

St Hilary School

School Lane, St Hilary, Penzance, TR26 9DR

Inspection dates 12–13 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' behaviour is excellent across the school because of the consistent approach to behaviour management by adults. Pupils are articulate, polite, courteous and keen to learn. They are very proud of their school.
- Teaching is good. In the best lessons teachers plan challenging activities and ensure that pupils understand what they have to do next to improve.
- Pupils make good progress in all phases of the school. Achievement is good and pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The well-designed curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for learning and successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.
- Senior leaders and governors are highly ambitious for their school. Governors robustly hold the school to account. They are fully involved in the life of the school and contribute well to school improvement.
- Additional adults in school provide effective support for small groups or individual pupils who need extra support to ensure that they make good progress.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe and say that bullying is very rare.
- Parents are unreservedly supportive of the school. An overwhelming majority would recommend the school to others and all say that their child is happy in school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Very occasionally, in a small minority of lessons, pupils are not sufficiently challenged to ensure that they make rapid progress.
- Leaders who check the quality of teaching in lessons do not always ensure that the best strategies are used consistently by all teachers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 24 lessons including short visits to sessions where small groups of pupils or individuals receive extra support with their learning. Seven lessons were observed jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, examined pupils' work in their books, attended two assemblies, visited the after-school club and observed pupils' activities in the playground and in the dinner hall.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, members of the governing body and an associate consultant from the Cornwall School Improvement Team.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents including minutes of governors' meetings, the reports the headteacher regularly provides for governors, a summary of the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, documents showing how the quality of teaching is evaluated, the school's information on pupils' progress, teachers' plans and records relating to pupils' safety, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke informally to parents to seek their views about the school and analysed the views of 59 parents through the Parent View website.
- The views expressed by 35 staff who returned a questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Chris Chamberlain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Linda Rafferty

Additional Inspector

Marian Marks

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-size primary school.
- The school converted to become an academy school in July 2011. When its predecessor school, also known as St Hilary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is slightly higher than the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics in Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that the activities planned for pupils in lessons always consistently provide an effective level of challenge for pupils of different abilities
 - improving the way in which all leaders check the quality of teaching to ensure that the teaching strategies observed in the best lessons are more consistently used across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the Reception Year with knowledge and skills in line with national expectations. They make good progress across this phase and also in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- However, although a minority of pupils in Year 6 in 2012 made less than good progress there is evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' work and school tracking data that, due to good and sometimes outstanding teaching, the current Year 6 pupils are making far better progress. They are on track to attain standards in English and mathematics similar to standards attained by pupils in previous years.
- All groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs or who are disabled make good progress across the school due to the support they receive from additional adults who work with them in small groups or on an individual basis.
- The school uses the extra money it receives from the pupil premium to provide one-to-one tuition and support for pupils entitled to this funding. Despite making good progress the attainment of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding was two terms behind that of all other pupils in 2012 in English and mathematics. This gap is now closing.
- Pupils read widely and have access to a wide range of genres and authors. Pupils are well supported with their reading at home. Following an analysis of gaps in pupils' reading skills the school has recently begun to use focused group teaching to teach specific reading skills to different ability groups. Consequently, progress in reading is good and attainment in reading is higher than the national average in Year 6.
- Pupils regularly have opportunities to write across a wide range of subjects. They are fully aware of the criteria which make a piece of writing successful and check their own work against these criteria. This approach has ensured that pupils make good progress in their writing and, by the time they leave the school at the age of 11, their attainment is higher than the national average.
- The school has recently introduced an online mathematics learning tool which has improved pupils' confidence and their rapid recall of number facts. Alongside effective teaching and support from additional adults this has increased the rate of pupils' progress in mathematics and is a key factor in ensuring that attainment at the end of Year 6 is above national averages.
- All parents agree that their children are making good progress in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- 'Our teacher is awesome' explained one Year 6 pupil during the inspection. This comment is typical of the views of pupils at St Hilary School. Teaching is good and is sometimes outstanding. Pupils are very happy in school, have a very positive attitude towards learning and so achieve well.
- An overwhelming majority of parents who accessed the Parent View website and all parents who spoke to inspectors were very happy with the quality of teaching.
- The best teaching happens when teachers plan tasks which challenge pupils to do their best. Teachers skilfully identify pupils' next step in learning through effective marking and support learning through the use of success criteria grids. This advice and support enables pupils to know what they have to do to make good progress. The most effective teachers regularly share the best work from individual pupils with the rest of the class during lessons. They question pupils skilfully to check their learning and deploy additional adults to work with groups and individual pupils of all abilities who need support to improve their rate of learning.
- In an outstanding lesson in Key Stage 2 pupils were learning about the different states of volcanoes. The teacher ensured that pupils made excellent progress by using information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning, demonstrating practically how a

volcano explodes. This encouraged pupils to talk to each other about their learning and ensured that, despite their exuberant enthusiasm, pupils continued to work hard and behave very well.

- In another successful lesson for much younger pupils the teacher planned a range of stimulating learning opportunities covering a wide range of curriculum areas to ensure that pupils of all abilities and ages made very good progress. By the end of the lesson pupils had developed a very strong awareness of, for example, the importance of beach safety.
- Since the last inspection the school has improved provision for outdoor learning for Reception Year children. There are opportunities for a wide range of play and investigative learning, supporting and extending the learning in the classroom. The school employs additional adults to work in the outdoor learning environment, supporting, talking to and questioning children to extend their learning and so improve their rate of progress.
- Adults create positive learning environments where pupils are stimulated and engaged in their learning. Classroom displays celebrate pupils' work and also support learning through word banks, reminders of behaviour expectations and pupil targets.
- The quality of teaching is not outstanding because, in a very small minority of lessons, teachers need to ensure that activities consistently provide an effective level of challenge to meet the wide range of pupils' needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils, parents and staff all say that behaviour is excellent in school.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy learning, behave responsibly in the classroom, at lunchtimes and break times, when they move about the school independently of adults, and also during assemblies.
- Pupils are extremely well mannered, polite and welcoming. For example, pupils readily speak to adults when moving about the school by saying 'Good morning' and a group of Year 6 pupils independently and confidently thanked inspectors for talking to them during the inspection. Pupils talk very positively about their school and are clearly proud to belong to St Hilary School.
- Pupils support each other well. In an assembly for Key Stage 2 pupils one pupil reminded another about the importance of being quiet in assembly by gently touching the other pupil's arm and putting a finger to her lips.
- Pupils readily take on responsibilities across the school either as class monitors or as members of the school council, fund raising or suggesting ideas for school improvement.
- Adults manage pupils' behaviour in all areas of the school successfully. Their consistent use of agreed strategies ensures that all pupils experience the same high expectations of their conduct wherever they are in school. Because of this the pupils behave very well.
- All pupils feel safe in school. Pupils understand the importance of e-safety and know how to keep themselves safe in a range of learning activities.
- In the Reception class pupils were planning a walk along narrow lanes close to the school. The teacher and additional adults ensured that, before the walk, all pupils were very aware of how to keep themselves safe and knew what to do if a car drove past or the pavement came to an end. In another class a beach lifeguard explained how pupils could remain safe while on the local beaches.
- Bullying is rare in school. Pupils are aware of all forms of bullying but explained that it was not a problem at their school. The overwhelming majority of parents who completed the Parent View survey agreed with this.
- The school engages effectively with families and this is helping to raise pupils' rates of attendance.
- The outstanding level of behaviour in school is underpinned by the three school rules, focusing on 'caring for everyone, following instructions with thought and showing good manners at all times.'

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and communicate these expectations effectively to the school community.
- School self-evaluation is thorough and action plans correctly identify areas for improvement. Leaders regularly report to the headteacher or governing body about the progress being made with new initiatives to ensure that changes are made rapidly. There is good capacity for the school to continue to improve.
- Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated and the school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. Regular pupil progress meetings ensure that the achievement of each pupil in the school is monitored effectively. When a pupil is not making enough progress appropriate support is given and the impact of this is evaluated to ensure that the identified pupils make better progress.
- All leaders are involved in lesson observations and monitoring activities so that they have an informed knowledge of teaching and learning across the school. Leaders should now make sure that the most effective teaching strategies are used by all teachers to ensure that there are a greater proportion of outstanding lessons.
- Feedback from staff questionnaires showed that there is a strong sense of teamwork and shared accountability across the school. Adults enjoy working at the school.
- Performance management is organised well for teachers and support staff. Objectives ensure that teachers focus on school improvement, pupils' progress and becoming even more effective in the classroom.
- The curriculum is well organised. The recent change to planning whole-school topics has ensured that the curriculum is stimulating, broad and balanced and promotes high levels of pupil achievement. Learning is enhanced by regular visits to the locality, opportunities for pupils to take part in residential visits and a range of visitors and experts coming into school. This ensures that learning is exciting and pupils are keen to learn.
- The school's provision for extending pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school promotes pupils' understanding of cultural diversity through artwork, links with schools in Uganda and an orphanage in Burma and through fund-raising events for international charities. The school successfully promotes its key values including: being caring, considerate, showing respect, healthy eating and creativity by awarding badges to pupils who demonstrate these values.
- A consultant from the Cornwall School Improvement Team has supported the school with moderation of lesson observations and discussions about school improvement.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are effective and fulfil their statutory duties successfully. They have had recent training on interpreting pupil data and know how to compare school performance data with that of other schools nationally. Governors have an overview of standards of teaching, how performance management is used to improve the quality of teaching and salary progression for other staff. They understand how pupil premium funding is being used and the impact of this on pupils' progress. Governors use this knowledge to ask challenging questions to senior leaders about the performance of the school. They are involved in the development of the school improvement plan. Governors are regularly in school. They monitor initiatives and feedback to committees. This ensures that they have a strong understanding of developments and issues facing the headteacher and senior leaders. They actively engage with parents through questionnaires, a monthly newsletter and informal conversations.

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

Unique reference number	111799
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	411827

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Scrase
Headteacher	Kelley Butcher
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	01736 763324
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