

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bodmin

Barn Lane, Bodmin, Cornwall PL31 1LW

## Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Since their arrival, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have made important changes to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are good. They have also guaranteed that St Mary's is a caring community that pupils describe as a 'family'.
- Teachers plan lessons that are interesting. Pupils are engaged. They develop appropriate skills in English and mathematics.
- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes so that they are ready for Year 1.
- Most pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, in relation to their starting points. Many make strong progress. Pupils behave well in lessons and play times. They are polite and considerate.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is enhanced by trips, residentials and special events. At times, pupils are not challenged enough, particularly to deepen their learning or make connections between subjects.
- The school gives a high priority to caring for its pupils and families. Safeguarding is a high priority and is effective.
- Leaders share a passion for the school and are ambitious for the achievement of its pupils. New governance arrangements have strengthened the support and challenge to the school.
- The role of middle leaders is underdeveloped. They are currently not ensuring the quality of teaching, learning and progress enough.

## **Full report**

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

- Develop middle leaders so that they:
  - have the necessary knowledge and skills to lead their areas of responsibility
  - take greater ownership of the quality of teaching and learning, support other staff and hold them to account
- Ensure that there are better planned activities and opportunities throughout the curriculum so pupils can deepen their knowledge and make the best progress that they can.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have high expectations for all pupils. They are clear that every pupil should have the opportunities to achieve to the best of their ability and learn through interesting activities, and that everyone should behave well. These expectations mean that they have made important changes to develop the school since its last inspection.
- Throughout this period of change, the headteacher has maintained a collaborative approach to bring about improvements. She has strengthened the morale of staff. The staff who replied to the Ofsted survey agreed that the school has improved and that they are proud to work at St Mary's.
- On their appointment, senior leaders reviewed the way in which mathematics and English were taught. They provided effective professional development for staff to learn about different approaches. Staff adapted methods and now basic skills are taught systematically.
- Leaders have ensured that assessment processes are robust. Pupil progress meetings and regular monitoring ensure that pupils who might be at risk of underachieving are identified and interventions put in place.
- Senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching through examining data and books and carrying out learning walks and observations. Through support, training and challenge, teachers have improved their practice. Any underperformance has been challenged vigorously.
- The trust and senior leaders have rightly identified that middle leadership is not yet effective in ensuring the quality of teaching and learning in subjects. They have adapted the roles of individuals, made a new appointment, and have appropriate plans in place to further develop responsibilities to embed changes and further improve practice.
- The curriculum is systematically planned to ensure coverage of different subjects. Pupils enjoy a wide range of interesting activities. At times, planned activities in the classroom do not always enable pupils to revisit, extend or deepen their knowledge or apply their skills sufficiently.

### Governance of the school

- Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust ensured that the leadership of the school was secured when the previous headteacher and deputy headteacher left the school. They provided good support for the new headteacher in her first year. The trust has recently adapted the way it holds its schools to account. Regular visits from the education standards manager ensure that there is a shared view of the performance of the school and the headteacher is held to account effectively. Cluster arrangements and links with other schools provide opportunities for staff to share their expertise with others.
- The local governing body offers an additional and very valuable perspective. It represents the voice of parents, the community and the local parish effectively.

Governors bring a deep passion and commitment to ensure that St Mary's school's values are evident in all its work. Through their regular visits, focused monitoring and meetings with staff and pupils, governors check that the school is safe and pupils are learning.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are very committed to the welfare of all pupils. Leaders ensure that staff are trained and regularly check that staff and governors understand their particular responsibilities. Clear policies and procedures are in place. Leaders ensure that all the required checks are made on adults who work with pupils.
- Those leaders who are responsible for safeguarding ensure that they know pupils and their families well. The pastoral support worker plays a key role in supporting families at the earliest opportunity so that concerns do not get worse. She provides practical and emotional support for pupils and their families.
- Leaders are knowledgeable about other agencies and work with them appropriately. They have high expectations and a determination to ensure that all pupils receive the best support.
- Parents and staff who responded to Ofsted's online surveys say that pupils are kept safe. The pupils that inspectors met were very clear that any issues would be sorted out by kind adults.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- All teachers have established an effective environment for learning. They ensure that lessons are motivating, behaviour is managed, and activities are planned and available.
- Teachers and support staff work hard to give pupils individual attention. They are on hand to give feedback, challenge more, support and clarify misconceptions. Pupils spoken to say that there is always someone who will help them.
- Teachers plan activities that capture pupils' interest. In key stage 1, in particular, they provide varied equipment so that pupils can explore concepts in a different way. In key stage 2 teachers provide stimuli that are thought-provoking.
- The teaching of phonics and reading is effective. Pupils use the sounds they have learned to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils develop a love of reading.
- Mathematics teaching allows for thinking and explanation. Pupils are keen to learn and contribute. They discuss their ideas and challenge each other's thinking with appropriate mathematical language.
- Teachers plan work for pupils of different abilities. However, some of these activities and a small amount of teaching do not challenge pupils systematically. Pupils readily comply with instructions and complete work but they do not always deepen or extend their knowledge, given their starting point.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils spoken with are very proud of their school. A group of pupils described the school as 'a community and a family where help is at hand'. They said that 'once you have joined St Mary's community you will always be part of it.'
- Pupils are encouraged to respect each other and to focus on values such as love, kindness and wisdom. They are very ready to celebrate the successes of others or to include other pupils in their groups, so no one is left out.
- Bullying is rare. It is effectively managed when it happens, with a focus on follow up and checking outcomes. Pupils are very clear that bullying is not tolerated.
- Pupils engage in charity work and work in the community. They fundraise at a local, national and a global level.
- The school ensures through the curriculum that pupils have experiences of different cultures and beliefs. Pupils are aware of British values and the importance of tolerance of others. Sometimes, knowledge is superficial and does not enable pupils to relate these issues to their own community, or to question and debate sufficiently.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff manage behaviour well. There are clear systems in place. Staff recognise how much behaviour has improved over the last two years.
- The school has considered its approach to behaviour and well-being. Staff have been trained to understand behaviour better. Interventions and activities such as forest school give opportunities to pupils to work together and reflect. The school is calm and purposeful.
- Pupils behave appropriately in lessons. They listen and respond to staff. They are polite and work efficiently on their own or in groups.
- Attendance has improved significantly through a tenacious and strategic approach to improving communication. Leaders track and analyse absence. There is good communication with the education welfare officer. Good attendance is rewarded at individual and class level. Attendance is now similar to the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The proportion of pupils achieving well by the end of key stage 2, in relation to their starting points, has greatly improved and many made strong progress. Work in books and the school's data show that current Year 6 pupils are also making good progress.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 was below average. The school recognises that this was due to a number of factors, including previous inconsistent

teaching. Teaching has been strengthened. Available data and work in books show that progress of the current Year 2 is good and that many are achieving well.

- Leaders recognise that some pupils have underperformed in the past. Improved teaching, rigorous monitoring and intervention mean that the vast majority of pupils are back on track and making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils read with enthusiasm and confidence. They enjoy the challenge of reading books appropriate to their needs and then answering questions.
- As pupils go through the school they develop their writing for different purposes such as diaries, letters and newspaper articles. They develop good grammar and punctuation.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics. They develop skills and knowledge. They talk about how they learn to 'do', 'think', 'solve' and 'explain'. They are particularly stimulated by applying their mathematics to real life situations such as running a theme park.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or those at risk of underachievement, frequently make rapid progress as a result of carefully chosen and implemented interventions.
- Work in topic books sometimes shows a lack of independent thinking, high-quality writing or the links to other subjects.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Nursery and Reception staff provide a range of interesting and stimulating activities in their bright and attractive classrooms. Children are engaged and practise skills because they are interested and motivated.
- Children develop good skills for learning. They learn to concentrate, work alongside or with others, share equipment and cooperate. They are attentive to adults in group sessions. They ably follow routines. They are prepared well for Year 1.
- Staff carry out detailed assessment of children when they are first admitted. Children's skills, knowledge and understanding are then captured in a variety of ways and routinely checked to ensure that they are making good progress.
- A high proportion of children enter Nursery with lower starting points than would be typical for children of this age range. The children make rapid progress, and by the end of Reception Year the proportion of children achieving a good level of development, the standard expected, is similar to the national average.
- Staff sensitively support children. They gently encourage them to explore and develop their early literacy, writing and number. Children therefore are becoming confident to write and count. At times, planned activities and questioning in groups do not challenge children enough so that the most able individuals do not have the opportunities to build on their prior knowledge.
- The early years leader is effective and enthusiastic to keep improving the provision. She works closely with the Nursery lead professional to ensure that there are common expectations, that transitions are seamless and that there is a continuity for children so they continue to learn.

- Parents and carers are very happy with the provision. They feel their children are happy and well cared for. Many enjoy the homework tasks that their children are set and share these with staff so that achievements can be celebrated.

## School details

Unique reference number	140773
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10088333

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Rt. Hon. Lord Burnett
Headteacher	Alison McDonald
Telephone number	01208 73218
Website	<a href="http://www.st-marys-bod.cornwall.sch.uk">www.st-marys-bod.cornwall.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@st-marys-bod.cornwall.sch.uk">head@st-marys-bod.cornwall.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 January 2017

## Information about this school

- The school is of average size for a primary school. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium is similar to the national average. There is a smaller proportion of pupils than average with SEND.
- St Mary's is a member of Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust. The school is monitored by the trust's education standards manager. In addition, a local governing body supports and challenges the school.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2017, initially on a secondment.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes, jointly with members of the senior leadership team. They scrutinised pupils' books and discussed and analysed a range of information about pupils' progress.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read. They spoke to pupils while visiting classrooms and at playtimes. In addition, inspectors met with a group of pupils formally to find out their views of the school.
- A range of meetings was held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with representatives from the local governing body and the education standards manager. He spoke with the chief executive officer of Plymouth CAST by telephone.
- Inspectors reviewed various documents provided by the school. These included the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The views of some parents were collected at the beginning of the school day and as they were watching sports day. Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered the 18 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Stephen McShane, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Justine Hocking

Ofsted Inspector

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