

St Martin's C of E Primary School

Lake Lane, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 3DE

Inspection dates

22 to 23 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There has been too little progress since the previous inspection. Changes in governance and school leadership have meant that previous weaknesses have not been remedied.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 2 has declined year-on-year since the previous inspection. While signs of improvement can be seen for current pupils, they have not yet caught up. Too few pupils are working at the higher standard.
- Leaders have introduced new approaches to teaching reading, writing and mathematics. However, these have not yet resulted in standards rising rapidly enough.
- The quality of teaching across and within year groups, including in the early years, is too variable.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is not strong enough. They do not match activities to pupils' needs closely. Consequently, work is often too easy or too hard.
- Pupils' spelling and punctuation lack accuracy.
- Leaders have failed to ensure that the curriculum in geography and history is planned well enough.
- Pupils' attendance at school continues to be below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is higher than national levels, although it is reducing.
- The clarity and timeliness of communication is a concern for some parents and staff. Some administrative procedures are not as effective as they should be.

The school has the following strengths

- Since September 2018, the new directors and leaders at trust level have provided the school with the support and direction needed.
- The interim chief executive officer (CEO) and head of school have a clear ambition for the school. Since they have taken post, the rate of change has quickened.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. They show a good understanding of different faiths.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using technology.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - staff have the subject knowledge they need to be able to plan and modify learning to meet pupils' needs more closely
 - the curriculum for the foundation subjects gives pupils the knowledge and understanding they need
 - leaders communicate clearly and in a timely fashion with parents and staff
 - record-keeping and administrative systems are organised well, so they support the effective running of the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years, by ensuring that staff:
 - use their assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do to ensure that misconceptions that pupils have are tackled swiftly
 - plan activities, particularly in reading and writing, that ensure pupils understand the different meanings of words and improve their spelling and use of punctuation
 - challenge the most able to reach the standards they are capable of.
- Continue to work with pupils and parents to reduce the rates of pupils' absence, particularly of those who are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust, which is responsible for St Martin's Church of England Primary School, has experienced significant changes since the previous inspection. The members of the trust appointed new directors in November 2017. In turn, they appointed an interim CEO. These changes have meant that, until recently, the school has not had the support it needs to improve quickly.
- Although leaders and trustees are ambitious for the school and have invested heavily in improving the quality of teaching and learning, this is recent. It has not, therefore, had sufficient time to be embedded in day-to-day practice. Consequently, it has not yet had the impact needed to ensure that the significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are addressed.
- Leaders have introduced many new approaches to teaching, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff have been trained in these approaches and classroom practice shows that they embrace them. However, staff subject-knowledge is not yet secure and they are not sufficiently skilled to modify their plans to meet pupils' needs.
- Leaders' pupil premium strategy identifies the main barriers that pupils face. However, leaders have not ensured that teachers' planning is closely enough matched to help pupils in some classes overcome these barriers and make the progress that they need to.
- The majority of staff feel supported by the CEO and head of school. However, a minority do not believe that leaders pay enough attention to their workload or well-being. Allied to this, a few comment that communication within the school is not clear or timely enough to ensure that staff are fully informed.
- Parents have mixed views about the school. Approximately half of the parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school. Those who are dissatisfied are concerned about the behaviour of pupils, bullying and communications from school staff. However, the school's own surveys paint a stronger picture. Staff have organised events and activities to involve parents more in their children's development and see the school in operation, but take up has been low.
- Leaders are aspirational for the school. They recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are taking action to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The trust has provided training which is valued by the staff. Although this is ensuring that staff are familiar with the new systems to improve standards, these are not yet embedded in their practice.
- The trust has engaged another trust, Venture Multi-Academy Trust, to provide additional leadership capacity and support to the school this academic year. This is supporting school leaders in their work. Since their involvement, there has been a quickening of improvements.
- The systems that have been introduced have been well received by staff and give leaders a common ground to work from. For example, the introduction of the

calculations policy has ensured a commonality of approach to the teaching of mathematical operations.

- Leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. They recognise the strengths and improvements and take action where the quality of teaching and learning is not good enough.
- Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) feel well supported. Mentors ensure that they receive the support they need, and they attend to the NQT's well-being needs. NQTs remark that sharing planning and their discussions with colleagues are helping to ensure that their workload is manageable.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils have a good understanding of their place in society, locally and globally. Opportunities are built into the curriculum to explore moral dilemmas and for spiritual reflection. 'Circle time' and the personal, social and health education are used to help pupils reflect on social issues, other faiths and cultures. Leaders actively promote British values through teaching and leadership opportunities for pupils.
- The sport premium is used effectively to improve teachers' practice. As a result, there is an increase in pupils' participation in sport. The range of sports that pupils experience has increased and there are more opportunities for pupils to participate in competitions locally.
- The leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. The special educational needs coordinator and the leader of the child development centre (CDC) know each pupil and their family well. They engage specialists in a timely fashion to ensure that pupils' needs are accurately identified and plans are developed to support them. For those pupils who receive additional teaching, this is closely monitored to ensure it is effective in improving their knowledge and understanding.

Governance of the school

- Members took decisive action to improve the governance of the trust in November 2017. The new board of directors has a clear oversight of the strengths and weaknesses and has effected much-needed changes in the last year.
- The directors have appointed an interim CEO and secured additional support from another multi-academy trust in Cornwall. This ensures that the information they receive is accurate and gives them the insight they need to make strategic decisions.
- The directors have also established a local governing body. Clearly defined responsibilities have been agreed and this group provides useful links to the local community.
- The directors have ensured that resources have been allocated to tackle the greatest needs. Where similar needs exist in other trust schools, then schools work together to ensure that staff do not work in isolation.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff have received training in the risks that pupils may face, including radicalisation and extremism. Their training

ensures that they are alert to the indicators of harm, and they are swift to share their observations with the designated leader. Referrals to the local authority are made when necessary and leaders participate in meetings with specialist agencies when required.

- Some administrative processes are not as well organised as they need to be.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Across the school, in a range of subjects, the quality of teaching is too variable. Class teachers do not demonstrate the subject knowledge they need when planning learning in the foundation subjects.
- Many teachers do not routinely use assessment in lessons to adapt their teaching. As a result, misconceptions often go unchecked. This is most commonly seen in geography and mathematics.
- Pupils' writing is not improving rapidly enough. Teachers have not ensured that pupils have sufficient skills, particularly in spelling and punctuation, to edit and improve their work. The level of challenge for the most able pupils is not high enough.
- In reading, pupils are not broadening their range or depth of understanding of vocabulary. They struggle to fully understand the content and the author's intent when they are studying texts. Strategies to ensure that the deficiencies in pupils' ability to read well are having little impact. Often the books that pupils read, particularly in key stage 1, are too hard or too easy for them.
- In the foundation subjects, such as history, the purpose of the tasks is not clear and so pupils' knowledge is not developed well. This is because the focus is too heavily on the technical aspects of the writing, rather than subject knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough. Pupils' work in geography and history is of poor quality compared to their English and mathematics. Work is often incomplete.
- Teachers provide effective support for pupils with SEND. Work planned is closely matched to their needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- In lessons, pupils support each other well and show respect for different views that they hold and share. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and follow instructions. At breaktimes and at lunchtimes, pupils play together well. Staff who supervise the playgrounds are alert and vigilant. They remind pupils about safe behaviour. Younger pupils appreciate the new play equipment.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of educational visits and outdoor learning, such as to the local historical sites and further afield. For example, during this inspection, many pupils from Year 5 were participating in a residential visit to London with other schools in the trust.

- In PSHE lessons, pupils are taught about good relationships and the importance of kindness and showing respect.
- Pupils are keen to support charities and regularly raise funds for charities of their choice.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- A new sanctions and rewards system motivates pupils and has helped them improve their behaviour and to work hard.
- A few pupils and some parents comment about bullying and poor behaviour. Where this is brought to leaders' attention, pupils have confidence that it will be dealt with. However, some pupils and parents do not always report such incidents.
- Pupils are polite to adults and visitors. They show good manners.
- Attendance has been below the national average for several years. In a few cases, there are factors which prevent pupils from attending. The school has worked with a range of agencies to help families to overcome barriers to help them attend more regularly. Leaders' work to reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is beginning to have a positive impact.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, standards at the end of key stage 2 have declined year-on-year. Pupils in key stage 2 have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding as a result of poor teaching in the past. However, in most year groups a higher proportion of pupils are on track to reach the expected standard for their age than in the past. Although standards have improved in most year groups, the proportion of pupils working at the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics in several year groups is well below where it should be.
- In mathematics, many pupils have too many gaps in their knowledge to be able to explain their thinking and solve problems. Many pupils do not show precision or accuracy in their work. Pupils continue to make the same mistakes because teachers do not tackle pupils' misconceptions.
- Across the school, the quality of pupils' writing is weak. Their work is marred by poor handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Pupils do not routinely use their phonics knowledge when writing.
- Work to improve outcomes in reading is proving successful and standards are rising more quickly than in other subjects. However, pupils' limited vocabulary and lack of understanding of words is impeding their full appreciation of the texts they read.
- In key stage 1, pupils are showing a more secure understanding of phonics as a result of the trust-wide approach that has been introduced and the support of an external adviser.
- Outcomes in some of the foundation subjects are poor. This is because the curriculum is not planned well enough, particularly in history and geography.

- Across the school, few pupils are working at the higher standard. This is particularly the case in writing. In Year 2, no pupil is currently on track to reach greater depth by the end of the summer term. Consequently, the most able pupils are making insufficient progress.
- There are no gender differences in outcomes. However, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 are not improving as quickly as their classmates in mathematics, but they are in reading and writing. In Year 2, disadvantaged pupils are achieving as well as their classmates in mathematics but not in reading.
- Pupils with SEND have appropriate, clear, often small-step targets against which their academic progress and personal development are monitored. Against these targets, pupils are making good progress.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years provision consists of the child development centre (CDC), Nursery and two Reception classes. There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching in Nursery and Reception classes. The CDC continues to provide highly effective support for the children it serves and their families.
- Recognising the need to strengthen the quality of provision, the directors deployed the trust's early years leader to take over the leadership of early years at St Martin's earlier this term. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and has high expectations for the provision. The early years improvement plans identify the necessary actions, but these are only starting to be introduced.
- The quality of teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is not ensuring that activities build on what children know, understand and can do. Many children do not yet have the fine motor skills they need to be able to form their letters accurately. The level of challenge is often poorly matched to children's abilities. Teaching staff do too little to develop the speech of children who struggle. Staff are too accepting of children's responses to their questions.
- The use of assessment in the Nursery is not strong. The quality and frequency of assessments are too variable. There are too few opportunities for children to practise their skills independently.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years is effective. Children in the Reception classes show fluency in their recall of the sounds.
- The most able pupils in the Reception classes show good use of language in their writing, and adults challenge them to work towards the higher standard.
- The CDC continues to be a strength of the school. Adults' assessments of children's needs are accurate. The provision is effective in helping these children with their complex SEND. Consequently, children make strong progress against their specific targets.
- Relationships in the early years are supportive. Children feel safe. In the Nursery, there are good relationships with adults. Turn-taking, listening to each other and sharing are well developed.

- Children in the early years are safe. Routines are well established and children follow adults' instructions. The safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and the welfare requirements are met.
- Parents are generally pleased with the early years provision. They appreciate the information they receive about their children's progress.

School details

Unique reference number	140347
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10088325

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mark Lees
Head of School	Holly Bridges
Telephone number	01579 344 042
Website	www.st-martins.cornwall.sch.uk
Email address	admin@stbarnabasmat.com
Date of previous inspection	2 to 3 November 2016

Information about this school

- St Martin's is larger than the average-sized primary school. It includes a child development centre for children under the age of five with complex SEND, and a Nursery.
- The school is part of the St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust, a group of six primary schools in south-east Cornwall. Directors have established a local governing body to oversee certain aspects of the school's work. Directors retain accountability.
- In April 2018, the directors engaged Venture Multi-Academy Trust to provide senior leadership of the trust and support to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This arrangement is in place until July 2020.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is above the national average.

- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. As such, it is also subject to a dedicated inspection of this aspect (a 'section 48 inspection'). The last such inspection took place in February 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out visits, accompanied by senior leaders, to all classes across the school. They held discussions with pupils, both formally and informally, to find out what it is like to be a pupil in this school.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders to discuss the impact of their actions. The lead inspector met with two directors of the trust, including the chair, and three members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the end of the school day. The responses of 50 parents to the online survey, Parent View, were considered along with 26 free-text messages. The comments of 102 pupils and 27 staff who completed Ofsted's online surveys were taken into account.
- Documents were scrutinised, including school improvement plans and leaders' notes of the checks they make on the quality of teaching. Inspectors also examined reports from the school's improvement partner and the minutes of the trust board meetings and the education and standards committee.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' education, health and care plans and individual education plans for those pupils with SEND.
- Safeguarding documents were scrutinised, including the school's record of the recruitment checks made on adults, risk assessments and records of incidents of pupils' poor behaviour.

Inspection team

Iain Freeland, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Claire Mirams	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Jane	Ofsted Inspector

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