

Quethiock CofE VA School

Quethiock, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 3SQ

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over the years, pupils have achieved lower standards than those reached in other schools. Standards are still low for current pupils. However, there is some improvement.
- Pupils are sometimes held back by low standards of literacy. Pupils' punctuation and grammar are not strong enough to allow them to write fluently and express their ideas clearly.
- Standards in mathematics are low. Pupils have gaps in their understanding of key concepts. Teachers are now addressing this. However, there is some way to go before pupils in every year group make good progress.
- Teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Very few of the most able pupils reach the high standards of which they are capable.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed executive principal is using the resources of the multi-academy trust effectively to lift expectations and support improvements in the quality of teaching. As a result, there is a palpable increase in the momentum of improvement.
- The head of school is working hard alongside the principal to implement plans for improvement. The leadership team have already had a positive impact on the quality of teaching.
- Teachers are beginning to expect more of pupils. In English and mathematics, pupils throughout the school are now beginning to be challenged to reach the standards of pupils in other schools.
- Parents and carers are unanimous in their praise for the school. They particularly praise the unique family environment. They feel their child is known as an individual, cared for and understood.
- Pupils behave well. They are unfailingly polite and friendly. Relationships between pupils are good. Pupils say bullying is very rare and that when it does happen, teachers deal with it quickly. Parents and pupils are confident that pupils are safe.
- Children in the early years are making good progress. In the pre-school provision and in Reception, they benefit from a stimulating environment that encourages talk and supports emerging writing.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, and hence raise standards, by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently set high expectations of what all pupils can achieve, particularly the most able
 - focusing on developing punctuation and grammar so that pupils can write accurately and are ready for the next stage of their education.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that teachers are well trained and have the necessary skills to deliver high-quality English and mathematics teaching for every pupil.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders ensure that care and support for each pupil as an individual are to the fore in all they do. Parents and pupils are very supportive of this ethos. The multi-academy trust, supported by the diocese, ensures that these values are protected and nurtured.
- Since his appointment at Easter 2018, the executive principal has brought a sense of urgency to the school's efforts to improve. He has worked alongside the head of school to develop an accurate and perceptive view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has allowed the leadership team to develop detailed plans and focus their efforts appropriately. As a result of this approach, staff understand what needs to be done and, increasingly, how to do it.
- Parents, pupils and teachers report that there is an increased energy and focus on teaching this year. While much of the change is new and not yet fully embedded, the impact is discernible.
- The executive principal has deployed middle leaders from other schools in the trust to support improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. This has been a key strategy. It is at the heart of recent improvements in teaching and, hence, the progress pupils are making.
- The trust has implemented a common curriculum for English and mathematics across its schools. This has had a positive impact on Quethiock. The expectations of what pupils should be tackling each year have risen. As a result, standards are now rising.
- Leaders are now monitoring the quality of teaching robustly. Senior and middle leaders from the trust are working with school staff to identify and address weaknesses. This is having a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- School leaders have ensured that pupils in both key stages receive a broad curriculum that covers all the foundation subjects. In these subjects, pupils are encouraged to think deeply about issues that affect them. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is strong. It covers a good range of opportunities for pupils to discuss their own personal development and issues that affect them as they grow up. Pupils also get the opportunity to learn about some of the underpinning values of our society. For example, after studying the ancient Greeks, pupils discussed ideas of democracy and then elected their school council.
- Leaders have also responded to the rural context of the school by developing a range of experiences outside the classroom. Pupils have the chance to learn about aspects of farming and the rural community directly from local farmers and businesses.
- Leaders have been successful in ensuring that pupils have access to team sports and other extra-curricular activities that become problematic when the number of pupils is so small. The trust brings its schools together to provide opportunities for team games, and pupils also take part in individual sports, such as fencing and golf.
- Pupils' progress is improving because leaders have revised the school's assessment system. Teachers are now assessing what pupils know with increasing accuracy and

diagnosing misconceptions. This helps them to plan the appropriate next steps in learning.

- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to provide additional support for the small group of disadvantaged pupils. As a result of this work, these pupils are now beginning to make the progress they are capable of. Leaders are also ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are given the support they need.

Governance of the school

- At the beginning of 2018, the diocese acted to renew the trust board. New trustees were appointed based on the skills they were able to offer. This has ensured that the board has the ability and experience to fulfil its monitoring functions robustly.
- The new board acted quickly to secure an executive principal and to make its own accountability procedures much more robust. The board understood the urgency of the need to improve. It now holds the executive principal to account for the standards and quality of teaching in the school well. This has had a galvanising effect on the school.
- Trustees understand the context of the school well and, as a church trust, they ensure that the values reflect a Christian ethos and they understand the strengths and constraints of such a small school. The trust includes six schools, and trustees have very recently set up local governing bodies to monitor the work of each school. As yet, this group is too new to have had any significant impact on Quethiock.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a robust safeguarding culture right across the school. Staff know their pupils very well, and the quality of relationships with parents is strength of the school. Staff are well trained and know what to do should they have a concern about a pupil's safety or welfare.
- Teachers look after the additional needs of vulnerable pupils, and those that face additional hardships in their lives, well. They work closely with external agencies, such as the local authority social care team, to ensure that children get the extra help they need to flourish in school.
- Leaders ensure that the school's safeguarding systems are robust and kept up to date. All appropriate checks are made on staff when they are appointed, and appropriate records are kept. Those staff who work with children in the early years have the appropriate paediatric qualifications.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over the past few years, teachers have not had high enough expectations of pupils in any year group. This is now beginning to change as a result of the revised curriculum the trust has introduced. However, pupils are not yet consistently being challenged appropriately. Pupils are not always set work that meets their needs and so they do not make consistently good progress.

- The needs of the most able pupils are not consistently being met. Teachers are not providing the additional challenge to stimulate and enthuse this group sufficiently. Consequently, sometimes, pupils are content to coast.
- Where teaching remains weaker, it is largely because teachers do not have a secure command of the subject. This is particularly true in mathematics, where teachers do not always have the skills to diagnose why a pupil misunderstands a concept and so help them overcome it. This is preventing pupils from building up a secure understanding of key mathematical concepts.
- The quality of the teaching of writing has been poor in the past but is now improving rapidly. Teachers are increasingly confident in sharing good writing with pupils, discussing it and asking them to respond to it. The approach is consistent from the early years through to Year 6 and, as a result, pupils are making better progress. There is still some way to go before underachievement is eliminated, but there has been substantial progress.
- The teaching of reading is also improving. Pupils are reading regularly at an appropriate level. Leaders are skilful in ensuring that the broad range of age and ability in each class is catered for. Teachers also set expectations about regular reading at home. Pupils enjoy their books and are making increasing progress as a result.
- Teachers are now setting explicit targets for pupils to address to improve their work. This is having some impact. Older pupils are clear about the areas they are working to improve and why. However, they are sometimes held back because teachers are often insufficiently clear and precise in their advice about how to improve.
- Teachers address the needs of the small number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well. Pupils are integrated into the class well and given the support they need to keep up with their peers wherever possible. Support for the very small number of disadvantaged pupils is equally well targeted.
- Teachers teach phonics effectively. Children and pupils in the early years and key stage 1 are making good progress because they are given regular sessions of precisely focused and appropriate input. Most pupils enjoy these lively and engaging sessions and respond enthusiastically.
- Teachers often challenge pupils to think deeply when they are taught foundation subjects. In key stage 2 geography, for example, pupils are asked to consider and prioritise the needs of settlers. In key stage 1 science, pupils are asked to think about the needs of the human body. At these times, pupils are expected to justify and explain their answers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The quality of relationships among pupils, and between teachers and pupils, is high. There is an emphasis on respect and dignity throughout the life of the school.

- Leaders make sure that there is a high level of pastoral care for individual pupils. Because relationships with parents and families are good and teachers know their pupils well, teachers are able to tailor their support for individual pupils appropriately.
- The PSHE curriculum is comprehensive and supports the development of pupils as they grow older. Pupils learn about their bodies and how to keep themselves safe in the real world and online. They also learn to have a positive outlook on life and learning. Pupils were very keen to tell the inspector that 'we make mistakes all the time, and that's OK'.
- Pupils are proud of themselves and their school. They feel they are part of a community. Parents comment that they feel their children are valued as individuals.
- Pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and quick to answer questions. Only when the quality of teaching is weaker, and pupils are not quite sure what they should be learning, do some become disengaged and passive.
- As part of the recent improvement to the quality of teaching and learning, pupils are now being asked to go back and redraft or correct their work. This is new for them and some are still reluctant to revisit and improve their work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a well-ordered and calm environment. The conduct of pupils around the school site is good. Pupils are respectful and polite to adults. They treat each other with good-humoured warmth. Behaviour in assembly is good. Pupils know what is expected of them and they respond appropriately.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils report that when it is, teachers deal with it quickly. Even when the quality of teaching does not meet their needs, pupils generally remain well mannered and compliant.
- The vast majority of pupils come to school virtually every day. Attendance is well above the national average and improving further. Parents say that their children enjoy coming to school and do not want to miss a day.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over a number of years, pupils have not achieved the standards that their peers in other schools do when they take the end of Year 6 assessments. Repeatedly, pupils have made less progress than pupils in more than nine out of 10 schools in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2018, outcomes improved in all three subjects but still remained significantly weaker than average in reading and mathematics. However, pupils made progress in writing broadly in line with that of pupils in other schools.
- The standards achieved by key stage 2 pupils currently in the school remain low. As a result of improvements to the quality of teaching, there is some improvement. However, pupils still have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding that teachers are only now beginning to address.
- The most able pupils have not, for a number of years, reached the high standards of which they are capable. Too often, leaders and teachers have settled for these pupils

reaching average levels of attainment when they were capable of more. This remains an issue for the school. The most able are still not achieving their potential.

- The standard of writing is improving across both key stages. However, pupils are being held back by lower-than-average standards of punctuation and grammar. Consequently, older pupils, who are quite capable of writing with a rich and imaginative vocabulary, are unable to express themselves as well as they should. This will put them at a disadvantage when they move on to secondary school.
- As a result of the previous curriculum and teaching, pupils have gaps in their mathematical understanding. Teachers are now addressing these. There is an improvement in pupils' fluency and confidence with number problems, but more remains to be done.
- Standards of reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 have been poor for some time. A below average proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard and very few go on to reach greater depth. In 2018, there was an improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard. However, the proportion reaching greater depth remained low.
- The standards of those pupils currently in key stage 1 are mixed. Pupils are making better progress with their reading and writing. For example, they are making good progress with their letter formation and handwriting. Progress in mathematics is generally more inconsistent. Pupils are improving their fluency with number but have difficulty in using their skills to solve problems and apply reason. Pupils are rarely able to access any mathematics at greater depth.
- Pupils achieved broadly in line with pupils in other schools in the phonics screening check in Year 1. Leaders were not satisfied with this and have reorganised and refreshed their approach. The standard of those now in school is improving as a consequence.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress in the early years. Leaders have created a provision that meets the needs of both pre-school and Reception children. Children in Reception benefit from having access to high-quality provision in which they are stimulated by appropriate activities and good-quality questioning. As a result, they are making good progress.
- In the past, very few of the most able children exceeded the expected level of development by the time they joined Year 1. However, those in the class now are getting the stimulation they need to make good progress from their starting points.
- Children in the Reception class also join with pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 for part of their day. This gives them the opportunity to learn in a more formal setting and they benefit from working with older pupils. This is a relatively new arrangement. In this context, children are not consistently challenged. Assessments, while improving, do not record exactly what children can and cannot do yet.
- Some Reception-aged children and the most able from the pre-school also join with older pupils in their daily phonics sessions. This is stimulating and challenging these children to develop the skills they need as they progress with their reading.

- Teachers and other staff put an appropriately strong emphasis on developing the personal and social skills of the children. As a result, children behave very well. They willingly cooperate and take turns when they play and learn together. They also understand what is expected of them when they join the older pupils for assemblies.
- The leadership of the early years and Nursery provision is effective. The flexible arrangement, where Reception children move between working with Nursery staff and formal learning, is new to the school and is bedding in. However, children are settled and making appropriate progress.
- Communication with parents is a strong and integral part of the early years provision. Parents value the regular and helpful contact with staff. They have a high degree of confidence in the staff's commitment and care.

School details

Unique reference number	140477
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10058312

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	38
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Rev Steve Morgan
Principal	Sean Powers
Telephone number	01579 343588
Website	www.quethiock.cornwall.sch.uk
Email address	hnewbitt@stbarnabasmat.com
Date of previous inspection	September 2016

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.* It includes a pre-school provision. The school has a key stage 1 class and a key stage 2 class. Children in Reception spend part of their time with key stage 1 pupils and the rest with pre-school children.
- The school is part of the St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust, supported by the Diocese of Truro.
- The trust is led by an executive principal, who has oversight of the school. He is supported by a head of school.
- It has a broadly average proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.

■ The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.

* As a result of its size, the proportions of pupils outlined above as qualifying for the pupil premium funding, who have SEN and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language vary significantly from year to year. They are not reliable indicators of the school's context.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning across the range of subjects and age groups and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' written work. All the observations were conducted jointly with senior or middle leaders.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including minutes of trust meetings, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour data, safeguarding documents and the trust and school's review of its own performance.
- The inspector met with the chair of the trust, the executive headteacher, the head of school, middle leaders from the trust and groups of pupils.
- The inspector took account of 13 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to parents in person. He also took into account the responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Andrew Lovett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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