

Inspection of a good school: Breage Church of England School

Trewithick Road, Breage, Helston, Cornwall TR13 9PZ

Inspection date: 24 November 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' learning is not good enough because of weaknesses in the curriculum, including in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). Some pupils still have too many gaps in their knowledge, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This prevents them from being as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they should be. The expectations of some pupils who find reading difficult are not high enough. As a result, they struggle to catch up once they have fallen behind.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils know each other well and there are positive relationships between adults and pupils. Older pupils like to take the lead in supporting younger ones, particularly at breaktimes and during play. This helps to create a strong 'family feel' in this small school. Pupils understand what bullying is and say that it is rare. However, should it happen, pupils have confidence in staff to deal with any incidents well.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Senior leaders and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school accurately. They are not complacent. They fully realise what needs to be done, particularly to improve the quality of education pupils receive. They have reviewed the curriculum and started to make key changes to what they want pupils to learn. Leaders have started to address weaknesses in some subjects, such as mathematics, English, reading, history and geography. However, there are others that are not sequenced well enough or sufficiently coherent to support pupils' learning. This means pupils do not know more and remember more across the whole curriculum. Pupils do not gain the knowledge they need in readiness for the next stage in their education, including when children move from Nursery into the Reception Year, and then into Year 1.

Leaders ensure that there is regular phonics teaching for pupils. Teachers celebrate reading and are keen to promote it. They understand the importance for all pupils to be fluent and confident readers, as quickly as possible. However, there are still weaknesses in the approach to teaching phonics. Teachers do not assess pupils well enough. They do not check what pupils know in a timely manner or with sufficient depth. As a result, pupils do not have learning or reading books which are matched closely enough to the sounds that they have been taught. As a result, teachers' expectations are not always high enough. Pupils who have fallen behind take too long to catch up. This has a negative impact on pupils' enjoyment of reading and their ability to learn across the wider curriculum.

Leaders check the work of the school for pupils with SEND, to ensure that their needs are identified and met, particularly in terms of their personal, social and emotional development. However, the quality of education for these pupils is not good enough. For example, pupils' individual plans do not identify the precise next steps which would help pupils to make the greatest progress. This means that pupils are sometimes held back and take too long to overcome their difficulties.

Since the school joined the multi-academy trust, there has been a period of considerable change and instability. Aside from the COVID-19 pandemic, this has included key changes to senior leaders, governors and teachers. This led to a significant decline in the quality of education provided in the school. However, following more recent appointments, including the arrival of the headteacher, leaders are now taking the right steps to improve the school.

In discussion with the headteacher, inspectors agreed that focusing on completing the curriculum and implementing this with suitably high ambition, as well as improving provision for early reading, phonics and SEND pupils, may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are tenacious in their work to keep pupils safe. The school has effective systems for checking, recruiting and training staff in child protection. Leaders make timely referrals and work closely with external agencies to keep pupils safe. Other staff, including those who work with the most vulnerable pupils, such as pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, are well trained and provide effective nurture and support. Leaders have also taken steps to help pupils in recovering from the effects of the pandemic.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not sufficiently developed, including in the EYFS. As a result, pupils do not gain the knowledge needed to be ready for the next stage in their education.

Leaders must improve the quality of education by implementing an ambitious curriculum for pupils, in all subjects.

- The early reading and phonics programme lacks rigorous and timely teacher assessment. Consequently, some pupils who struggle to read do not receive the precise support they need to catch up quickly, including having a well-matched phonics book. Leaders must ensure that teachers use assessment information to identify where pupils are stuck and provide the prompt and exact support needed to help them learn to read well.
- Individual plans for pupils with SEND are not always as well focused as they need to be. This means that some pupils do not get the precise targeted support they need to learn effectively. Leaders must ensure that pupils with SEND consistently receive the high-quality support that these pupils need to help them overcome their difficulties and fulfil their potential.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, then we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Breage Church of England School, to be good in May 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 143967 |
| Local authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 10200914 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 71 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Kevin Thomas |
| Headteacher | Dan Hadley |
| Website | www.breage.cornwall.sch.uk/website |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- Breage Church of England School is part of Southerly Point Co-operative Multi-Academy Trust. The school joined the trust in June 2017.
- The predecessor school was previously inspected in May 2012, when it was judged to be good.
- The school is arranged into three mixed-age classes.
- The school opened an on-site nursery for three- and four-year-old children in September 2021.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history.

- For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector looked at the single central record and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator to help evaluate SEND provision and practice in the school. Inspectors reviewed individual plans for pupils with SEND, to evaluate how well these are being implemented.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff and pupils to find out what it is like to be a pupil, or to work, in this school.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors and trustees, as well as the trust's executive officer.
- The lead inspector reviewed key documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form, school action plans, governors' minutes and monitoring records.
- The lead inspector checked all survey responses, including those from pupils, staff and parents. This included taking the 14 responses to Ofsted's free-text service into account.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Leanne Thirlby

Her Majesty's Inspector

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