

Threemilestone School

Polstain Road, Threemilestone, Truro, TR3 6DH

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' attainment is above average. Children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able, those in receipt of additional funding and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, make good progress.
- Teaching is good, and contributes strongly to the good achievement. Teachers manage their classes well and usually make sure that pupils do work which is at a level which helps them learn well.
- Pupils behave outstandingly well. They are very keen to do well in lessons. They thrive on responsibility and love coming to school, where they feel very safe.
- Governors support school leaders well. Leaders at all levels check the quality of teaching and learning thoroughly.
- All staff share the leadership's commitment to continually improve the school and raise its performance to the highest levels. The school's successes since its previous inspection show that the school has a strong capacity to improve further.
- Pupils enjoy not just lessons but the wide range of clubs and activities which the school offers, sometimes in conjunction with other local schools.
- Parents are very appreciative of the school, both for the quality of care for their children and the progress they make.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally more-able pupils do not do sufficiently challenging work in lessons which would help them meet their full potential.
- There are inconsistencies in the way teachers mark pupils' work and ensure pupils respond to their written comments.
- Pupils sometimes make slower progress in writing than in reading or mathematics because some teachers give them limited opportunities to write at length in subjects outside of English lessons.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons, taught by 13 teachers. Four of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also made several shorter visits to classroom sessions.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other staff, a group of pupils and 11 governors. They also spoke to several parents.
- The inspection team took account of 57 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the record of responses to the school's own recent survey of parents' views. Inspectors scrutinised 31 questionnaires returned by staff. They looked at responses to the school's recent survey of pupils' views.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a variety of documentation, including the school improvement plan, the school's checks on its own performance, minutes of governing body meetings, information on pupils' current progress and records relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

John Laver, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Robert Arnold

Additional inspector

Janet Sharp

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Threemilestone School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided by the government for children in local authority care or pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There are two Reception classes and two classes in each of the year groups between Year 1 and Year 6.
- The school shares its site with a privately-run pre-school, which is inspected separately.
- The school runs a before-school breakfast club and an after-school club.
- Three months ago the school restructured its senior leadership team to redefine some roles and responsibilities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, so that more of the good teaching becomes outstanding, by making sure that:
 - teachers always give more-able pupils work earlier in lessons which will really challenge them to reach their full potential
 - teachers' marking is consistently helpful in showing pupils how to improve their work and that they ensure they act upon teachers' comments
 - teachers find more opportunities to develop high-quality writing in lessons in subjects which currently do not have a strong focus on literacy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the school in Reception with levels of skill and knowledge in line with those typical for their age. As a result of mostly outstanding teaching in Reception, children make outstanding progress there, many joining Year 1 with above average attainment.
- Inspectors saw children in Reception making this outstanding progress in a variety of activities. Sometimes these took place in the classroom, sometimes outside. For example, inspectors observed some children exploring the wildlife in their forest in the school grounds, whilst others were practising their biking skills in the playground. The children made great strides in their personal development, working and playing together eagerly. At the same time they rapidly gained basic language, literacy and counting skills.
- From Year 1 onwards, pupils make good progress as they move from year to year. They leave at the age of 11 with above average attainment. It is particularly high in reading. Inspectors heard several pupils reading confidently and talking about their reading habits. In the last check on phonics (the link between sounds and letters), Year 1 girls did not do as well as expected. The school has addressed this issue by improving the teaching of phonics.
- Pupils throughout the school have well-developed speaking and listening skills. They speak clearly and confidently, both in lessons and in assemblies.
- Progress in mathematics has varied in the past. However, the school has worked to improve teaching and learning in mathematics, through measures such as encouraging teachers to coach each other. They have increased their expertise and confidence in the subject, with positive results.
- Pupils achieve well overall because all groups share in the good progress. Pupils supported by the pupil premium have not achieved as well as other pupils in the school in the past. The leadership identified this as an area for improvement, and provided extra staff support and resources to enable these pupils to progress at a faster rate. As a result, in most classes there is no longer a significant difference in the rates of progress in English and mathematics between different groups of pupils.
- This is also the case for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Some of these pupils also underachieved in the past. The school has provided a lot of extra support for these pupils, both inside and out of the classroom, and their progress has improved in the current school year.
- Progress in writing still varies, sometimes between year groups and within them, although overall standards of writing are above average. The variation is partly due to some teachers not giving pupils enough opportunities to write at length when they are studying topics such as geography or science outside of their English lessons.
- In the last national tests, a few more-able pupils in Year 6 did not attain the higher levels of which they were capable. The leadership has worked successfully to raise expectations of more-able pupils. For example, able mathematicians in Year 6 go to the local secondary school for regular mathematics teaching. As a result, these pupils, like other groups, are meeting challenging targets in reading, writing and mathematics this year.
- Occasionally more-able pupils still do not achieve as much as they could in individual lessons. This happens when they do not do activities with sufficient challenge until later in the lesson, rather than early on. This is the main reason why achievement is not yet outstanding.
- Parents, when responding to the school's own survey and talking to inspectors, are complimentary about their children's progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Although there are aspects of outstanding teaching in the school, it is good overall. This has

been so for some time and applies throughout the school, although inspectors saw particularly effective teaching in Reception. Children there benefit from a very good range of activities, both when working and playing on their own or when working closely with a teacher or another adult.

- There are very good relationships in class, with pupils eager to learn. They respond well when answering questions which test and reinforce their learning. They also learn well when working in small groups either with a teacher, a teaching assistant, or by themselves. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoyed lessons and have respect and affection for staff.
- There is particularly effective teaching in some subjects. Music has a very high and successful profile in the school. For example, all pupils in Year 4 learn a brass instrument. The school has a high reputation for its choir.
- Attainment has improved in physical education, partly because teachers' skills in the subject have been boosted through the school buying in specialist teaching, paid for by primary sports funding. Consequently, all pupils are benefiting, and the school also has an increasingly successful record in competitive sport.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in helping pupils supported by the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to increase their skills in English and mathematics. The school provides extra support for some of these pupils in small groups, or as individuals, both inside and outside lessons.
- Teachers are very positive about the good opportunities the school provides for their own professional development. Some come from supporting each other, some from opportunities outside school, for example when working with teachers from schools in the local cluster.
- Teaching is not outstanding because there are still some variations in quality between classes, due to the different expectations of teachers. Occasionally there is limited challenge for more-able pupils.
- Pupils believe that they know how well they are doing and understand their targets. However, although teachers are conscientious in marking work and giving feedback, some of their comments are more helpful than others in showing them how to improve their work. Pupils in some classes are more likely to be made to act directly upon teachers' comments than in others.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school, which has a very positive reputation in the local community.
- Pupils are very keen to learn, so that lessons are full of purposeful activity. Relationships are excellent. The positive climate for learning underpins the good and improving achievement, beginning in Reception and continuing throughout the school.
- The parent support adviser has worked closely with several families to improve attendance. This has resulted in above average attendance, which is also reflected in pupils' obvious enjoyment of the wide range of activities which the school offers. These include popular before-school and after-school clubs.
- The many sports and other clubs which the school provides have a high take up. All pupils from Year 2 onwards enjoy one of several residential trips.
- The school puts considerable emphasis on developing pupils' willingness to take on personal responsibility and involvement in community activities. There is an active school council. There is also a school parliament, with 'ministers' consulting with staff and playing a role in important activities such as the appointment of new staff, including a headteacher. Pupils take responsibility for lunchtime activities, support each other and help to draw up school policies.
- Pupils are very welcoming and polite to visitors. Parents comment on the 'lovely' ethos of the school. The school ensures equal opportunities for all and has successfully tackled the few issues of discrimination that existed in past years, such as those surrounding racist name calling.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school meets all safeguarding requirements. Parents and pupils confirm that pupils of all ages feel very safe and happy in school. The school teaches safety awareness in lessons, in assemblies and through

visits. Pupils understand the nature of bullying, but insist that it is not an issue.

- The school gives parents extensive information on how to support their children's well-being and learning. Each class has its own homework policy. There are regular newsletters. Parents are encouraged to come into school for assemblies and events designed to inform them about pupils' learning.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good, partly because school leaders have been very effective in carrying out changes smoothly, for example in a recent restructuring of the leadership team. Staff were unanimously positive in telling inspectors how they supported the leadership's drive for improvement.
- The leadership has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Its improvement plans focus on the right priorities.
- Senior leaders, subject leaders and year leaders all check the quality of teaching and learning regularly and are committed to improving both.
- One of several improvements since the previous inspection has been the development of a detailed system of assessment of each pupil's progress. This is discussed at pupil-progress meetings and making sure that all pupils get the support necessary to help them achieve well.
- The leadership ensures that all staff are held accountable, since pay and promotion are clearly linked to staff performance and pupils' progress. The leadership provides good opportunities, often in conjunction with local schools, for staff to develop their expertise.
- The partnerships with other schools are very productive for pupils as well as staff. For example, the school plans joint activities for more-able pupils with other local schools.
- The leadership works hard to give pupils a rich experience at school, for example through music. There is a range of exciting visits. Two foreign languages are taught. Sport is a developing strength, and the school has used its primary sport funding well to increase staff expertise in physical education and provide more opportunities for pupils.
- The local authority has had limited involvement in the school, because it recognises the school's strengths and its ability to generate improvement largely from its own resources.
- The school creates many opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. During the inspection, inspectors saw a very effective assembly on different forms of caring. Pupils eagerly take part in assemblies.
- Staff, parents and pupils are very complimentary about the school's leadership. The leadership and management have many strengths, including tackling all the key issues from the previous inspection. For example, the school has greatly improved outdoor learning for children in Reception.
- Leadership is not yet outstanding because some of the improvements to teaching and learning are not yet secure enough to have ironed out all inconsistencies, although this is clearly a school which has the capacity to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Inspectors met a large number of governors, because they were very keen to demonstrate their commitment to the school. The governing body is very active in visiting the school in various capacities, including going into lessons and talking to staff and pupils. Governors have a very good understanding of how well pupils do in relation to others in the country and how well they have progressed in the school. They are slightly optimistic about the strength of teaching overall, but do accept that there are a few areas of consistency which still need to be worked on. Governors were able to tell inspectors about the impact of additional funding on pupil progress and how pupils have benefited from developments in sports facilities and teaching. They have the confidence to challenge the leadership to explain its decisions, for example over the restructuring of the leadership team. Governors have a good understanding of their responsibilities to ensure good safeguarding and to oversee the process by which the school's performance is judged, including the way rewards to staff are linked to progress.

Governors benefit from good opportunities to develop their own professional expertise. They are rightly proud of the school and, like the staff and pupils, governors are determined both to maintain the school's strengths and build on them further.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111877
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	434613

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	382
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Moore
Headteacher	Mark Lees
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 June 2009
Telephone number	01872 263322
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