

Ladock Church of England School

Ladock, Truro, TR2 4PL

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The return to duty of the highly respected headteacher, now joined by an almost completely new staff team, has brought a refreshed atmosphere for learning across the school. The additional specialist support from the academy trust has enabled the school to move forward over the past 12 months.
- Leadership and management are good. Determined and effective effort by the headteacher, ably supported by all other leaders, including governors, has secured good teaching and quickened pupils' progress.
- The school's harmonious community atmosphere underpins the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision highly successfully.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to their work and towards one another. They are extremely courteous and polite.
- Pupils greatly enjoy school and learning together. This supports their above average attendance.
- The school's work in keeping pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All staff implement rigorous safeguarding procedures and provide high-quality care. This view is fully supported by parents.
- Teaching is typically good. It is outstanding in Years 5 and 6 and early years classes. Teachers have raised expectations. They provide effective additional support to fill gaps in pupils' previous learning and improve their progress.
- Standards have risen rapidly this academic year, especially in writing, after a dip the previous year. An increased number of pupils in Year 6 demonstrate skills in reading, writing and mathematics that are above those normally expected for their age. This represents good achievement by the pupils.
- Parents have every confidence in the school. They have excellent relationships with staff and contribute well to their children's progress.
- Early years provision for children in their Nursery and Reception groups is outstanding. Children experience a highly confident and effective start to school and make rapid progress, preparing them very well for Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school is not utilising some of its outstanding practice to develop more excellent teaching.
- Some pupils do not develop their basic number skills quickly enough, limiting their ability to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils' spelling and handwriting skills are not always developed as effectively as the descriptive quality of their written work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons and saw the work of five teachers. He was accompanied by the headteacher during some visits to lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's analysis of how well it is improving. The inspector examined the school's systems for checking progress, records of checks on the quality of teaching and reports of visits to the school made by the Academy Improvement Partner.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their work and listened to individual pupils read. He looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes, especially writing.
- The inspector held meetings with members of the governing body and with representatives of the academy trust. Meetings were held with school staff, mainly senior and middle leaders. He also met with members of the school council. The inspector spoke to many individual pupils in lessons and around the school. The inspector met with the multi academy trust's Chair of Directors.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed in the 20 online responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire. He also took note of the school's own survey of parental views, completed earlier this year. The inspector gathered the views of some parents during informal meetings at the school during the inspection. Questionnaires completed by 12 members of staff were analysed.
- The inspector considered the school's use of the primary physical education and sport funding and the pupil premium.

Inspection team

Alexander Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ladock Church of England School converted to become an academy school on 1 December 2013. When its predecessor school, Ladock Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be a good school.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is below average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals varies significantly from year to year. Currently, and in recent years, there have been very few pupils in receipt of free school meals in Year 6.
- An above average proportion of pupils either join or leave the school other than at the normal times. The number of pupils joining each year group across the school varies significantly. Over time, most arrivals have been into Years 1 and 2.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides its own breakfast club.
- Children start the school's early years provision in a Nursery setting, which they attend for part of the week alongside children in a Reception and Year 1 class. Children commence their Year in Reception on a full-time basis. Other pupils in the school are taught in two mixed-aged classes, with some pupils in Years 3 and 4 taught as a separate group for part of the week.
- On 1 December 2013, the school became a member of the St Piran's Cross Church of England Multi-Academy Trust. The multi-academy trust contains five primary schools. A board of directors and an interim executive principal direct the work of the academy trust. This school retains its own headteacher and local governing body.
- The headteacher was absent from school for several months, following a serious accident. During this period, a senior teacher, aided by the executive principal of the academy trust, led the school.
- The school has experienced significant changes in teaching and leadership staff since becoming an academy. This academic year, the headteacher has returned to duty and three new teachers have been appointed.
- The academy trust has also experienced changes in leadership in recent years. The work of the school is currently overseen by an interim executive principal of the academy trust. A new executive principal has been appointed and will commence his duties next term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from good to outstanding so that pupils make the best possible progress by:
 - sharing the excellent teaching evident in parts of the school to demonstrate to teachers how to remodel tasks during lessons to quicken pupils' progress
 - strengthening pupils' ability to quickly recall number facts and so improve their problem-solving skills
 - more effectively developing pupils' handwriting and spelling as they progress through the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, very ably supported by a newly appointed senior teacher, has re-established the school's determination and capacity to bring improvement following her absence. Guidance and specialist training for staff, provided by leaders of the academy trust, have helped to improve teaching and pupils' learning during a difficult period of change. The headteacher has restored high morale amongst the entire school community by empowering staff and governors to work closely as a team.
- The school promotes a very caring community atmosphere within which a culture of excellent behaviour and good and improving teaching continue to flourish.
- The academy trust provides good support. Improving liaison between school leaders with directors and senior staff of the academy trust is strengthening their ability to raise standards more quickly.
- Governors and academy trust leaders ensure that the school's procedures to safeguard pupils are rigorously adhered to. Safeguarding fulfils all statutory requirements and is effective.
- The online Parent View and school parent questionnaires, along with comments from parents during the inspection, show that the vast majority of parents are very satisfied with the school.
- Academy directors and school governors manage the performance of the headteacher and other staff effectively. Teachers' movement along pay scales is effectively linked to improving pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- The leadership roles at school and academy level have been carefully agreed and well developed. Senior and middle leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Some roles, such as responsibility for special educational needs, apply across all five schools in the academy trust.
- The interim executive principal of the academy trust and the headteacher check the performance of the school effectively. They keep academy directors and the school governors well informed so that the right areas for improvement are addressed. For example, the strengthened emphasis on extending the pupils' phonic understanding (the sounds that letters make) has improved pupils' reading skills.
- Teachers have also improved pupils' ability to write expressively. However, pupils' basic handwriting, spelling and number skills have not been developed as thoroughly. Consequently, leadership is not yet outstanding because improvement has not yet secured pupils' outstanding achievement.
- Staff treat all pupils equally. They do not tolerate discrimination and work diligently to ensure that all pupils, across the range of abilities and needs, make equally good progress. For example, this is evident in the way additional pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide extra adult support to help disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their classmates.
- The school's curriculum is planned well. It covers the breadth of subjects and sustains an effective focus on developing the pupils' reading, literacy and numeracy skills.
- Links with the church community are an integral part of the school's relationship with the local community. The school also has links with four other schools in France, Germany and The Netherlands. These links underpin the school's values, including respect and compassion, which strongly promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school also promotes the pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures in Britain. For example, the school holds 'Faith' and 'Multi-Faith' days to extend pupils' understanding of Christianity and other religions, such as Hinduism, respectively.
- The school develops the pupils' understanding of democracy and British values well throughout the curriculum. For example, pupils interviewed various local politicians during their 'Let's Go and Vote' citizenship topic. Staff model the principles of democracy and fairness in lessons by valuing and responding to pupils' ideas. Pupils apply these principles for themselves when choosing representatives on the school council. This supports pupils' preparation for a life in modern Britain, extremely well.
- School leaders and staff collaborate closely with local schools to ensure that the primary physical education and sports funding is used effectively. They employ a specialist sports development officer to extend staff and pupils' skills, for example, in sports such as basketball, dodgeball and tennis. There has been a significant increase in pupils' enjoyment and in their participation in sports, which is enhancing their health and fitness. For example, the proportion of pupils taking part in sports activities has increased from 56% to over 70% during the course of the year.
- The breakfast club is well managed. Pupils learn and play productively together and enjoy a refreshing start to the school day.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors work closely with the headteacher and have developed positive relationships with parents during a period of significant staff change. Governors, directors and senior leaders of the academy trust share an agreed strategy for the future direction of the school and are well

placed to bring improvement. Governors receive very detailed reports from the headteacher and challenge and question her effectively about the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement. Governors undertake regular visits to see the work of the school for themselves. Several governors assist with pupils' learning at school and strongly support the school's close links with the church and its community events. Governors keep their training up-to-date and fulfil their statutory duties effectively, including with regard to safeguarding procedures which are robustly upheld. Directors of the academy trust and governors receive evaluations of the school's work from the interim executive principal and other specialist staff of the academy trust. As a result, governors have an accurate picture of the quality of teaching and how pupils' performance compares with other schools. This helps directors and governors to ensure that their management of teachers' performance rewards good teaching and tackles underachievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and their sustained effort and enthusiasm in lessons are strengths of the school. From the moment pupils begin school each day, in the breakfast club, for example, there is a tangible sense of harmony throughout day-to-day activities that enriches learning.
- Pupils are very polite and extremely welcoming to visitors to the school. They show enormous respect to all members of staff and clearly try to give of their very best in lessons. Pupils say, 'We know each other very well and teachers give us lots of attention.'
- School records indicate very few incidents of misbehaviour, and no bullying in recent years. Records also show that when individual pupils need additional support, the school responds very quickly and positively to give appropriate support.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning and very eager responses when teachers challenge them to express and explain their opinions in lessons.
- Pupils show very high levels of respect to each other. Their very willing and determined efforts to share ideas with each other in lessons make a highly positive contribution to the quality of their learning. Pupils on the school council readily represent and consistently respect the views of other pupils. In particular, older pupils listen closely when the very youngest offer suggestions and give them very special attention. Pupils say, 'Lots of people interact, share ideas and help each other to learn'.
- Pupils fulfil a wide range of responsibilities diligently and with great reverence, for example, when helping and participating in assemblies in the parish church. Pupils are proud of the way they support several charities, for example organising 'Fun Friday' bring and buy sales and events to support 'Shelter Box'.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Academy and school leaders, and staff, ensure that health and safety arrangements, including checks on staff prior to appointment, are implemented highly effectively to safeguard pupils.
- Pupils greatly enjoy their time at school. They say that they feel extremely safe at school. This is clearly seen in their above average attendance, which also reflects the exceptionally supportive partnerships between home and school.
- Pupils show a secure understanding of how to stay safe. They make appreciative reference to the way that staff look after them so well at school, especially, for example, outdoors at break times.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying that might occur. They talk knowledgeably and confidently about physical and cyber-bullying and racist abuse. They express great confidence that staff are swift to sort things out and that bullying is extremely rare at this school.
- All the parents who spoke to the inspector and the vast majority of those who responded in the online and school questionnaires express no concerns about bullying. Parents make particular reference to the exceptionally strong community atmosphere of the school and its close links with the church in nurturing caring values.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good. Teaching is often outstanding in the early years and Years 5 and 6 classes, where pupils are encouraged to quickly move into more challenging activities.

- All teachers, including the majority who are new to the school, respond very purposefully to the strong and encouraging support from the headteacher. Teachers are very motivated and model this extremely well to the pupils by skilfully promoting pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Teachers and skilled teaching assistants have benefited from specialist guidance from colleagues in the academy trust. As a result, they have improved the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) and writing and this is helping pupils to read and record their ideas productively, when learning across other subjects.
- The headteacher and staff are fully committed to developing pupils' enjoyment in learning. They set high expectations and successfully encourage pupils to share ideas and help each other to learn.
- Pupils enjoy the challenges that teachers present to them. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils respond eagerly to the teacher's and each other's questions, for example, when enriching their understanding of how to use subordinate clauses to improve their writing.
- Teachers in all classes question pupils effectively to extend their vocabulary. This is successfully developing the pupils' ability to write expressively.
- There is less consistent emphasis on improving pupils' handwriting and spelling. Similarly, whilst pupils are encouraged to explain their ideas in mathematics, their quick recall of number facts is not yet fully developed. These relative weaknesses sometimes restrict pupils' confidence to complete longer pieces of writing and solve mathematical problems.
- Teachers check pupils' progress effectively. They give good guidance to pupils by discussing how their work needs to be improved.
- Teachers set clear targets and also provide good information about what pupils need to do next to improve when they mark their work. Teachers adjust their planning carefully after lessons to make sure that the work they give to pupils advances their skills.
- Pupils often enrich their learning in Years 5 and 6 by being given work that requires a deeper level of thinking, once they have demonstrated their initial understanding to the teacher. Opportunities are, sometimes missed to accelerate pupils' progress in Years 2 to 4.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 2 to 4, but, sometimes, their work is not adapted quickly enough during lessons to challenge them to make more rapid progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well and are well prepared for secondary education because they make at least good progress from their different starting points.
- Strengths in children's progress in the Nursery and Reception class have been sustained. This academic year, new teachers in Years 2 to 6, strongly supported by the headteacher, have significantly quickened pupils' progress.
- Teachers have benefited from additional guidance from specialists in the academy trust, especially in writing. This has helped them to end the inconsistency in teaching that reduced pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2014.
- School and inspection checks of pupils' developing skills and observations of their responses in lessons and work in books reflect this rapid improvement in their progress.
- Pupils' much faster progress is especially evident in Years 5 and 6, where more than the expected numbers of pupils work at higher levels than might be expected for their age. This is especially the case this year, where achievement is now good.
- Checks of pupils' learning across the school show above average proportions of pupils making better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' reading skills, for example, have been boosted in recent years by strengthened teaching of phonics. Pupils' good learning across the school is aided by the pupils' well-developed ability to research information using books and computers and their desire to read for enjoyment.
- Although some pupils still find spelling accurately and recalling number facts difficult, their current levels of skill reflect good achievement in relation to their starting points. At times, pupils' joined handwriting is underdeveloped. Even so, pupils' work in books is neatly set out and reflects their positive attitudes to learning.
- This year, school records and pupils' work show that the progress and attainment of the most-able pupils has been improved. This is especially the case in the current Year 6, where a higher proportion of pupils are demonstrating higher levels of skill than normally expected for their age. This now includes writing, as well as reading and mathematics, as a result of the improved quality of teaching.

- Currently, and in recent years, there have been too few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6 to compare their attainment meaningfully with other pupils in the school and nationally. Often, over half of the very small number of pupils in receipt of pupil premium support across the school also have special educational needs. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional adult support for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, their achievement generally matches that of other pupils in the school. At the present time, with improved teaching, disadvantaged pupils now make faster progress than other pupils, nationally.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and others who join the school later than the normal time also benefit now from improved teaching. This is especially the case in Years 1 and 2, where these pupils receive additional adult support to boost their confidence. As a result, they make good progress in relation to their starting points.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Leadership of the early years provision for Nursery-aged children and for those in their Reception Year is excellent.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work extremely well together to complement each other's work and to ensure that children remain fully engaged in their learning.
- All staff promote very warm and encouraging relationships to secure the children's self-confidence and to ensure that children behave extremely well and greatly enjoy their time at the school.
- Staff safeguard children highly effectively and ensure that they are safe. They also sustain excellent relationships with parents to boost the quality of children's attitudes to school and learning.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. It is typified by excellent questioning and support of pupils during work led by adults and also when children choose activities for themselves. For example, children responded to the teacher's prompting by eagerly offering their own ideas when retelling the story of *How the Tortoise Got his Shell*. Children also develop their own stories using glove puppets. As a result, children across the range of abilities, including those with special educational needs and those with most ability, make excellent progress.
- The teachers implement an excellent system for checking and recording children's progress. All staff, parents and the children themselves are invited to enter comments about their progress in learning journals. These contain careful observations and evaluations of the children's learning and progress across a wide range of stimulating activities. Adults at home and at school use these very effectively to identify the right next steps in children's learning and to ensure their outstanding progress.
- The school has significantly improved the facilities and widened the opportunities for children to continue their learning outdoors. As a result, staff ensure that children's skills are developed successfully across all areas of learning.
- During the inspection, the children greatly enjoyed learning together in the farm shop, making tracks with toy machines in the sand tray and estimating weight using balancing scales. They made excellent progress by sharing ideas to extend their communication, language and mathematical skills. The warmth and clear desire to help each other learn, strongly promoted by staff, significantly enhanced the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Above average proportions of children reach and exceed a good level of development by the end of their time in Reception. This represents outstanding achievement in relation to children's starting points and shows that they are very well prepared for future learning in 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	140468
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	450358

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shirley Soper
Headteacher	Lisa Michell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01726 882622
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