

Inspection of a good school: St Meriadoc C of E Infant Academy

Rectory Road, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 7DW

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

St Meriadoc C of E Infant Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this community-focused school. Good relationships are central to the school's work. There is a harmonious atmosphere throughout the school that enables pupils to learn and play well together.

Pupils use the school's values to help them to develop positive attitudes to learning. Animal characters, such as Respectful Rhino, help them to describe what respectful behaviour looks like. Pupils enjoy receiving rewards for showing these values during the week.

Clear and well-established routines help pupils to learn well. Children in the nursery show sustained interest in a range of activities. Early years children know the expectations adults have of them. They show they are ready to learn by following instructions and are eager to meet these high expectations. This prepares them well for key stage 1. Low-level disruption is rare. For pupils who have additional needs, leaders ensure that effective strategies help them to learn well.

Pupils take part in a range of clubs and activities. These develop their interests in sport and the arts, or things such as board games and construction. Pupils enjoy mixing with different age groups at these clubs.

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

Leaders understand that reading is the gateway to learning in the rest of the curriculum. Therefore, they ensure that learning to read is the highest priority for every pupil. All members of staff recognise their role in developing pupils' love of books and language. Nursery staff encourage children to join in with familiar stories, rhymes and songs. In the three- and four-year-olds' nursery room, children are introduced to letter and sound recognition. This prepares them to make a flying start to their phonics when they start Reception.

Leaders ensure that staff are experts in the teaching of reading. Ongoing training helps staff to deliver highly effective phonics learning. Leaders use rigorous checks to ensure that phonics teaching matches every pupil's specific needs. For pupils who have complex needs, teaching is adapted appropriately. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn to read well.

The design of the mathematics curriculum is equally strong. Pupils move through the curriculum building successfully on what they already know. In the early years children learn basic vocabulary that sets them up well for future learning. When playing with shapes and beads, they can talk about patterns using mathematical words. This emphasis on accurate vocabulary continues in key stage 1. Adults support all pupils well. They ask questions to prompt explanations and reasoning. Any pupils who need additional support in mathematics have access to a range of appropriate resources to help them.

In a few subjects, the specific knowledge leaders want pupils to learn has not been identified precisely enough. As a result, pupils are not able to build on what they have already learned in these subjects as well as they can in reading and mathematics. Because the knowledge to be learned is not precisely specified, checks on learning cannot identify whether pupils know more and remember more over time. Pupils struggle to recall learning or make links across subjects. For example, pupils learning about the great fire of London then used an aerial photo of London when learning about map symbols. However, they were unable to name the river Thames as a key geographical feature of London.

This is an inclusive school. Pupils with SEND learn well because teaching is tailored to their individual needs. Leaders are ambitious for every child and work well with a range of external professionals to make sure that pupils can learn alongside their peers wherever possible. Bespoke learning programmes help the pupils with the most complex needs to build on what they already know.

Pupils understand that everyone is different. They listen to stories that celebrate cultural diversity, disabilities and challenge stereotypes. Pupils are enthusiastic about the different experiences they have that bring learning to life. They enjoy a range of trips and visitors, which helps give them a context for what they learn.

The trust and local governors, with the support of the diocese, work well together to ensure oversight of leaders' actions. Robust evaluations ensure that priorities are clear and are having an impact on pupils' learning. Staff are motivated and proud to work at the school. They feel supported with their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are vigilant. They know the signs of abuse. Record-keeping is secure and staff report concerns in a timely manner so that any issues can be responded to swiftly. Recruitment and employment checks are thorough. Leaders work closely with a range of external agencies, which means that families get the right help at the right time.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They know some of the risks when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not identified the precise knowledge that they want pupils to learn. As a result, leaders cannot be sure that pupils will learn the important knowledge they need for future learning. Leaders need to identify the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember across all subjects.
- In some subjects, teaching strategies are not always used to help pupils know more and remember more. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils struggle to recall previous learning or make connections across subjects. Leaders must develop teachers' pedagogical expertise to enable pupils to build cumulative knowledge.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Meriadoc C of E Nursery and Infant School, to be good in March 2010.

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

Unique reference number	140782
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10212393
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pat McGovern
Headteacher	Sarah Wilkins
Website	www.st-meriadoc-inf.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England school within the diocese of Truro. Its previous Section 48 inspection was in June 2015, when the school was judged to be outstanding.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2023. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- The school has nursery provision for two-, three- and four-year-olds.
- 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. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum 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 held meetings with the executive headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and teaching and support staff.
- The inspector met with the chair of governors and with representatives from the trust, including the chief executive officer.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss how the school keeps pupils safe. She considered the school's recruitment procedures, staff induction and training, records of concerns and their engagement with external agencies. The inspector also spoke with staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to an adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. In addition, she met with pupils informally and formally to hear their views.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text responses. She also took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Angela Folland, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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