

The Five Islands School

St Mary's, Isles of Scilly TR21 0NA

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not all pupils, particularly the most able and those with special educational needs, are making consistently good progress throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is uneven across year groups and subjects. This is because some teachers are not skilled in checking pupils' progress and adapting their lessons to meet their different rates of learning.
- Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teachers rely too much on the support of teaching assistants, without checking during lessons whether the pupils they support are making as much progress as they possibly can.
- Not all teachers help to develop pupils' literacy skills.
- Subject and other middle leaders do not always use information gathered about pupils' progress to identify improvements in the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables the children to get off to a good start.
- Good teaching in the upper school results in most pupils making good, and often outstanding, progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- GCSE results in mathematics are particularly high because the specialist teachers in this subject check pupils' progress during the lessons and adapt their approach to meet the pupils' different learning needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium achieve as well as, and often better than, others.
- Pupils' good behaviour helps to create a positive ethos for learning. Pupils feel safe in school due to the school's good arrangements for keeping them safe and secure. Attendance is improving.
- The new headteacher has raised teachers' expectations of, and pupils' aspirations for, achievement. She has established much more rigour in the systems for checking pupils' progress and the performance of staff.
- Governors are now holding senior leaders to account for the standards reached by all groups of pupils across the school. This has been particularly effective in bringing about improvements for pupils who are supported by the pupil premium.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 20 teachers, some of which were observed jointly with senior staff. This included a few observations of lessons at the base on the island of St Martin's. In addition, the inspectors listened to a few pupils reading.
- The inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, teachers, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. They also held a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner and met informally with some parents.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They examined a range of documents, including information on the monitoring of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour, the monitoring of the quality of teaching, and documents relating to improvement planning and the safeguarding of pupils.
- The inspectors examined pupils' work, with a particular focus on the impact of teachers' marking on pupils' progress.
- They took account of 40 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and a few emails that were sent by parents who could not log on to the survey. They also took account of 14 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Sue Frater, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Jane	Additional Inspector
Simon Bishop	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This all-through school is much smaller than most secondary schools, but about average in size when compared with primary schools. It serves the five populated Isles of Scilly. The main base for pupils aged three to 16 years is on the most populous island of St Mary's. It is purpose built and was opened in 2011. There are three other bases for pupils aged four to 11 years on the islands of Tresco (also serving Bryher), St Agnes and St Martin's.
- Children in the nursery provision at the St Mary's base attend part-time. Most children in Reception classes attend full time. Some pupils, and all on the off-islands, are taught in mixed-age classes.
- There is boarding provision on the island of St Mary's for pupils aged 11 to 16 whose homes are on the other islands. The provision was inspected separately last year.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils' education.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is low when compared with the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for the pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Currently, there are no pupils in the school who are in local authority care.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by a statement of special educational needs or school action plus is broadly average, as is the proportion supported by school action. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been in post for a year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils, including the most able and those with special educational needs, make consistently good progress throughout the school, by:
 - developing teachers' skills in checking pupils' progress and adapting lessons to meet their different rates of learning
 - making sure that teachers' marking helps pupils to know precisely what to do to improve their work and that pupils demonstrate the necessary improvement
 - making sure that teachers check during lessons the progress of pupils being supported by teaching assistants
 - making sure that teachers in all subjects help to improve pupils' literacy skills.
- Ensure all subject and other middle leaders use information gathered about pupils' progress to identify more specific targets and actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has successfully tackled the areas for improving leadership and management identified in the previous inspection report. She has raised expectations and aspirations for all pupils and is committed to improving standards throughout the school.
- To strengthen the school's capacity for improvement, the headteacher has established a new leadership structure with clear roles and responsibilities for raising achievement, including in literacy. She has also established more rigorous systems and procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.
- The procedures include the performance management and training of staff, which now link closely to the Teachers' Standards and pupils' progress. These changes are leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, although inconsistencies remain. For example, leaders have maintained good teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the Early Years but improvements in the primary phase have not yet led to consistently good teaching.
- Subject and other middle leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations, examination of pupils' work and scrutiny of information on pupils' progress. They are not yet fully evaluating this information to identify more specific targets and actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning in some subject areas.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is being supported by a more robust system for checking pupils' progress throughout the school. This is enabling senior and middle leaders to hold teachers to account for the progress their pupils make.
- The school development plan accurately identifies areas for improvement based on leaders' and governors' good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However the plan lacks sufficient measurable 'milestones' to help the governing body in their monitoring of school improvement.
- The school's curriculum engenders pupils' enthusiasm for learning. It is broad and balanced, covering all National Curriculum subjects, citizenship and personal, social and health education. It leads to appropriate academic and vocational qualifications and includes career guidance which pupils find invaluable in helping them to make their choice of post-16 pathways. The curriculum is enriched by a variety of visits, sports, outdoor pursuits and participation in activities such as the Youth Parliament. These activities make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their understanding of life in modern Britain.
- The primary sport premium is being used effectively to develop teachers' skills and to extend the range of sport available to the pupils, including netball and tennis.
- The pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are also being used to good effect in providing individual support which is closing the previous gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others.
- The school has a strong caring ethos and all staff promote equality of opportunity for the pupils and good relations between them.
- The school works well with parents, as in finding ways to improve pupils' attendance. Most parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to another parent.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Leaders ensure that all staff are trained regularly and well. Consequently, they identify pupils at risk of harm and respond appropriately. All required checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and young people have been carried out.
- Leadership of the early years provision has ensured that it is effective.
- The local authority knows the school well. It is funding suitable external support, including a school improvement partner, links with a school on the mainland, and training for staff and governors. The school is using the support to good effect, for instance in training leaders in lesson observation.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is now holding senior leaders to account for the standards pupils reach, following its review
 - has an in-depth knowledge of the school through regular visits, external reports and scrutiny of information, including information about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance, and of the quality of teaching
 - has a good understanding of the school's system for managing the staff's performance and how good teaching is rewarded and underperformance tackled
 - ensures financial resources, including the pupil premium and other funding, are managed efficiently and effectively
 - makes sure that all statutory requirements, especially those relating to safeguarding pupils, are in place.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The attitudes of pupils to learning are positive, especially when the quality of teaching inspires them. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson involving investigating enzyme action, a pupil exclaimed, 'I love science. It relates to real life. I learn a lot in science lessons.'
- In the lower school, pupils' resilience and self-motivation are not sufficiently strongly developed to enable pupils to remain focused on their learning when not supported by an adult. In the upper school, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive across subjects, except in a very few lessons where teaching fails to interest and engage them. Even in these lessons, pupils respond quickly and maturely to the teacher's instructions. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons, bring the right equipment and are ready and eager to learn.
- There are no concerns expressed by parents, staff and pupils about behaviour and safety. Pupils understand the importance of good attitudes and behaviour in school, in the community and in work.
- There is a very positive ethos in and around the school. Pupils conduct themselves well at different times of the day, including at lunchtime. They take pride in their appearance and their school, although not always in the presentation of their work.
- The school's record keeping shows that there are marked improvements over time for the very few pupils with particular behavioural needs. Behaviour and incident logs indicate that examples of poor behaviour are low, and there has been only one fixed-term exclusion in the past year.
- Attendance is improving and is now broadly average due to recent measures put in place, including discouraging parents from taking holidays during term time.. Reasons for pupil absence include medical appointments on the mainland, disrupted return travel due to weather conditions, and out of season holidays for families who work in the tourist industry. The school is constantly reviewing its procedures for improving attendance, including establishing a virtual learning platform for times when pupils cannot travel from the other islands.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Absence is followed up rigorously.
- Through lessons such as information and communication technology and personal, social and health education, pupils gain a good awareness of different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and how to keep themselves safe in different situations. There are very few instances of bullying in the school and any concerns are dealt with effectively by the staff.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school because they know everyone and the staff know them well. The school's risk assessments are appropriate. The parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children feel safe in school.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time, particularly teachers' use of assessment, has been too uneven to secure consistently good progress for all pupils throughout the school, especially in the mixed-age classes. In some lessons, teachers are setting expectations that are too high or too low for the range of pupils' starting points, in particular for the most able, and this slows down pupils' progress over time.
- Too often during lessons, teachers are not checking the progress of pupils who are being supported by teaching assistants, particularly pupils with special educational needs, or making sure that they sustain good progress.
- Not all teachers are writing comments when marking work that help pupils to know precisely how to improve it, or checking that the necessary improvements have been made.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers use the school's assessment information to set work at appropriate levels of difficulty. They constantly check pupils' progress during the lesson and adapt the activities, allocated time and questions to sustain good progress for all.
- For example, in a literacy lesson involving pupils in Years 3 to 6, the teacher explained his expectations of the pupils according to their different starting points. The pupils were each given clear written targets with guidance on how to improve their work. The teacher asked questions during the lesson to check and extend the pupils' understanding. The more able pupils were encouraged to work at a quick pace, while the teacher took the time to review the activity with those who were struggling. As a result, all made good progress. However, pupils do not make good progress in all mixed-age classes.

- Pupils are making most progress in subjects where teachers provide helpful comments on how to improve their work. For example, teachers' marking in mathematics in the upper school includes a target for improvement. When the pupils demonstrate the improvement, the teacher marks the book with a 'good progress' stamp.
- Mathematics teachers in the upper school are helping to develop teachers' subject knowledge at Key Stage 2. Consequently, the results in the national tests taken in Year 6 improved in 2014.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) in the lower school is not sufficiently matched to pupils' starting points. The teaching of reading overall is not consistently strong across the primary phase. To address this, the school has recently invested in resources to encourage pupils to read more widely. The teaching of reading and writing is effective in specialist English lessons in the upper school and enables pupils to close previous gaps in their learning. Teachers across subjects are not all helping pupils to improve their writing. Consequently, the presentation of work is not always good.
- Teachers and additional adults create a positive climate for learning, giving pupils the confidence to communicate their ideas and to explain their work.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by appropriate homework.
- Appropriate support is provided for vulnerable pupils, but their progress is not checked rigorously to ensure all disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve as well as they can.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The school's information on pupils' progress and the pupils' work, as seen in lessons and in pupils' books, show that progress throughout the school, including in reading, writing and mathematics, is uneven and is a result of teachers' inconsistent checking of progress during lessons.
- The good achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not built upon well enough in Key Stage 1, particularly in reading. . By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment has been above average over time. However, in 2014, fewer pupils achieved the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics than in previous years.
- The progress of the most able pupils at Key Stage 2 is also not keeping up with the national average, as fewer pupils than average are exceeding the expected progress. Progress overall is improving at Key Stage 2 and a greater proportion of pupils than nationally is making expected progress, although not yet good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are not making as much progress as other pupils across Key Stages 3 and 4 because the work is not matched well enough to their learning needs.
- Pupils, especially those with special educational needs, are not reading widely and often. The school has appointed three literacy leaders who have suitable plans to tackle this issue.
- By the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils making and exceeding nationally expected progress in English and mathematics is above average. For disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium, the proportions are similar to other pupils nationally and in the school. Pupils in the upper school are, therefore, prepared well for the next stage in their education.
- Both the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils are similar to other pupils nationally in English, and better in mathematics by about two GCSE grades. This is similar to other pupils in the school and is closing the gap from Key Stage 2 where disadvantaged pupils are about six months behind other pupils in the school and nationally.
- Across subjects in the upper school, attainment is generally strong, but not consistent in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher A* to A grades at GCSE. In order to increase the chances of pupils getting higher grades, the school no longer enters pupils early for GCSE examinations.

The early years provision is good

- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision is effective in making sure that all the children make good progress from their starting points. Teachers are trained in checking the progress of individuals and groups of children and in using this information to provide appropriately challenging activities for them. In addition, parents are encouraged to contribute information on their children's learning at home.
- Suitable additional support, including from external agencies when necessary, is identified for any children in need of this.
- Behaviour is good. The children are respectful and work well with each other. They feel safe and secure as most adults know them well.
- Teachers carefully plan activities to meet the needs of all children. The activities, both inside and out, are broad and balanced. They cover in depth the seven areas of learning required at this key stage and include visits and visitors.
- As a result of the good provision, children make expected or better than nationally expected progress from their starting points. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs or who are supported by the pupil premium, progress as well as others. The development of skills in the prime areas of communication and mathematics is particularly strong in the Nursery class. By the end of the key stage, achievement in the early learning goals is above the national average and children are well prepared to start Year 1.

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	133554
Local authority	Isles Of Scilly
Inspection number	449064

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	3–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	274
Number of boarders on roll	22
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ben Julian
Headteacher	Linda Todd
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 November 2012
Telephone number	01720 424850
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