

# Inspection of a good school: Stithians Community Primary School

Church Road, Stithians, Truro, Cornwall TR3 7DH

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2022

## **Outcome**

Stithians Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Stithians Community Primary School is a warm, nurturing and happy place. Pupils are proud of their school. They feel that the staff are approachable and want the best for them.

Pupils are kind and courteous to each other, both in the classroom and at social times. Bullying is rare. However, when pupils do fall out, they trust adults to sort incidents out quickly.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They make sure that all pupils feel included. Staff have placed the school at the heart of the village community through links such as the local church.

Parents appreciate the improvements that leaders have introduced, particularly the improved communication. Leaders pride themselves on their 'open door' policy. They have strengthened relationships with parents.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of clubs on offer. These include podcasting, gardening and sports. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as 'play leaders' and helping younger children. They value the house system and say it motivates them in their learning and behaviour.

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

The recently appointed headteacher has quickly gained the trust of the school community following a period where some parents and staff lost confidence in the school. She has acted decisively to improve the school. There is a sense of shared vision and working together. The headteacher has rightly prioritised key issues, such as phonics and engagement with parents. However, leaders are not complacent. They draw upon external support where appropriate to improve further.

Leaders have created a curriculum that is well sequenced and designed to spark pupils' enthusiasm. This shows in their positive attitudes to learning. Teachers present key concepts clearly. Pupils can recall much of what they have learned. They talk confidently about historical events such as the sinking of the Titanic. However, in a few foundation subjects, leaders have not identified the small steps of knowledge precisely enough. As a result, pupils do not deepen their knowledge consistently across the curriculum.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have added much-needed rigour and consistency to phonics teaching. Children in Reception Year learn phonics as soon as they start school. Staff establish routines to ensure children are ready to learn. Staff are well trained in phonics. They have strong subject knowledge and so they quickly identify pupils who fall behind. Changes in the deployment of support staff mean that younger pupils and pupils who need to catch up receive increased support to help them learn to read. These pupils are now given books that are well matched to the sounds they know. As a result, they learn to read well.

Teachers promote a love of reading. Pupils enjoy talking about the books they share in story time sessions. Leaders have ensured there are high-quality and engaging books in the English curriculum. Consequently, pupils are able to read increasingly complex texts.

In mathematics, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to revisit their learning to ensure it is secure. They use questioning effectively to check pupils' thinking. Pupils show quick recall of number facts and apply them to more complex problems. However, in some subjects, teachers do not always take into account what pupils already know, and move them on quickly enough.

Leaders are passionate about ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn the full curriculum. Staff know these pupils well and meet their needs effectively.

Pupils take on responsibilities such as play leaders and pupil council members. Leaders have carefully considered curriculum choices so that pupils understand diversity. Through assemblies, leaders celebrate pupils' academic and sporting achievements. This inspires pupils to try their best.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have prioritised safeguarding. Staff know families well and identify when pupils are at risk of harm. Leaders have swiftly identified and addressed issues of an inconsistent recording system. As a result, records kept are now robust, timely and detailed. They ensure staff receive regular training and monitor its impact. Leaders ensure that recruitment processes are strong. Staff, visitors and contractors are subject to appropriate checks.

Pupils know how to stay safe online and the importance of keeping physically and mentally healthy.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' use of assessment is not as well developed as it could be in some subjects, As a result, some teaching does not build on pupils' knowledge as well as it could. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used effectively in all subjects, so that pupils are challenged to know more.
- In a few of the wider curriculum subjects, leaders have not identified the precise knowledge pupils need to know and build on over time. This means that pupils do not gain the depth of knowledge they should across all subjects. Leaders need to make sure that curriculum thinking for all subjects sets out what pupils need to learn and remember.

## Background

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

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2017.

## 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111851
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240669
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	175
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Catherine Cullen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ellie MacQuarrie
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stithians.cornwall.sch.uk">www.stithians.cornwall.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 April 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in April 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector looked at the single central record and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, who is also the headteacher.
- The inspector met with five members of the governing body.

- The inspector reviewed key documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, action plans and headteacher reports.
- The inspector checked all survey responses, including those from pupils, staff and parents and carers. This included taking the 47 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, into account.

### **Inspection team**

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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