

# The Five Islands School

St Mary's, Isles of Scilly, TR21 0NA

**Inspection dates** 13–14 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Significant changes in senior leadership and governance since the last inspection unsettled staff and the school community, hindering the rate of improvement in the school.
- The governing body has not developed ways of linking teachers' pay to their performance and does not check the effect of the pupil premium on improving pupils' achievement in enough detail.
- Some leaders and managers are overstretched, in particular there is no-one with a brief to oversee teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6.
- Although there is more stability in leadership and governance, these are not fully developed and have not had sufficient impact on the drive for improvement. The school development plan, for example, is not sufficiently focused on increasing the rate of pupils' progress. It requires sharper targets for measuring improvement and clearer systems and accountability for checking its impact.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils achieve well and at GCSE reach standards above the national average. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make equally good progress, as do those known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- The curriculum is outstanding as are arrangements to keep pupils safe and secure.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Rare instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. Attendance has improved, particularly in Years 7 to 11.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and provide interesting work that motivates them to learn.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, including two lessons at the base on the island of Tresco. They reviewed documents, including those about pupils' attainment and progress, their behaviour and safeguarding. This included documents relating to all the island bases.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and with representatives of the local authority.
- The views of 26 parents who submitted them on the Parent View website, and of 49 staff who completed a questionnaire, were analysed and taken into account.
- Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school as part of Ofsted's quality assurance procedures to gather further evidence of the quality of leadership and management on 4 and 5 December 2012.

## Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Cutler

Additional Inspector

David Nebesnuick

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is for pupils aged 3 to 16 and is relatively small. It serves the five populated Isles of Scilly. Young people requiring education after the age of 16 travel to the mainland.
- The school's main base is a purpose built facility opened in September 2011. This is on St Mary's, the most populous island. There are bases for pupils aged 4 to 11 on the islands of Tresco (also serving Bryher), St Agnes and St Martin's.
- There is a boarding facility on St Mary's for pupils aged 11 to 16 whose homes are on the other islands. This facility was not inspected on this occasion.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils' education.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average, as is the proportion who are supported through school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is low (this is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations relating to safeguarding were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. They were also aware of a separate investigation by the appropriate authorities into allegations of wrong-doing that did not concern child protection or safeguarding arrangements. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the incidents were considered (where appropriate) alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.
- The school is currently led by an acting headteacher and several other senior leaders also hold their posts in an acting capacity. Many members of the governing body are newly appointed and a number of its officers, including the Chair of the Governing Body, are new to their roles.

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

- Improve teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 at the St Mary's base by:
  - making sure that pupils understand the work that they are asked to do by presenting it in ways that help them to learn even better
  - increasing the speed of learning, such as by using timed tasks
  - ensuring that marking shows pupils how to improve their work.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - developing systems that link teachers' remuneration to their performance
  - ensuring that the governing body checks that the pupil premium is improving the achievement of the pupils who are eligible to receive it
  - ensuring that performance management takes account of the Teachers' Standards and is clearly linked to the progress made by pupils
  - making sure that there is clear responsibility and accountability for improving teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6
  - making sure that development plans focus on raising standards, with specific and measurable targets for improvement linked to clear timescales, and clear procedures for monitoring and

evaluating their impact.

- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills such as speaking and listening that are higher than is usually found in other schools. They make excellent progress in the nursery, especially in their social skills, through learning and playing together happily.
- In Reception and Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Year 1 pupils achieved above the level expected in the phonics screening check (this assesses pupils' knowledge of the link between letters and the sounds they make) in 2012, and by the end of Year 2 most can read and understand books appropriate for their age. Pupils in Year 2 also produce very good quality written work, notably at the Tresco base.
- In Years 3 to 6, most pupils make the expected levels of progress in English and mathematics but few do better than this. Nevertheless, standards of reading at the end of Year 6 are above average. School leaders are rightly planning to prepare more pupils to take the highest levels of national tests at the end of Year 6 in the future.
- In Years 7 to 11, pupils make excellent progress, especially in mathematics, where in 2012 all Year 11 pupils made at least the expected progress, with three-quarters of them doing better than this. Nearly nine out of ten pupils achieve the government's standard of five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics, which is well above the national average.
- Pupils of this age also make very good progress in English, art, design and technology and science. In English, the school has adopted the demanding international GCSE (iGCSE) syllabus in order to provide greater challenge for more able pupils, and English work of outstanding quality by Year 10 pupils of all levels of ability was observed.
- In subjects where attainment is currently less impressive, teachers have identified and tackled the reasons, for example, by improving the preparation of pupils for the theory examination in physical education.
- Pupils throughout the school demonstrate good skills when using information and communication technology (ICT), as all have ready access to laptop computers. They have mature attitudes to their studies and can work independently or collaborate effectively. Pupils and parents agree that homework is effective because of these strengths.
- School leaders have identified and tackled differences in achievement between boys and girls in particular year groups. Other groups such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils. The progress made by pupils who are eligible to receive the pupil premium funding is not monitored or evaluated well enough by school leaders, including the governing body.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, who as a result are confident that they can achieve their demanding targets. Teachers plan interesting work that motivates pupils to learn, for example, Year 8 pupils benefited well from planning a science investigation to test the effectiveness of biological and non-biological detergents. All could develop a fair test and understand why some of the factors were kept constant.
- ICT is used very well as an aid to learning by both teachers and pupils. A good example was seen in the nursery where children described Rangoli patterns associated with the festival of Diwali. This was also a good example of teachers' outstanding development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Most teachers use marking and assessment well to help pupils to improve their work, as in Year 11 design and technology where the teacher explained to each student how to improve their GCSE grade. In some lessons, such as in Years 3 and 4, marking is less effective in this respect.
- Almost all work is planned to meet the individual needs of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Excellent examples were seen at the Tresco base where

the teachers' questioning showed their detailed knowledge of each pupil. There are exceptions, for example, in Year 4 where pupils were asked to sequence a series of events. They were given little guidance as to how to go about this, leaving them confused and slowing the pace of the lesson.

- Teaching assistants are very effective when supporting individual pupils or small groups. A very good example was seen in a Year 10 English lesson, where they subtly adapted the demanding work to ensure that slower learners could keep up. When supporting whole classes, teaching assistants are sometimes unsure of their brief, hence they are less effective.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Pupils are polite, considerate and very well motivated to learn, for instance after eating lunch they work together on their laptops, helping each other and exchanging ideas.
- Pupils report that very occasional verbal bullying is dealt with effectively. They are aware of the dangers of forms of bullying such as cyber-bullying and homophobia, but say these never occur, and this is supported by the school's good records. One pupil observed that if you fall out with other children of your age, there are no others to be friends with on the small islands, so they learn to get on.
- Pupils are taught to be safe in and around water, as many pursue water sports. On Tresco, where there are few cars, pupils are taught road safety in preparation for visits to the mainland.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are confident and keen to pursue further education on the mainland. They say they receive good guidance, with many gaining scholarships or bursaries to help with the additional costs.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection, especially in Years 7 to 11. When younger pupils have medical appointments on the mainland this is time-consuming. Punctuality can be affected by issues such as tides and sea state, but most arrive on time.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- In difficult circumstances the acting headteacher has led the school well. Staff morale is improving, with many submitting comments in support of the new acting senior leadership. Pupils, when asked if teaching and learning have been weakened by recent events at the school, are adamant in saying that this is not the case. Nevertheless, the period of turbulence and uncertainty since the last inspection has left the school behind the game in comparison with other schools in some important respects.
- Checking of the quality of teaching is accurate and is given high priority, as is offering teachers any training they need, in spite of the high cost of commissioning this from the mainland. Nevertheless, senior leaders are stretched in this area as there is no-one with a specific brief to lead teaching in Years 3 to 6. Moreover, these are recent improvements and have not had time to become fully embedded or to have a demonstrable impact on standards.
- Performance management is now more closely linked to the quality of teaching, learning and achievement. However, leaders and managers have yet to link their judgements and recommendations for development fully to the Teachers' Standards and have yet to ensure that targets for individuals are carefully linked to the progress made by pupils.
- Development planning has improved. Recent documentation is clearer and has been shared with staff, but there has not been sufficient time for the impact of the proposed actions to be evaluated. Moreover, targets are sometimes imprecise and lack timescales. Arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and modifying plans are unclear.
- Senior leaders and governors know the school well and have taken good action to improve some things. For example, new safeguarding policies and procedures have been adopted and all staff and governors have recently been trained on the requirements, which are now fully in place.
- Subject leadership is generally good and innovative, for instance in introducing the iGCSE for

English. Pupils are not entered for examinations until they are ready to achieve their full potential. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is also a strong feature.

- School leaders have a good commitment to equality of opportunity as is shown by the equally good progress of all groups of pupils. Discrimination is not tolerated, shown by the lack of bullying and by displays such as carved wooden symbols representing the world's major faiths, in the school entrance.
- School leaders seek the views of parents. While there is some uncertainty about leadership due to recent events, the great majority of parents and carers are rightly happy with their child's education. This includes parents on the outer islands, an improvement since the last inspection.
- After a hesitant start the local authority is providing good support for the school in its current circumstances. Leaders and governors especially appreciate the support to manage the school's finances and the commissioning of external consultants to strengthen leadership and governance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance requires improvement. A number of governors are inexperienced but since major changes in the summer of 2012 they have taken some effective action, for example, on safeguarding and in planning for new leadership of the school. Governors are now supplied with good quality data, an improvement on the last inspection. They use this to challenge senior leaders, but are not rigorous enough in checking that the pupil premium has enhanced the achievements of eligible pupils. Similarly, while they are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, they have yet to develop systems linking teachers' remuneration to their performance and have not had sufficient oversight of the process. The new governing body has not had time to develop the skills to have a clear impact on raising standards in the school.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133544
<b>Local authority</b>	Isles of Scilly
<b>Inspection number</b>	403752

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	270
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	22
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ben Julian
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Liz Duffy-Griffiths (acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8–9 July 2010
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