

St John's Catholic Primary School, Camborne

Trevu Road, Camborne, Cornwall, TR14 7AE

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2016

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, ably supported by other leaders and governors, provides inspiring and determined leadership. This has led to significant improvements over the past year, ensuring that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are now good.
- Leaders give teachers specific direction and guidance to improve their teaching and increase pupils' progress. They recognise that greater precision in evaluating the impact of teaching on different groups is the next step to raising standards further.
- Teachers plan purposeful and interesting work that enables pupils to practise and apply their skills well. As a result, attainment is rising across the school and all groups of pupils are making good progress.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is extremely well planned and pupils receive excellent levels of support. This ensures that they make good progress.
- The most able pupils are made to think hard in their work and increasingly they reach high standards, particularly in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, receive effective support, so that they achieve well in comparison to other pupils nationally from similar starting points.
- Children settle quickly and confidently into school routines in the early years and most children make good progress. At times, teaching does not enable the most able children to achieve at the highest level.
- Pupils behave well. They have very positive attitudes to their learning and are respectful towards others.
- Pupils enjoy what school life has to offer and say they are kept very safe. They are polite and friendly, developing well the key skills of respect and kindness.
- Parents praise the work of the school, especially the way that adults care for pupils, ensuring that they are happy and safe.
- Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide strong levels of challenge to senior leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders and teachers evaluate precisely the impact of teaching on different groups of pupils so that more pupils reach even higher standards.
- Strengthen teaching in the early years by ensuring that:
 - most-able children are supported effectively to maximise their progress
 - adults are clear about the intended learning outcomes from activities that children choose for themselves.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school has improved significantly over the past year as the headteacher, together with governors and other leaders, has established a clear direction for improvement and set high expectations for all pupils. Her thorough and systematic approach to increasing the school's effectiveness has ensured that improvements in teaching, learning and leadership are secure and sustainable.
- The headteacher has the confidence of her staff and morale is high. Overwhelmingly, staff are of the opinion that the school has improved tremendously since she took up her post and are proud to work at this school.
- The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate. The headteacher and governors have used the expertise available to them through Plymouth CAST (the trust) to help validate their judgements. Consequently, development plans identify the correct priorities and have the capacity to bring about further improvement.
- Leaders acknowledge the invaluable support they have received from the trust, especially from the area adviser and other consultants. They appreciate the depth of challenge given to help them plan improvements effectively. Partnership work with other schools in the trust has ensured that good practice is shared and that teachers' assessments are accurate.
- A key improvement has been the introduction of a new system to track the outcomes for different groups of pupils. This has enabled leaders to gain a secure view of achievement and to hold teachers to account more readily for pupils' progress.
- Another key improvement has been the way that leaders give staff regular and helpful feedback on the strengths of their teaching and where they need to improve, with precise timescales and actions. The performance of staff is closely linked to school priorities in order to raise pupils' achievement. Governors set challenging targets for the headteacher.
- Senior and middle leaders have introduced some effective strategies to improve teaching, especially in English and mathematics. They check teaching regularly and follow this up with helpful guidance. However, at times their evaluations do not precisely identify the impact of teaching on different groups of pupils so that progress is maximised.
- School leaders promote equality of opportunity effectively and tackle discrimination of all kinds. The extremely well-planned support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective in promoting good progress and ensuring that they are fully included in school life.
- The pupil premium is used to good effect to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve their potential academically as well as having access to school trips and residential visits. As a result of precisely targeted support, they make good progress.
- The school uses the sport premium wisely to increase levels of participation in a wide range of sporting activities and competitions. Staff have improved their skills in teaching physical education through working alongside expert coaches.

- The curriculum provides good breadth and balance, with an interesting variety of extra-curricular activities. Enrichment activities such as residential visits, visiting speakers and other cultural events help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Homework is well planned and supports the learning in lessons effectively.
- British values and the school's values of humility, gratitude and kindness are threaded through the school's curriculum. For example, during the inspection pupils organised their own 'Fair trade' tuck shop in response to the Cornwall Youth Citizenship Conference, hosted by the school. They spoke knowledgeably about the benefits of doing this for people who produce the products in Africa, showing good empathy and understanding of life in other societies. These activities help to prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school and judge that the school is well led and pupils are taught well. They are pleased with the improvements made by leaders over the past year and praise the approachability of the headteacher and her staff.

Governance of the school

- Governors are a tightly focused group and organise their work effectively. They have sought the advice from the trust to ensure that their judgements are accurate and that they are suitably trained to carry out their responsibilities.
- They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses as they monitor the school's work for themselves. This insight enables them to challenge leaders rigorously about outcomes for the different groups of pupils. Through a detailed analysis of pupils' achievement provided by the headteacher, they have a good view of how well the school is performing compared to other schools nationally, as well as across the trust. They know about the quality of teaching across the school, how the performance of staff is managed to reward effective practice and how any underperformance is tackled promptly.
- Governors monitor the school's budget very closely to ensure that funds support improvements to teaching and learning. They understand how additional funds are spent to help disadvantaged pupils and to develop sport in school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A culture of vigilance prevails in the school as leaders are extremely diligent in checking that policies are kept up to date and that policy guidelines are adhered to. They ensure that staff are well trained and fully informed about the latest guidance for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being in areas such as child protection. Parents agree that their children are safe and well cared for in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is typically good. It has improved over the past year as teachers receive clear and consistent guidance from leaders about how to promote effective learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement and their behaviour. They use their secure subject knowledge to build on pupils' prior learning and increase progress

rates for the different groups in their classes. They check pupils' understanding regularly in lessons, reshaping their questions to clarify meaning and aid progress.

- Teachers ensure that learning is both challenging and enjoyable. For example, pupils in Year 6 studying the Victorians in history spoke knowledgeably about crime and punishment, drawing on their online research and a recent visit to the old Camborne jail. Work in books demonstrated their increasing confidence in history and a greater use of sophisticated vocabulary in their writing.
- Teachers apply the school's marking and feedback policy consistently and pupils respond well to the oral feedback and written comments that are given. Pupils say that they find the guidance helpful in improving their work.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are very skilled in providing support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They give pupils useful strategies for managing their behaviour, helping them to integrate fully in all activities.
- Disadvantaged pupils benefit from carefully targeted support that helps them to catch up with others and achieve well. Teachers ensure that the most able pupils in this group have the right level of challenge to achieve as well as others of high ability.
- The most able pupils are challenged well across subjects because teachers plan tasks that stretch their thinking. Pupils confidently demonstrate what they know, understand and can do when explaining their ideas and when evaluating the effectiveness of their methods, for example when solving problems in mathematics.
- Reading is taught well and a consistent approach to teaching phonics ensures that pupils quickly become fluent readers. In response to the increased demands of the new end of key stage 2 test, older pupils are taught to read at greater pace and scan quickly to find information in texts.
- Writing is taught effectively and the current emphasis on accurate spelling is ensuring that the quality of pupils' written work across subjects is of good quality.
- The high attainment in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 was the result of teachers' raised expectations. Current work in pupils' books shows that teachers stretch pupils' thinking to the full, with regular opportunities to reason and solve problems.
- On occasions, teaching in the early years is not sufficiently challenging, resulting in some children, particularly the most able, not achieving as well as they could.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Effective relationships make the school a welcoming and happy place to learn. 'Teachers greet you with a smile, so I always like coming to school' was a typical comment from a pupil, and others agree.
- Pupils are proud to take on additional roles and responsibilities, such as being a play leader at lunchtime, an eco-warrior or head boy or girl, and they carry out their duties very diligently.

- Pupils are positive that they feel very safe in school. Parents who completed the online survey or who spoke to inspectors agree that their children are secure and very happy at school.
- Pupils are clear that bullying and derogatory and aggressive language are very rare and not tolerated here. They have a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying and the forms this can take, such as online bullying.
- Pupils say that there is very little poor behaviour and school records support this view. They say that any 'meanness' when other pupils are annoying or unkind is sorted out promptly and effectively by adults.
- Pupils have learned about injustices that happen in the world through events such as the 'Fair trade' conference. They understand that they have to stand up for others less fortunate than themselves. This developing empathy with others is helping to prepare them to be responsible citizens in modern Britain.
- Pupils receive good training for keeping themselves safe both in and out of school. They are knowledgeable about keeping safe by the sea having received beach safety training recently, an important life skill for living in Cornwall.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Typically, pupils are courteous, friendly and considerate of others' feelings. They look out for younger pupils in and around school so that no one is left out and make sure that the playground is a happy and harmonious place.
- Pupils maintain good levels of concentration when working on their own and equally they work well together when cooperating in pairs or small groups. Pupils talk sensibly about their ideas and listen to each other respectfully.
- Pupils are keen to learn and respond well to the increasing levels of challenge presented to them in their work. They take great pleasure in their achievements and show pride in the excellent presentation of their work.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved over the past year and current attendance is above national rates. The very large majority of pupils attend well and most absences are due to illness or medical issues. Leaders work effectively with the local authority attendance officer to promote regular attendance and discourage any unnecessary absence. Initiatives such as the information leaflet for parents 'Missing school is missing out' and the rewards for good attendance have had a significant impact on improving attendance and punctuality.
- Very occasionally, pupils say that a few pupils lose concentration and become inattentive in lessons, which slows down their progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over the past year, pupils have made faster progress and attainment has risen across key stage 1 and key stage 2. Most pupils now leave the school at the end of key stage 2 with the knowledge, understanding and skills required for their age, preparing them well for the next stage in their education.
- Year 6 pupils made very strong progress in mathematics in 2016. In reading and

writing, their attainment was in line with other pupils nationally, representing good progress from their starting points. Disadvantaged pupils achieved above others nationally in each subject. All pupils reached the expected standard in science.

- In Year 2 in 2016, pupils made good progress in each subject. An above-average proportion achieved the expected standard or better in reading, writing and science. Attainment was in line with others nationally in mathematics.
- Effective use of the pupil premium enables disadvantaged pupils to achieve at least as well as others from similar starting points. This good progress ensures that any differences in their attainment diminish by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as they receive well-tailored support from skilled staff. Even though the steps in progress are sometimes quite small, according to the complexity of their needs, pupils are proud of their achievements and keen to try their best.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress as their work is consistently challenging. They are able to articulate their ideas clearly and justify their decisions, for example when choosing the most effective methods for solving problems in mathematics. Sometimes, a few most-able children in the early years are not stimulated fully by the activities on offer.
- Pupils are developing fluency in calculation skills, with a clear understanding of number and how to check the accuracy of their answers. They are able to apply these skills to solving problems in other aspects of mathematics, such as problems involving time.
- In the past two years, the numbers of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 has risen and the proportion was higher than found nationally in 2016. This success ensures the good development of early reading so that pupils, including those who are low-attaining, soon become confident and accurate readers.
- The most able readers in key stage 1 read with fluency, expression and obvious enjoyment. The most able Year 6 pupils read challenging texts at greater pace than has been the case previously. The increased emphasis on the quality of their written responses to their reading ensures that comprehension skills are developing well.
- Pupils say they are inspired by the display entitled 'The road to remarkable writing' that showcases high-quality work from the early years to Year 6. Pupils write to a good standard across subjects and are becoming increasingly accurate in their spelling.

Early years provision

Good

- Effective arrangements for starting school ensure that children make a positive start to school life. They settle into their new routines very quickly and become comfortable in their new environment.
- Parents are appreciative of the care taken to ensure that their children are happy and safe. They speak highly of the approachability of staff. They welcome opportunities to be involved in their children's learning and to contribute to their child's learning journey.

- Most children enter the school with the knowledge and skills below those typically found for their age, particularly in language and communication. From their starting points, children make good progress across all areas of learning. Most start Year 1 as confident learners with the skills and knowledge expected for their age.
- In recent years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been above average, with all groups achieving well. In 2016, this figure was just below average due to the high level of special educational needs. Nevertheless, all children made good progress from their starting points.
- School leaders check that all possible steps are taken to ensure that children are safeguarded. Children are supervised closely and understand the safety and hygiene rules, such as wearing overalls in the mud 'kitchen'. They play together very cooperatively and their behaviour is good.
- The early years leader knows the strengths and areas requiring development in the provision and is implementing a training programme for staff. Increasing use is made of visits to see the best practice in other schools in the trust and gather ideas. Recent improvements to provision have increased the opportunities for outdoor learning.
- Learning journeys track children's progress carefully and show how the activities are adjusted to meet the needs of disadvantaged children well, particularly in their personal development. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs identified at an early stage and the school works well with other agencies to ensure that their needs are met effectively, for example in the development of their speech.
- Teaching is typically good and children benefit from well-planned, adult-led teaching, including the teaching of phonics, which underpins the development of early reading and writing skills successfully. Children were observed during the inspection developing their knowledge of mathematics by measuring out quantities in the water tray, learning the terms 'full' and 'half full' effectively.
- Children also learn from following their interests and adults develop their language skills well as they play. However, at times adults do not plan precisely enough what they want children to learn, particularly in the activities that children choose for themselves. When this occurs children's progress is hampered, especially for the most able.

School details

Unique reference number	140763
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10019971

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret de Valois
Headteacher	Nichola Teixeira
Telephone number	01209 713944
Website	www.st-johns.cornwall.sch.uk
Email address	head@st-johns.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St John's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school and is part of the Plymouth Catholic and Anglican Schools Trust (CAST). The school became an academy on 1 April 2014.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance to provide details of the academy trust's scheme of delegation for governance functions.
- The current headteacher took up her post in September 2015.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is just below the national average.
- An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

However, the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is greater than that found nationally.

- Pupils are organised in seven classes, all of which are single-age.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place over two days. Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, some in conjunction with the headteacher. In addition, they made visits to classrooms, the dining hall and the playground, as well as attending the harvest festival.
- Meetings were held with pupils, governors and school leaders. The lead inspector also met with the area adviser from the trust, who supports the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 39 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as consulting informally with parents at the end of the school day. They also took account of the 23 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans. They examined information on current pupils' progress, minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding procedures and the plans for the use of the primary physical education and sports premium.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to them in classrooms and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Jane	Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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