

Inspection of a good school: St Just Primary School

Bosorne Road, St Just, Penzance, Cornwall TR19 7JU

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Outcome

St Just Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Demelza Bolton. This school is part of Truro and Penwith Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jennifer Blunden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anita Firth. There is also a director of education, Chris Gould, and a primary executive lead, Rick Gill, who are responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and learning with their friends. In all classes, including the early years, relationships are positive and respectful. The school is a calm and purposeful place to learn. Pupils are happy and safe. They work hard, concentrate well and are eager to participate in lessons.

Routines and high expectations are clearly communicated and consistently applied. This means pupils behave exceptionally well. They demonstrate the school's core values, including kindness and perseverance, and the school praises them for doing so. At playtimes, pupils socialise well together.

Pupils appreciate opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities. Eco-council, school council and pupil subject ambassadors play their part in school improvement. Pupils spoke of the positive impact that pupil well-being and anti-bullying ambassadors have.

A rich range of experiences open pupils' eyes to the awe and wonder of the world. For example, the 'One World School Across the Ocean' project has opened the doors for the school on a global stage. Pupils performed poems and presented at a local university, sharing their passion for ecology, connecting people with nature and working with other schools from around the world.

Most parents recommend the school. They appreciate the nurturing environment the school provides.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. It is broad, balanced and well sequenced. For example, in mathematics, children in Reception Year count and recognise numbers. They apply this knowledge to understand repeating patterns and sequences. Older pupils have strong recall of prior knowledge and make connections between their learning now and what came before. For instance, Year 6 pupils use their prior knowledge of place value to understand multiplication of decimals. The school has introduced tablets for older pupils. These help pupils to visualise new ideas and review their learning.

The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils live up to these, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Learning is appropriately adapted to support pupils to learn well. This means most pupils with SEND learn successfully alongside their peers in class.

In the wider curriculum, the school has identified the essential knowledge and skills that it wants pupils to know. For example, in art, pupils learn about a diverse range of artists, such as Helen Bishop, Van Gogh and Giuseppe Arcimboldo. Pupils appreciate the symbolism behind a variety of artwork. They emulate these artists' key techniques and styles in their pictures and paintings. However, in a small minority of subjects, the curriculum is not always precise enough. Consequently, pupils do not build the same depth of knowledge as they do in the more established subjects.

Reading is a top priority. Children in the early years learn to read as soon as they start school. There is a clear focus on children's communication and language. Pupils learn how to decode words before they move on to develop greater fluency and comprehension. Most pupils read books that matched the sounds they know. Pupils still at the early stages of reading are well supported. Staff use interventions so they can catch up quickly. Beyond phonics, the school's reading curriculum supports pupils to explore a broad range of genres and authors and challenges them to read widely and often.

Pupils learn about fundamental British values and how the law protects people with different characteristics. They have an acute awareness of equality and respect for others. Pupils work cooperatively and successfully to earn 'golden beads' to achieve class rewards.

The school ensures educational visits are woven through the taught curriculum. For example, a visit to the Barbara Hepworth gallery helped pupils to understand scale and size when creating their own sculptures. Residential visits provide pupils with an opportunity to build resilience and confidence. Pupils enjoy a range of clubs, which develop their talents and interests. For example, they can take part in science, football, table tennis and golf.

Systems to tackle persistent absence are robust. The school liaises with parents to understand the reasons for their children's absence and to promote the importance of regular attendance. As a result, the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has reduced.

Governors and trustees support and challenge the school well. They fulfil their statutory duties. The school ensures that its assessment practices do not place an unnecessary burden on staff, so that staff are able to prioritise teaching. Staff are proud to be part of the school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small minority of subjects, the curriculum is not precise enough. As a result, pupils do not develop a deep understanding of the knowledge they need to be successful in these subjects. The school and trust need to identify the precise knowledge they want pupils to know and remember so that the curriculum is securely and consistently embedded across the school and pupils develop a deeper understanding over time.

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 Just Primary School, to be good in November 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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142444
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10298046
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	184
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anita Firth
CEO of the trust	Jennifer Blunden
Headteacher	Demelza Bolton
Website	www.stjustprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her role in April 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, and members of staff. The inspector also held discussions with the chief executive officer of the trust, the director of education, the primary executive lead, the chair of the trust board and members of the local governing body.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments, and the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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