

Inspection of a good school: St Mawes Primary School

Grove Hill, St Mawes, Truro, Cornwall TR2 5BP

Inspection dates: 19 November 2019

Outcome

St Mawes Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mawes Primary School is a happy, ambitious place for pupils to learn. This small school is like a family. Pupils and staff are highly valued and their contribution matters. Pupils demonstrate respect for one another. They have regular opportunities to work with pupils in the other class, through activities such as shared reading.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils. Leaders have clear aims that underpin the school's curriculum. These are 'aspirational futures; health and well-being; and sustainability'. Pupils enjoy learning across all subjects and achieve well. They are increasingly able to use prior knowledge, from a range of subjects, to help tackle new learning. This is highly effective.

Pupils state that behaviour at the school is a strength and that bullying does not occur. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is good, and they engage well in their learning. Low-level disruption is uncommon. Pupils are keen to meet teachers' high expectations. The curriculum hooks pupils in well and maintains their interest, which significantly strengthens pupils' attitudes to learning.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know that adults are there to look after them.

Staff, pupils and parents and carers are unanimously positive about the school. Staff value how well leaders consider their well-being and the opportunities the trust offers them.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leadership is strong. Leaders have a culture of high expectations for all. A 'can-do' attitude permeates the school. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum, supporting pupils to develop a deep understanding about what they are learning and encouraging them to make links between subjects. This curriculum is well established. Leaders have given great thought to the age-ranges of pupils within the mixed-aged classes, so pupils acquire knowledge well over time.

Leaders have prioritised making sure that pupils learn to read. There is a clear phonics programme in place. Leaders have trained all staff to teach the phonics programme well. Staff use ongoing assessment information to keep track of pupils' progress. This allows them to quickly identify pupils who may need more help to keep up. Leaders do not delay in giving high-quality support to those that need it. Pupils enjoy reading and have regular opportunities to read to an adult, as well as their peers. Pupils access reading books that contain sounds they have learned. This helps them practise. At times, pupils apply phonic knowledge with relative ease as books are not consistently challenging enough.

Across the curriculum, leaders and staff have given great thought to how best to sequence learning so pupils know more and remember more. This work is paying off. Pupils are increasingly able to make links between subjects and their prior learning. These are signs of an effective curriculum. Teachers know the school's curriculum well and have strong subject knowledge to teach it well. This allows them to adapt the curriculum to meet the different needs of pupils. Teachers have high aspirations for all, setting challenging activities for pupils to complete. Rarely, pupils access learning that doesn't build on what they have learned before, making it tricky for them to understand new knowledge.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as other pupils. Staff set precise targets for pupils, to help support them to keep up, and frequently review these to ensure they remain relevant and ambitious.

Pupils hold learning in high regard. They contribute well in lessons and enjoy the breadth and quality of the school's curriculum. Pupils hold meaningful discussions with one another and demonstrate a thirst for knowledge. Pupils have an increasing understanding of the world around them, including different faiths and cultures. The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum helps to achieve this. Leaders are keen for pupils to learn as much about life both inside and outside the village as possible, to help broaden pupils' understanding.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. However, there are instances where some pupils regularly miss school, often due to term-time holidays. This prevents them from accessing the school's rich curriculum offer in its entirety.

Children in the Reception class get off to a strong start. Leaders ensure that children learn how to read from day one. This helps prepare children well for future learning. Staff ensure children access the breadth of the early years framework. Children have opportunities to independently develop their knowledge through the activities on offer. Children in the Reception class share a class with other pupils across key stage 1. However, staff ensure activities are well tuned to consider children's different stages of development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders complete recruitment checks prior to the appointment of new staff. This helps ensure they only appoint staff that are suitable to work with children. Staff are highly vigilant when it comes to recognising concerns about pupils' welfare. Although concerns are few, this does not dilute leaders' emphasis on the importance of safeguarding. Pupils feel safe and have the knowledge they need to be safe when using the internet. One pupil, whose view reflected that of many others, stated, 'I feel super secure!' Pupils can explain how staff have raised their awareness of safety and safeguarding in a range of ways.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to teaching phonics is implemented well. However, there are occasions where pupils access reading books that lack challenge. Pupils read these books fluently at the first attempt, without the need to apply their reading strategies. Leaders need to ensure that reading books are suitably challenging and provide opportunities for pupils to apply recent sounds they have learned.
- Leaders have implemented a successful and highly ambitious curriculum. However, there are times, although few, where pupils access learning that is too challenging and beyond their knowledge and understanding. Leaders need to ensure that teachers do not teach content that does not consistently build on pupils' prior learning.
- Some pupils regularly miss school more than others. Over time, this could affect how well they keep up with new learning. Leaders are working hard to reduce this and intend to use expertise from within the trust to help them reduce persistent absence.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Mawes Community Primary School, to be good in May 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143778
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10111593
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jacqueline Swain
Headteacher	Karen Middlemore
Website	www.stmawes.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ofsted inspected the predecessor school in May 2012, when inspectors judged the school to be good. In January 2017, the school joined Aspire Academy Trust.
- The academy trust has delegated some responsibility to the 'Hub council', which meets and conducts monitoring visits at the school on a termly basis.
- An executive headteacher and head of school form the leadership team.
- Leaders have arranged the school into two classes: Reception children and pupils in key stage 1 make up class one, and key stage 2 pupils make up class two.

Information about this inspection

- We looked closely at reading, science and physical education during the inspection. We met with senior leaders and curriculum leaders, considered pupils' workbooks, conducted lesson visits, and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- The lead inspector spoke with the chief executive officer from the trust. He also met with hub leaders to discuss the responsibilities that the trust has delegated to them and how they ensure they fulfil these.

- The team inspector met with the designated leader for safeguarding. He also considered the school's single central record.
- The team inspector analysed attendance information, behaviour logs and exclusion records.
- The team inspector met with several parents at the beginning of the school day. We also considered responses to the online survey, Parent View, and the staff survey. There were four responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors also sought pupils' views about the school when inspecting individual subjects.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gary Chown

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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