

# St Ives School

Higher Tregenna, St Ives, Cornwall TR26 2BB

## Inspection dates

18–19 January 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school is improving rapidly as a result of the headteacher's skilful and determined leadership. Supported by her senior staff, she has ensured that teachers and pupils know exactly what is expected of them.
- Governors and the directors of the trust are working hard to make sure that the school meets the needs of its community. They check the work of school leaders rigorously and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the headteacher is well supported when taking difficult decisions.
- School leaders have created a very positive culture where staff morale is high. Teachers feel supported, are highly motivated and work together very well to ensure that their teaching is of a high quality.
- Pupils now make better progress overall than pupils nationally. Pupils of all abilities make good progress; no group is left behind. Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils nationally.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in English as a result of the consistently high-quality teaching they receive throughout their time in the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are catered for very well. They receive very strong support from the team based in 'The Harbour'. As a result, they make good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils behave well towards each other. They are considerate and tolerant. Out of lessons, pupils act sensibly and socialise well.
- Pupils come to school with positive attitudes and engage well in their learning. They generally enjoy their lessons and disruption is rare.
- Teachers make accurate assessments of what pupils can do and, as a result, teaching is typically well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils' books show that they make good progress.
- Although the majority of pupils are positive about their learning, some lack self-confidence and resilience when faced with a difficult problem and they give up too easily.
- Attendance is improving and is close to the national average. The school has worked hard to reduce the numbers of pupils who are persistently absent. However, the figures remain stubbornly high.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' achievement further by:
  - ensuring that teachers build pupils' self-confidence, especially that of disadvantaged pupils, so that they persevere when facing new and challenging problems
  - helping all pupils to develop better learning habits so that they become more resilient when they find work difficult.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by reducing persistent absence so that it is at least in line with the national average.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher has high expectations of all staff and pupils in the school. She is very focused on ensuring that every pupil receives high-quality teaching every day. In pursuit of this objective, she is robust in holding staff to account. However, she is equally clear that, to improve the quality of teaching, teachers need to be given opportunities to reflect on their work and to sharpen their skills. Combining clarity of expectation with a high level of support has resulted in a highly motivated team of staff. They work hard to make sure that pupils receive consistently good teaching.
- Senior leaders articulate a clear vision of a high-performing school serving its community. As a result of the clarity of their vision and the moral values that underpin it, they enjoy a broad range of support from pupils, parents and staff.
- The governors and headteacher have faced problems in recruitment but have not compromised when seeking out high-quality staff. They have shown persistence and have been successful in overcoming staffing issues.
- Senior and middle leaders have an accurate view of the school based on robust assessment information and evaluation. They monitor their improvement plans closely and are not afraid to adapt and change them if necessary. Because of this scrutiny, the school has improved markedly since it opened as an academy.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported by the extra funding the school receives to promote their progress. The funding is used to ensure that pupils play a full and active part in school life. This is done, for example, through subsidising school visits or by providing the additional materials sometimes required in lessons. The funds are also used to ensure that pupils attend as well as they can and are supported through any difficult circumstances outside of school. As a result, disadvantaged pupils now make progress broadly in line with that of all pupils nationally.
- The leadership of the special educational needs team is a strength. The team is well trained and deployed effectively. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress. Pupils who need to catch up when they join from primary schools are supported effectively by a programme to boost their reading skills. These pupils are now making accelerated progress.
- Middle leaders are highly motivated and run their departments skilfully. They monitor the quality of teaching and act quickly to improve it where they find inconsistencies. They are adapting teaching programmes well as examination and curriculum requirements change. As a consequence of their dynamism, pupils are making better progress.
- The curriculum is well organised and thought through. Because of this, it is meeting the needs of pupils effectively. Pupils are able to study a broad range of subjects at GCSE level. A number of courses are thoughtfully designed to make the best of the school's situation, for example the practical geography GCSE uses the local natural environment well to give pupils extensive fieldwork experience. The school continues to offer some subjects where there are only a limited number of pupils who want to follow a GCSE course. This is because leaders believe they have a duty to meet pupils'

needs wherever possible. Hence, for example, a small number of pupils continue to enjoy studying a vibrant music course.

- Pupils receive a well-balanced careers education programme, starting from Year 7. As a result, they are successfully developing their understanding of the careers opportunities and pathways open to them as they progress through the school. Careers advice is independent and impartial. Disadvantaged pupils take advantage of good opportunities to broaden their horizons by visits to universities and through additional careers advice.
- The options chosen at GCSE by some of the most able disadvantaged pupils are potentially compromising their ability to apply to top universities in the future.

### **Governance of the school**

- The trust has a clear vision of supporting young people in Cornwall to achieve their potential. It has harnessed the leadership expertise of the sponsoring college of further education to that effect. For example, it carries out an in-depth annual review which is useful to the headteacher and governors in their improvement planning.
- The trust has delegated most of its governance functions to the local governing body. The chair of this local body is very active and knowledgeable in her role, and the governing body as a group is astute in asking searching questions of the headteacher and leadership team. They deepen their knowledge of the school by coming in to 'governor days' to focus on a particular aspect of school life, for example disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has improved considerably. They have also overseen the arrangement for the performance management of teachers effectively.
- Both the trust and the governing body are ambitious for the school and, although they celebrate recent successes, they are not complacent and are eager to improve the school further.

### **Safeguarding**

- The school has a strong safeguarding culture. The welfare hub, 'The Harbour', provides a comprehensive wrap-around service for all students, including the most vulnerable. It also acts as a contact point for a wide array of external support agencies and providers. This facility, which is led by a senior leader, makes a significant contribution to creating a culture where all students are able to access the support they need.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has clear systems and procedures which are understood by staff and pupils. Both teachers and other adults are well trained and know what to look out for to ensure that pupils are safe, including from extremism. Recruitment checks are carried out properly for all those who work with children. The pupils are well supervised on the site.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They understand the dangers of online grooming and of sexting. They know who to go to if they feel unsafe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved rapidly over the last two years. Typically, teaching is engaging pupils in thought-provoking tasks at a level which stretches and stimulates them. Teachers use questioning skilfully to draw out answers from pupils and elicit deeper thinking.
- Pupils benefit from consistently good teaching in English. They make very good progress as a result of well-structured lessons that are focused on key learning points. Pupils are highly engaged and keen to take part. The department has been especially effective in teaching boys, who enjoy considerable success.
- Although teaching is typically good, it is less effective when pupils are set low-level tasks which fail to interest them. In these circumstances their progress slows.
- Higher-ability pupils benefit across a broad range of subjects from teaching that stretches them. They generally rise to the challenges teachers set and engage in purposeful dialogue with teachers about how to improve their work.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are taught well. Teaching assistants are well trained and work with pupils effectively. Consequently, these pupils make very good progress.
- Some pupils in Year 7 receive extra support to help them catch up. The staff know their pupils well and so focus on the essential skills they need. Over time, these pupils make good progress with their reading and numeracy and consequently access other parts of the curriculum successfully.
- Teachers plan learning activities which are at the right level for their pupils as a result of their accurate assessment of what pupils can and cannot do. Typically, teachers' subject knowledge is secure and consequently they plan activities which deepen pupils' understanding of the subject.
- Teachers' written feedback to pupils consistently adheres to the school's expectations. As a result, pupils are aware of their targets and their current progress and this helps them to know where they are and where they should be in their learning.
- Assessment strategies have been developed recently and are being reviewed regularly to take account of changing national performance measures. Procedures are understood by staff and, as a result, accurate assessment information is passed between middle leaders, senior leaders and governors.
- Most pupils are stimulated by the challenges teachers set them. Consequently, they make good progress, whatever their starting point. However, a minority of pupils, often disadvantaged ones, shy away from the challenge and so make less progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils work and play well together. Most are socially confident, and relationships, both between pupils and with adults, are positive. Pupils say that everyone is welcomed into school and respected, whatever their background, race or sexuality.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a central part of school life. They are given opportunities to consider a broad range of topics which help to prepare them for adult life well. Pupils are involved in planning the programme. For example, after requests from older pupils, teachers have included discussion on challenging topics such as radicalisation and transgender issues in the curriculum.
- The school's work to support vulnerable pupils with emotional or health issues is comprehensive. Pupils appreciate the support offered in 'The Harbour'. They speak warmly of the care staff take to support them when they are struggling with personal issues. The school's breakfast club provides a welcome opportunity for pupils to share problems with staff before the school day gets under way.
- Most pupils and parents believe that bullying is dealt with well by the school. The school's mixed-age tutor groups are broadly welcomed by pupils. They feel that the opportunity to mix with other year groups helps them support each other.
- Pupils take on numerous roles of responsibility across the school. For example, in physical education, pupils who are also members of a local running club work under the direction of the teacher to lead and coach their peers on cross-country runs.
- A small number of pupils attend a local alternative provision academy that can better meet their needs. These pupils experience success both academically and in terms of their personal development. Their progress is closely monitored.
- A minority of pupils lack the self-confidence and resilience to take on challenging problems and they opt for simpler, lower-level work. Consequently, they underachieve.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- There is a calm and orderly atmosphere across the school. Pupils are well behaved at break and lunchtimes, and they enter and leave school sensibly. They are friendly and good humoured as they move around the school between lessons.
- The atmosphere is equally positive in lessons. When pupils are asked to contribute their opinions, they are listened to respectfully by their classmates.
- Most pupils are keen to contribute in lessons. They expect to work and they generally enjoy the tasks they are given by teachers. Disruption in lessons is rare. Some pupils, however, do lose their enthusiasm and begin to let their attention wander when teaching fails to inspire them. When this happens they do not make the progress they could.
- As a result of a concerted effort by school leaders, teachers and pastoral staff, attendance is improving and is now broadly in line with the national average. The school has also worked hard to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Although there are some signs of improvement, the rates of persistent absence are still too high.

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils currently in the school are achieving well. As a result of the good quality of teaching they receive, they are making good progress from their starting points. Books are well presented and pupils are proud of their work.
- Higher-ability pupils are producing work of a standard that will reach the highest grades in the newly revised English and mathematics GCSE qualifications. They are being stretched and challenged by knowledgeable staff who set demanding targets, and they are responding appropriately.
- Outcomes for pupils have improved significantly in the last two years and are now good. In 2016, pupils achieved results well above the national average. English is a particular strength where pupils' achievements rank in the top 10% of schools nationally.
- Pupils achieved well in excess of the national average in their combined English and mathematics GCSEs. However, the school's success in pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate qualification is well below the national average. This is because most pupils do not choose to take the combination of GCSEs which qualify for it.
- A feature of the school's success in 2016 was that most pupils, of any ability, did well across a broad range of subjects. Boys and girls were similarly successful. This is in marked contrast to the national picture, where girls' performance is substantially better than boys'.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieved well. Those pupils who had a statement or an education, health and care plan did better than pupils nationally. Those pupils currently in school are receiving a high quality of support which will allow them to be equally successful.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieved broadly in line with other pupils across the country, although they did poorly in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils currently in school are achieving well across the curriculum. The school is predicting improvements in mathematics for these pupils and the progress seen in books supports their judgement.
- Pupils display a good standard of literacy. The school has made it a priority to ensure that pupils experience a range of opportunities to practise their skills across the curriculum. For example, in geography, pupils use creative writing to describe a journey to the centre of the Earth. Pupils of all abilities who were asked to read to inspectors did so fluently and with enjoyment.
- Almost all pupils who leave Year 11 attend the local college of further education. The school provides a comprehensive programme of advice and support. As a result, there are very few pupils who do not go on to further study or a job with training.

## School details

Unique reference number	140675
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10024902

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	554
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Jane Cashmore
Headteacher	Jan Woodhouse
Telephone number	01736 795608
Website	<a href="http://www.st-ives.cornwall.sch.uk/">www.st-ives.cornwall.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@st-ives.cornwall.sch.uk">head@st-ives.cornwall.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school has been sponsored by Truro and Penwith Multi-Academy Trust since April 2014. The trust also sponsors 12 primary schools in Cornwall.
- Nine out of ten pupils are of White British heritage. There are few from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion who are supported by pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- A small number of pupils attend Penwith Alternative Provision Academy.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects and age groups, and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' written work. Some of the observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including minutes of governors' meetings, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour logs, safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- Meetings were held with the chief executive officer of Truro and Penwith Multi-Academy Trust and governors, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and groups of pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4.
- An inspector listened to a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of 45 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own parent survey, and also spoke with parents. They also took into consideration 64 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Andrew Lovett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Williams	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Butler	Ofsted Inspector

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