven rapid improvement in the school after the previous inspection. As a result, the school is more effective and continues to improve.
- Recent changes in senior leadership have been effective. Together with governors, leaders have established an ambitious vision for the future which is shared among staff. Consequently, all staff have higher expectations and are now pulling in the same direction to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' monitoring of the school is rigorous and effective. Leaders check the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility carefully, including in the early years. New systems to track pupils' progress are utilised well to check where teachers are making the most difference. This helps ensure that leaders' evaluations of the effectiveness of the school are broadly accurate and useful to plan further improvements.
- However, some checks by leaders are not focused enough on pupils' learning. For example, when leaders review pupils' work, too often they look at superficial improvements or how well staff are following school policy, rather than the quality and depth of pupils' learning.
- The performance management of teachers is now robust and has helped bring about improvements to the quality of teaching. Leaders ensure that teachers are held to account to improve the progress pupils are making. Weak performance is challenged appropriately and with rigour.
- Many leaders, including subject leaders, are very effective and demonstrate the skills needed to lead improvements in their areas of responsibility. Their actions to improve the school have been effective and brought about rapid improvements, particularly in the last year. However, some leaders still need support in developing their skills, particularly when checking the impact of their actions over time. Leaders' plans to address this are appropriate.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and captures pupils' imagination well. For example, pupils report very positively about the trips and visits that supplement their learning, such as to Morewellham Quay. Pupils rightly believe the enhancements within the curriculum help them to learn better across a range of subjects. Opportunities to develop pupils' self-awareness and self-esteem are very well developed.
- Pupils' spiritual, cultural, social and moral development is catered for well. They understand and learn to value other people's differences, including in relation to other 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 in opportunity for all. Consequently, fundamental British values are promoted well.
- School leaders have made very good use of targeted and appropriate support provided by Cornwall County Council. Bespoke packages of support, including from a local teaching school, are utilised diligently to inform how leaders intend to improve the

effectiveness of senior and middle leadership and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

- Leaders have ensured that the pupil premium grant is used well. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from a range of bespoke and specialised interventions that ensure they do not get left behind. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving, and they are quickly catching up with their peers.
- The sports premium is used very effectively. Leaders have ensured that staff develop their practice by working alongside specialised coaches. As a result, pupils benefit from high-quality physical education (PE) lessons. Access to competitive sport is plentiful. Participation in the wide range of sporting clubs that are available is getting stronger.

Governance of the school

- The governing body provides robust challenge and support to leaders. It ensures that changes to leadership are focused on improving effectiveness, particularly in how well pupils do at the school. As well as keeping a keen eye on how the school is improving, governors have looked at ways to strengthen their own effectiveness. For example, a recent skills audit has led to the appointment of highly skilled members of the community with education and policing backgrounds. Governors' effectiveness in holding leaders to account ensures that the school is very well placed to improve in the future.
- Governors receive timely information from school leaders on how well teaching supports learning, and this is used well to ask searching questions. They follow this up effectively, by regularly visiting the school. The sharing of responsibilities among governors has ensured that all aspects of the school are carefully reviewed. Where weaknesses appear, governors ask astute and challenging questions, which lead to useful actions by leaders, when necessary.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding policies and procedures are comprehensive. Appropriate child protection processes have been implemented and 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 follow up concerns tenaciously. Records are kept diligently and securely. Safer recruitment is taken very seriously, and all checks are completed in a timely and appropriate manner. The single central record is carefully maintained and monitored.
- The strong community at the school ensures that there is an open and caring culture. Pupils report they know who to go to if they are concerned about anything and that they would be taken seriously. They also believe that school staff would take effective action to support them, should the need arise.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good, particularly in writing, mathematics, science and the humanities. Pupils achieve well because they find lessons increasingly engaging and challenging.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is consistently strong. Teachers impart this knowledge using a range of interesting and well-planned lessons that capture pupils' interests. Teachers and support staff enjoy excellent relationships with pupils. This helps to ensure that lessons are purposeful, calm and enjoyable.
- Teachers make effective use of assessment, particularly when planning lessons. They consider carefully how to challenge pupils and what is needed to allow pupils to build on what they already know or can do. This means work is well matched to the different needs of pupils.
- The teaching of writing is effective. Leaders' actions to improve how teachers engage pupils' interest and model writing have worked well. Pupils report that English lessons are increasingly interesting and challenging, because teachers expect a lot from pupils. Many rightly feel that teachers' engaging style and the links made to other subjects are helping them to enjoy their learning more and make better progress in their writing.
- Recent changes to the teaching of mathematics have been effective. Teachers ensure that pupils benefit from studying an appropriate range of mathematical concepts and get regular opportunities to apply them across the curriculum. The use of mathematical imagery to support pupils' understanding of more complex mathematics ideas is well developed. As a result, pupils' confidence is growing when tackling problems of increasing difficulty.
- The teaching of reading is good. Children and pupils experience a useful programme of phonics teaching. However, this is not as precise or systematic as it could be. This means that, on occasions, pupils do not learn their sounds as accurately as they should and so find it more difficult to blend when reading. In key stage 2, pupils are not given the chance to refine their inference and deduction skills as often as they could. Consequently, pupils' progress in reading is good, but not as rapid as that now seen in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants are effective and add value to pupils' learning. Many are highly skilled and support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very well. For example, teaching assistants often hold back and allow pupils with SEND to attempt work independently before offering guidance. Consequently, pupils with SEND do well in lessons and are often included successfully alongside their peers.
- Teachers' use of questioning is targeted and precise. Teachers probe pupils' understanding effectively by asking searching and well-planned questions. Consequently, pupils are often challenged to think deeply about what they are learning, helping them to make strong progress in a number of subjects, including science and the humanities.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum has a number of elements that promote pupils' self-confidence and physical and mental well-being well. For example, outdoor learning is utilised effectively to supplement pupils' personal development.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the different forms of bullying and believe that there is no use of discriminatory language in the school. Pupils believe that bullying is exceptionally rare at the school, and this is reflected in the logs kept by the school and analysed by inspectors. Although not all parents agree, on the occasions when there have been issues, the school has responded appropriately.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes about healthy lifestyles. Leaders have prioritised access to regular, high-quality PE for all pupils. Sporting achievements are celebrated and valued by the staff at the school. This helps to ensure that pupils feel the same. They enjoy PE lessons and the clubs that are on offer to them. There is a high take-up for the sporting clubs on offer.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at the school, and parents overwhelmingly share the same view. Leaders have driven a number of initiatives which help pupils develop a strong sense of what they need to do to stay safe. For example, opportunities for outdoor learning are utilised well to teach pupils to assess risk and play safely. Pupils talk with confidence about how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show strong attitudes towards learning in lessons. They demonstrate resilience when activities are challenging and respond well to the feedback they receive from teachers and teaching assistants during lessons. However, there are still pupils in key stage 2 who are not as independent as they should be for their age.
- Pupils behave positively in and around the school. They play and learn cooperatively. The strong sense of community is particularly evident at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Older pupils take on appropriate responsibility and look out for younger pupils. Adults model positive and respectful relationships, which pupils utilise to guide their own interactions with their peers.
- Pupils, parents and staff rightly agree that pupils' behaviour is good and well managed.
- Staff at the school know each individual very well. Strong relationships permeate the school between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves. Consequently, there is a strong sense of community at the school, and every individual feels valued. Pupils strive to be, and are, a credit to the school and their families.
- Many pupils attend well, but this is not consistently the case. As a result, pupils' overall attendance remains below national averages. There is no discernible difference in the attendance of groups. Leaders have rightly identified the need to reduce the number of pupils that take term-time holidays.

- Recent initiatives introduced by the headteacher have already raised the expectation about the promptness of arrival in the mornings. However, this has also had a detrimental effect on pupils' overall attendance. When necessary, leaders work appropriately with other agencies and take robust action. However, the tougher approach taken by leaders has not had the time needed to bring about consistent improvements to pupils' attendance where it is needed.
- Fixed-term exclusions are rare and lower than other schools working in similar contexts. There have been no permanent exclusions for the last three years.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current pupils make good progress from their different starting points in all three key stages at the school. In some cases, pupils have made very strong progress in a very short amount of time because of effective initiatives employed by the current senior leadership team, particularly in writing. Consequently, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 has improved in writing and mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. This is a significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection.
- As the school has grown, the cohorts of children starting have varied. The proportion of children joining the school working below what would be typical is increasing. This has led to variations in the proportion attaining a good level of development by the time they leave Reception. Nevertheless, current assessment information, supported by the observations of inspectors, demonstrates that children of all abilities make strong progress from their starting points. Children leave Reception well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics lessons in Reception and in key stage 1. By the end of Year 1, pupils' results in the phonics screening check are in line with the national average, although this has fluctuated in the past. The most able learn to read very well, reflected in the high proportion working at greater depth by the end of Year 2.
- By the time pupils finish key stage 1, their attainment is broadly average. However, the proportion achieving a greater depth of understanding in reading is above the national average. This is because, overall, pupils make good progress during Years 1 and 2.
- The attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2 improved significantly in 2018. Standards have been consistently improving and have been sustained in current year groups. Pupils also achieve well in a range of subjects, including science, PE, geography and history.

Pupils' progress across key stage 2 has varied in the past. However, effective action by leaders has improved the quality of teaching, and pupils are now making much stronger progress. This was reflected in the much better progress made by the Year 6 cohort in 2018, who made strong progress from their starting points. This improvement has been maintained. The school's own data about the current Year 6 pupils and the work in their books demonstrate that pupils are on track to make good progress from their starting points again this year.

- Pupils with SEND make good progress academically, socially and emotionally. Leaders

know and analyse the needs of these pupils well. Leaders work effectively with parents to ensure that there are strong links between what happens at school and at home. This makes sure pupils' needs are catered for effectively.

- Key stage 2 results demonstrate that the most able pupils often achieve very well. In 2018, the most able pupils in Year 6 made strong progress from their starting points. Evidence in lessons shows that this trend has continued.
- Disadvantaged pupils do at least as well as, and sometimes better than, their peers at the school. As with other cohorts in the school, disadvantaged pupils' progress from their starting points is good and improving.

Early years provision

Good

- Provision in the early years is effective. Children benefit from enticing and stimulating activities that support their learning in all areas of the early years foundation stage curriculum. Consequently, children enjoy the school, attend well and show good attitudes in lessons.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. Leaders have ensured that, through their evaluations and strong use of assessment, they have maintained the effectiveness of provision to meet the varying needs of all children. Work in children's journals and their achievement in lessons show they make good progress from their starting points.
- There are very effective links between staff and parents. Parents report very positively about how the early years meets the holistic needs of their children. Parents make regular and enthusiastic contributions to the school's information about how well their child is doing. Parents appreciate the open and welcoming environment that leaders have created.
- Children take part in purposeful and engaging activities, including when having more choice about what they are learning. Teachers make good use of questioning to challenge children's thinking and deepen their understanding. As a consequence, children make good progress. However, some staff are less adept at securing progress when leading sessions in small groups. Furthermore, the challenge for the most able is, at times, not high enough, particularly in writing.
- Teachers' assessments are used very well to build up a strong picture of how well children are doing. Leaders, teachers and support staff use the information they collect about children effectively to adapt provision and plan learning opportunities that promote progress. The learning environment is utilised very well, including outside.

School details

Unique reference number	111983
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10058297

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Sillifant
Headteacher	Penny Simpson
Telephone number	01288 353196
Website	www.stratton.cornwall.sch.uk
Email address	head@stratton.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 July 2016

Information about this school

- Stratton Primary School is a larger-than-average sized primary school, with a mix of one-and-a-half and two-form entry.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staffing changes, including a new headteacher and two new assistant headteachers.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- There is a before-school club that operates on the school site. This is managed by the school's governing body.
- The proportion of pupils that are from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for SEND support is below average, but the proportion with education, health and care plans is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons across the school, the majority jointly with a senior leader. They observed pupils' behaviour around the school and during lessons. Inspectors analysed records of pupils' achievement, talked with two groups of pupils and listened to pupils from Years 4 and 6 read. They scrutinised information about pupils' attendance.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, leaders responsible for SEND and different subjects, and a group of governors. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked closely at school documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, external reports provided by the local authority and Cornwall teaching school, the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and assessment information about pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors took account of 65 responses from parents to the online questionnaire Parent View, free-text responses from parents and discussions with some parents at the beginning of the first day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Chown	Ofsted Inspector
Adam Morris	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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