

St Catherine's CofE Primary School

Moorland Road, Launceston, Cornwall PL15 7HX

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher has strengthened senior and middle leadership throughout the school.
- Pupils make good progress as they move up through the school. They are well prepared for secondary school by the time they leave.
- Pupils' behaviour is good because the school promotes a culture of tolerance, fairness and inclusivity. Pupils are polite, kind and respectful to each other and to adults.
- Leaders have implemented, and continue to refine, a curriculum that stimulates pupils. It supports the development of academic knowledge and personal character.
- Leaders use additional funding well to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Although pupils make good progress from their starting points, the attainment of some pupils is not at age-related expectations. Pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- The school has benefited from support provided by the multi-academy trust to which it belongs.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are very well supported by the school. Pupils develop self-assurance, learn to become good citizens and make a positive contribution to the local community.
- Children are well taught in the early years and make good progress. They are well prepared for the beginning of key stage 1.
- Governors are proactive and committed. They share leaders' high expectations and hold leaders to account for the progress of pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good because teachers plan interesting and challenging activities. They teach pupils to become resourceful and resilient learners.
- Attendance, although improving, is below average overall and within different groups of pupils.
- The early years environment and resources do not enable pupils to engage fully with their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the early years environment and resources to further engage children in their learning.
- Continue to take action to improve pupils' attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average.
- Continue to embed strategies to improve pupils' progress further, particularly in writing, in all year groups, so that attainment rises to be in line with national averages.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has prioritised the development of leadership at different levels throughout the school. She has provided clear direction and has high expectations of staff. Consequently, senior and middle leaders understand their responsibilities, take ownership of their work and welcome greater accountability.
- Leaders know the school well. Their self-evaluation is accurate and objective. They have identified key areas for improvement and have been quick to take action to overcome them. Leaders and the wider staff are purposeful, determined and optimistic in their outlook. They do not shy away from tackling weaknesses.
- The trust has provided strong support to the school since it became an academy in 2016. Academy improvement officers have provided advice and guidance to firm up leadership. They have also contributed to leaders' accurate self-evaluation. School staff share practice with other colleagues in the trust and benefit from joint training events. Finance and human resources matters are also more effectively dealt with as a result of the school being part of the trust.
- The school is a happy place. Pupils want to come to school because they enjoy their learning and feel safe and valued. They want to be part of the vibrant school community. The school's Christian ethos is important to staff and governors. They endeavour to 'live' the school's values, and they foster these values successfully in pupils.
- Leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum to ensure that it engages pupils and nurtures their growth in different ways. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to acquire a range of skills and knowledge in different areas, including creative and humanities subjects. Topics studied include 'The Great Plague', 'the Mayans' and 'Space'. Long-term planning ensures that cross-curricular connections are made between subjects to reinforce pupils' understanding.
- Enrichment activities and resources, such as the outside classroom and forest school area, support pupils' learning. For example, during the inspection, pupils used this area to assist their understanding of plant growth during a science lesson.
- Senior and middle leaders have good oversight of the quality of teaching. They work closely with staff to identify how their teaching practice could be improved and provide training which promotes professional development. For example, training includes middle leaders modelling best practice for the benefit of colleagues. Leaders monitor teaching regularly in different ways to form an ongoing comprehensive picture of its quality. They are quick to challenge underperformance where it is identified.
- Leaders have galvanised staff so that they are united behind the leadership team. Staff share leaders' high expectations and are all 'pulling in the same direction'. All staff who responded to an in-house survey issued earlier in the year agree that they are proud to be members of staff at the school. They all also agree that the school is well led and managed.
- Additional funding, including the pupil premium, is used well to support disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Leaders evaluate the effectiveness of spending strategies

to ensure that funding has the most impact.

- Additional sports funding is used well. Leaders know what they want to achieve with it and have detailed plans in place describing how their goals will be achieved. Funding is being used, for example, to enable pupils to participate in more sporting activities and to provide training to staff.
- Staff have worked successfully to establish good relationships and communication with parents. Nearly all the parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school. One parent, sharing a view typical of other parents stated, 'I am more than happy with the care, learning and teaching at this school.' Another parent stated, 'I would recommend St Catherine's to anyone!'

Governance of the school

- Governors from different backgrounds bring a range of skills and experience to bear in their work. They are very committed and play an important role in the life of the school. Governors know the school well and are able to articulate its strengths and areas for improvement.
- Governors ask challenging questions of leaders about issues such as pupil progress and attendance. To aid governors' understanding, and at their request, leaders provide information that is detailed, transparent and accessible. This information enables governors to ask the most pertinent questions.
- Governors have appropriate strategic oversight of safeguarding. For example, a nominated governor assists the headteacher in conducting the annual safeguarding audit.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated leads for safeguarding know their responsibilities. They ensure that staff are appropriately trained in child protection, are vigilant and know the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child. The online referral system organises information well so that designated staff can monitor ongoing cases closely and take appropriate action to resolve issues.
- Staff work well with external agencies to provide specialist support for vulnerable pupils where this cannot be provided by the school or the trust.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school because it is an open, friendly place where pupils and staff are kind to each other. They would willingly speak to staff if they had any concerns. All the parents who responded to Parent View and all the staff who responded to the staff survey agree that pupils are safe in school.
- Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils are up to date and comprehensive. Staff and governors who are involved in the appointment of new staff are trained in safer recruitment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have worked successfully to develop their subject knowledge to meet the demands of the new curriculum introduced in 2014. They use this knowledge to plan interesting tasks, appropriately pitched for pupils of different ability, so that pupils are encouraged to think. Pupils who spoke with the lead inspector reported that they feel challenged in their learning and enjoy the challenge.
- Pupils benefit from good relationships with staff. Teachers ensure that classrooms are 'safe' spaces where pupils feel confident in sharing views and answering questions. Consequently, pupils are unafraid to make mistakes. They are invited to see learning as a fun activity and to participate.
- Teaching assistants are well used to support pupils' learning. They have undertaken training which has helped to develop their expertise and broaden their skills. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to identify where they could be of most use. They ask questions and provide explanations that allow pupils to find answers for themselves.
- Staff across the school use a well-established assessment system to monitor pupils' progress. The accuracy of assessment information is secured through moderation and standardising activities. These are undertaken within the school and across the trust. Assessment information informs regular pupil progress meetings. During these meetings, staff consider barriers to learning for individual pupils and determine strategies to help them catch up.
- Pupils are taught to become resilient and resourceful learners. Staff provide pupils with access to different resources they can use should they get stuck. Pupils who spoke with the lead inspector talked about the usefulness of the 'stuck-unstuck ladder'. This resource helps pupils to work through a series of steps to help them move forward once they get stuck. Consequently, pupils are not overly dependent on teachers because they resolve their own difficulties.
- Classrooms are designed to assist pupils in their learning. They are colourful, stimulating environments, in which displays are used to provide pupils with key pieces of knowledge for different subjects.
- Pupils value the feedback they receive from staff to help them improve their work and this is evident in their continued efforts to edit and redraft their work. Pupils are motivated to produce their best work and do not shy away from 'wrestling' it into good shape.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are looked after well in the school. The school's Christian ethos and values of inclusivity, tolerance and collective responsibility inform leaders' approach to supporting pupils' personal development and welfare. For example, pupils are highly involved in the local community. They spend time with dementia patients and visit a local care home to sing and make soup for residents. Pupils play an active role in the youth council; they have participated in projects to redesign the local library and improve

traffic conditions outside the school gates.

- Staff ensure that pupils learn how to be healthy. Outside speakers talk to pupils about managing their well-being. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthy snacks and get fresh air and exercise through activities such as the outdoor learning week and the fitness programme 'Jump Start Jonny'.
- Staff support the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in different ways. Pupils learn about different faiths, including Christianity, Islam and Judaism. They are also taught about local Cornish heritage, as well as global events, and issues such as the plight of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Many pupils are confident and charismatic because the school encourages the growth of self-esteem. Pupils enjoy their school experience and feel comfortable, safe and well supported by adults. As such, they are happy to share their views and are loyal to the school.
- Staff secure necessary support for vulnerable pupils. For example, staff work with parent family support workers and an educational therapist to help pupils with social and emotional problems. This work helps to improve mental health and pupils' readiness for learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and during social times. In lessons, they are attentive, follow teachers' instructions and set to tasks quickly. No low-level disruption was seen during the inspection. During social time, pupils use playground space in a considerate and sensible way.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well through a range of incentives and rewards. For example, pupils' achievements and good behaviour are recognised and celebrated in Friday assemblies. As a result of positive behaviour management, there have been very few exclusions over time.
- Attendance is currently below national average and has been so over time. Nevertheless, staff are persistent in their efforts to improve it and have implemented robust procedures to this effect. For example, leaders have put in place a clear escalation policy which would apply should attendance worsen. Staff also work closely with parents, with the assistance of the education welfare officer, to ensure that parents understand the importance of good attendance. Consequently, attendance is improving but leaders acknowledge there is further work to do.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The progress of pupils of different abilities leaving the school at the end of key stage 2 has been in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics over time. Pupils' attainment, however, was below average in 2018.
- At the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment was above average in all subjects, both at the expected standard and at greater depth. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the national Year 1 phonics screening check has been

consistently above average. Leaders have focused successfully on the improvement of key stage 1 as it was identified as an area for improvement when the predecessor school was inspected in 2013.

- Current pupils in the school are making good progress in most year groups. However, given pupils' starting points and certain cohort-specific issues, the attainment of pupils in Years 2 and 6 is not yet in line with average. Leaders are aware of pupils' performance and barriers to learning, and they are providing support to help pupils catch up. Across the school, pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books indicates that pupils are engaged with their learning. They acquire the knowledge and skills necessary across subjects, especially reading and mathematics, to be well prepared for study in secondary school. Most pupils present their work well and take pride in it.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make comparable progress with their peers. Over time, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has been in line with average in all their subjects. Scrutiny of work in school shows that there are no discernible differences in the quality and presentation of work produced by disadvantaged pupils and their peers. This is also true for pupils with SEND.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps once they leave St Catherine's. The school fosters the personal skills required to succeed, such as curiosity, perseverance and self-sufficiency. These traits complement pupils' academic achievements and other aspects of their personal development.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years provision, including the nursery class, is led effectively by the middle leader responsible for overseeing key stage 1 and early years. She works well with other staff who are clear about their responsibilities. Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision.
- The nursery class provides children with a strong start to their time in school. Children from the age of two are provided with stimulating activities that enable them to develop quickly and make good progress. They are provided with more challenging activities when they are ready to move on. Staff have been suitably trained in catering for the needs of two-year-old children. Some of this training is provided by other schools in the trust.
- From the outset, staff establish good relationships with parents because they welcome parental involvement in children's learning. Throughout Nursery and the Reception Year, parents contribute to assessments of pupils' progress against the early learning goals.
- Strong transition arrangements are in place from Nursery to Reception and Reception to Year 1, in part because of good relationships with parents.
- Children who have previously attended the Nursery class, start Reception with the levels of development expected for their age. This tends not to be the case for children who did not attend the Nursery. Nevertheless, most children, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, make good progress during Reception. In 2018,

the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was well above the national average.

- The quality of teaching is good. Staff use their knowledge of children, and accurate assessment of their progress, to plan activities that meet children's needs. Consequently, children participate in activities that stimulate their creativity, imagination and curiosity. Whether learning to form letters, building objects out of blocks or enjoying a role-play activity, children are encouraged to experiment and explore.
- Children behave well. They cooperate with each other, taking turns and learning to compromise. They also develop independence, completing some activities without direct supervision. Children listen carefully to adults and each other.
- Safeguarding is effective in early years. Staff receive the same training and adopt the same vigilant approach as other staff in the school. There are detailed risk assessments in place specific to nursery provision and the care of two year olds. Staff undertake daily checks.
- The indoor and outdoor environments do not provide children with enough high-quality resources to make the most of their learning. Some of these resources are 'tired' and do not provide enough inspiration to children.

School details

Unique reference number	142804
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10088254

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Brian Jennings
Executive Headteacher	Louise Hussey
Telephone number	01566 772198
Website	www.stcatherinescofe.co.uk
Email address	lhussey@andaras.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND who require support is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health or care plan is below the national average.
- The school converted to become an academy and joined An Daras Multi Academy Trust in 2016. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- St Catherine's Church of England Primary School is one of seven primary schools

belonging to the trust. The trust board takes responsibility for functions such as finance, premises and human resources. A local governing body is accountable for the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

- The school has a Nursery class and takes children from the age of two.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and behaviour in lessons jointly with leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior leaders, middle leaders and governors.
- The lead inspector conducted a telephone conversation with an academy improvement officer for An Daras Multi Academy Trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation, progress information, trust monitoring reports, curriculum documents, attendance, behaviour and exclusion records and information relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed pupils' conduct around the school, during assembly and at breaktimes.
- The lead inspector took account of 39 responses to the online Parent View survey and free-text comments.

Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Greenwood

Ofsted Inspector

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