

Sir Robert Geffery's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137257
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	397458
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2012
Lead inspector	Kevin Jane HMI

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Poulton
Headteacher	Julie Curtis
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2009
School address	School Road Landrake Saltash PL12 5EA
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kevin Jane

Her Majesty's Inspector

Pauline Robins

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Teaching and learning were observed twice in all classes; smaller teaching groups were also observed and the inspectors heard four individual children read. In addition, discussions were held with groups of pupils, and parents and carers, six members of the governing body, the headteacher and most teachers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View questionnaire in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' performance, as well as the school improvement plan, minutes of the governing body meetings, school policies and curriculum planning documents. Questionnaire responses from 126 parent and carers, 25 staff and 116 pupils were also scrutinised.

Information about the school

The school was founded by the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers in 1704 and the company continues to provide Foundation Governors. It serves the village of Landrake and surrounding area and is average in size compared to all primary schools nationally. Since the last inspection the school has converted to academy status. The school has appointed new teachers and the number of pupils on roll has increased. Pupils are taught in seven classes, each containing a discrete age group. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals is lower than that found nationally. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action or with statements of special educational needs is below average. The school shares its site with a privately managed pre-school which also provides care for pupils before and after school. The school meets the current government floor standards in English and mathematics, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school holds a variety of accredited awards, including Active Sportsmark, Artsmark Gold, Healthy Schools, and the Eco Schools Green Flag award, among others.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school, fully realising its stated ambition to 'provide high quality teaching and learning, fulfilling the potential of its pupils and the needs of the community'. It is truly a 'school for enthusiasts' as the prospectus states. Although teaching is outstanding overall, in a minority of lessons pupils are not always given the opportunity to consolidate their knowledge and skills before moving on. Governors make a strong contribution through appropriate support and challenge although the latter element is less visible in published minutes of meetings.
- Senior leaders relentlessly pursue high standards and outstanding progress for all pupils, irrespective of ability or circumstance. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is significantly higher than that found nationally at the age of 11.
- The quality of teaching is typically outstanding because all staff have high expectations of pupils to succeed, not only in their academic work but also in their personal development. Well-organised lessons and assessment procedures ensure that all pupils make excellent progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. This makes a very strong contribution to the school as an exciting and extremely orderly learning community. The pupils respond well to curriculum and enrichment opportunities and take their responsibilities seriously. Relationships throughout the school are exceptional.
- The commitment from leaders and managers to continuous improvement is also exceptional. Priorities are founded on accurate and thorough self-evaluation and robust performance management of staff.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the quality of educational opportunity provided for their children. 'In my mind, Mrs Curtis and her team really show outstanding and exceptional commitment to the children's education' and 'an excellent school that cares about each child whilst making mine feel special' are typical of the very many positive comments reported and that accurately reflect the findings of this inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils are always given the opportunity to consolidate and fully understand their prior learning so that they can tackle new work more confidently and successfully.
- Governors should ensure that the appropriate levels of challenge exerted in holding the school to account for its performance are fully reflected in publicly available minutes of meetings.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most children start school with skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. Routines are understood securely as a result of well-balanced formal learning and play opportunities such as in the 'den making' area and in the outdoor garage. Pupils consistently make rapid and sustained progress so that by the age of seven, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above national averages. This rate of progress is accelerated through Key Stage 2 where attainment in English and mathematics has been consistently and significantly above national averages for the past three years. Attainment in reading at ages seven and 11 is well above national averages. The monitoring of individual pupils' progress is rigorous with expectations that all pupils will make better than expected rates of progress relative to their starting points. Significant numbers of more-able pupils, in particular, attain even higher standards. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported particularly well with flexible support and intervention. Observations revealed that their progress is particularly good and exceeding that of similar pupils nationally. As a consequence, the great majority of pupils make excellent progress overall relative to their starting points.

Pupils are undoubtedly making excellent gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding throughout the school but an equally strong feature is the mature and positive attitudes pupils have towards their learning. The wide range of curricular and enrichment opportunities provided for them means that all pupils can flourish and, consequently, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is fully appreciated by parents and carers; the great majority report their children are achieving well and that as parents and carers, they feel fully involved in their education.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching observed in the school is typically good and frequently

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outstanding, including that for pupils who require additional help. During a typical week at the school, and over time, pupils experience a rich and varied curriculum which attends extremely well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents and carers are also exceptionally positive in their views about the quality of teaching which reflect the findings of this inspection.

The systematic attention to the teaching of letters and sounds for the younger children, and the development of reading skills and comprehension as pupils progress through the school, mean that the great majority of pupils are confident, fluent and expressive readers. This, combined with a priority to develop pupils' writing capability in other subjects, means that literacy skills are well established and account for the high standards reached at age 11.

The characteristics that account for this highly positive picture include teachers' high expectations for pupils to tackle challenging tasks, which are usually well matched to ability levels. The planning of work is thorough and imaginative; tasks engage and motivate pupils and promote very positive attitudes to learning. The staff use their very good subject knowledge to excellent effect in explaining or informing complex content. This was evident when an older age group class were discussing salaries and deductions as part of a personal finance education programme which enabled pupils to build on their prior awareness to acquire new knowledge and successfully interrogate payslips. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, expert modelling by the teacher drew on children's prior learning to achieve written work which was grammatically correct, punctuated and spelled correctly. A strong feature was the successful encouragement to use interesting and varied vocabulary in their writing. In a mathematics lesson for younger pupils in Key Stage 2, pupils responded very positively to the excellent teaching. They used a variety of strategies to convert fractions to their decimal equivalent, applied themselves to the task and were not daunted by the level of challenge to make very good progress in manipulating numbers in a single lesson.

On occasion, pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to consolidate their knowledge and understanding securely so that they can respond to demanding tasks more successfully. However, a consistently strong feature of teaching is the quality of assessment of learning. The marking of work is thorough and informs pupils how well they have achieved against the learning objectives and what they need to do next to improve. Frequently, pupils reflect personally on their work or that of their friends, offering critical insight on their learning. Formal observations of the youngest children in their play activities, the frequent opportunity to discuss in 'T-Time' (talk time) and routine strategies applied in the classroom to check understanding, enable adults to be secure in their understanding of pupils' progress, which informs the next steps in learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. The response from pupils, parents and carers is overwhelmingly positive in their praise for the school in

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securing a typically safe and orderly community where pupils show respect for each other and the adults who work with them. Pupils have a secure awareness of the different forms of bullying and know how to prevent and tackle such incidents. Bullying is rare, but when it occurs, is dealt with efficiently and effectively. Relationships between all in the school community are exceptionally positive so that pupils know who to go to if they feel troubled; they are confident knowing that they will be listened to and that issues raised will be resolved. The 'can-do' culture in the school supports and builds pupils' confidence. Their positive attitudes to challenges in lessons and wider enrichment opportunities make a significant contribution to the schools' high academic achievement and pupils' personal development. In classrooms and in the outdoor spaces there is a safe and harmonious atmosphere. All pupils work and cooperate with each other very well, including the youngest children. Pupils are respectful and considerate towards each other in lessons and around the school because adults have high expectations of good behaviour and a strong commitment to the inclusion of all. As a result, pupils show high levels of self-discipline, respond well to the rewards system and understand the sanctions of unacceptable behaviour.

The school is highly vigilant in attending to the safety and well-being of pupils through lessons and other opportunities, such as curriculum themed weeks on this aspect. Pupils are taught very well to recognise unsafe situations, including those related to e-safety, and how to keep themselves safe. The findings of the inspection are also confirmed by the views of parents, carers and pupils in their survey responses, which were extremely positive.

The school's open door policy at the commencement of the school day reinforces that the school is at the heart of its community, and is no barrier to an efficient and prompt start. Lessons start punctually at all times of the day. Attendance is above average and has been improving over the last three years because the school encourages and expects good attendance and monitors this carefully. Pupils reported that their attendance is so good because 'we don't want to miss anything!'

Leadership and management

Senior leaders are relentless in their ambition to improve pupils' achievement and continuously improve the quality of teaching. The high degree of success in this is shown in the academic achievement and personal development of all pupils. Pupils' performance data are used very effectively to ensure that all pupils' needs are provided for and met, and that support is provided to address any potential for underachievement. This, together with the accurate monitoring of teachers' performance, contributes to effective performance management and in identifying priorities for school improvement and further professional development. New or recently appointed teachers are extremely well supported so that the start of their careers is a highly positive one. Professional development has helped to secure outstanding quality teaching across the school. A cohesive and motivated staff team has been created and all fully subscribe to the school's aims and vision. This has resulted in significant and continuing improvement in whole-school performance over time. Importantly, the school is a fully inclusive one with a strong focus on each and

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every child and their individual needs. The promotion of equality is exceptionally strong and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

The governing body also makes a strong contribution to highly effective leadership and management. Governors' commitment to supporting the strategic direction of the school, their involvement in setting priorities for improvement, and their role in monitoring and providing challenge, are all very effective. Governors are successful in holding the school to account for its performance because they are very well informed. However, this is not always publicly visible in published minutes of the various meetings.

The school's curriculum is exceptional in its imaginative organisation and delivery, utilising the specialist expertise of staff, particularly in Key Stage 2. All pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. This secures coverage of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and aligns subjects into themes and topics which motivate and engage the older pupils. Particularly good attention is paid to applying knowledge and skills in English, particularly writing, and mathematics in their thematic work. Curriculum enrichment is provided through designated time during the week for a wide range of musical, sporting, artistic and craft activity, including the Forest School initiative and attending to the school farm. This also serves to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and is evident in the high quality displays around the school.

Partnership and engagement with parents and carers are also excellent and shown in the very high number of parent and carer questionnaires returned for this inspection. The full confidence and support shown towards the school is reflected in the very high rate of positive responses and by those few parents who spoke personally with inspectors.

Arrangements for securing the safety and welfare of pupils are highly effective.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



29 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sir Robert Geffery's Primary School, Saltash PL12 5EA

I would like to thank you for being so helpful to us when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking with you in lessons about your work, how well you are learning and how much you enjoy school. You are clearly extremely proud of your school and I think you are absolutely right to be so! We are very pleased to report that our inspection found that Sir Robert Geffery's is an outstanding school and here are some of the things we were particularly impressed with.

- Mrs Curtis is leading the school exceptionally well and all the staff are working very hard to make sure you all have every opportunity to improve in your school work and in your personal development.
- You are consistently reaching high standards and making very good progress in your school work. Well done to everyone for working hard and for your very positive attitudes to your work!
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you are a great credit to your school.
- You have wonderful opportunities to extend your knowledge and understanding of the world around you and this is helping you to develop as young people. We particularly enjoyed hearing and seeing for ourselves all the wonderful opportunities you have in and out of school, including your farm.
- We appreciated how you have opportunities to contribute to make the school even better and how you take your responsibilities seriously. We hope that your cake sale raised lots of money to help your friends in Uganda! The cakes were delicious!
- You told us that the adults look after you very well and keep you safe and we fully agree with you.

To make sure the school remains outstanding we have asked Mrs Curtis and the teachers to ensure that when you are presented with hard tasks, you fully understand and practise your skills so you are ready to respond to the challenge and can be successful. You can help here by letting the teachers know if you don't always fully understand what you are asked to do. We have also asked the governors to make sure that they fully record in the notes of their meetings their discussions that make your school the outstanding place it is to enjoy learning.

Congratulations to the school for being outstanding. It was a pleasure to inspect your school and observe all the exciting things you do. We wish you all continuing success and hope that all the older children who are leaving soon will enjoy the move to their new schools and the new challenges they bring.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Jane
Her Majesty's Inspector

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