

St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School

Polhearne Way, Brixham, Devon TQ5 0EE

Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Significant staff turbulence has hampered the progress of the school. It has affected the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. At times, expectations of pupils are not high enough to develop learning effectively. This is particularly so in mathematics, and for most-able pupils.
- Pupils' progress varies across subjects and year groups. Pupils' skills in spelling and punctuation are not consistently well-developed. This is weakening pupils' progress in writing.
- This is an improving school. However, a legacy of underachievement means that too many pupils are not ready for the next stage of their education.
- Children in the early years have not secured the necessary learning behaviours that enable them to make strong progress. Too often, children do not challenge themselves and staff do not plan activities that motivate them to reach their full potential.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has ensured that staff and leaders share her passion for improvement.
- Equality of opportunity is a strength. Effective systems and provision ensure that pupils who find learning difficult are well supported.
- Staff are highly motivated and determined to secure further improvements. They work well together, and morale is high.
- Initiatives to improve teaching and pupils' progress are having a positive impact. This is leading to stronger outcomes than seen in the past.
- The interim academy board (IAB) has been effective in raising standards across the school. The new governing body is taking shape and is being well supported by the IAB.
- The curriculum is broad and rich, particularly in developing pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development and the arts.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure teachers:
 - use what they know about what pupils can already do to match work with greater accuracy so that pupils are sufficiently challenged, particularly the most able in mathematics
 - insist that pupils' spelling and punctuation are accurate and contribute to improving the quality of writing.
- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - ensuring that the new local governing body develop their roles, so that they are knowledgeable and are able to provide effective challenge to hold leaders to account
 - making sure the quality of teaching is consistently strong across the school.
- Improve outcomes for all groups of pupils, by:
 - accelerating pupils' progress so that pupils who need to catch up are in line with the national figures by the end of key stage 2
 - increasing the rates of progress that pupils make in writing and mathematics, particularly most-able pupils, so that larger proportions achieve the higher standards of learning by the end of key stage 2.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching and provision in the early years, by:
 - providing opportunities which help children to foster strong attitudes to learning, so that they are well prepared for Year 1
 - plan activities which sustain children's interests and challenge all children to reach their full potential.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her arrival, the headteacher has worked relentlessly to bring about rapid improvement. She has established a shared commitment from all staff to improve the quality of education on offer and ensure stronger outcomes for pupils. As a result, standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection and continue to rise.
- Leaders have brought about significant improvements to pupils' attendance, particularly for pupils who were persistently absent from school. Initiatives to improve the quality of teaching are also taking shape and having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders and the IAB have effective strategic plans to continue to improve the school further. Development plans make clear what needs to improve, how this will come about, and how leaders will measure the impact. Regular monitoring by the IAB has ensured that plans meet their desired intentions. This has ensured a positive trajectory of improvement.
- Middle leaders share a determined passion for further improvement and demonstrate good subject knowledge of their areas of expertise. Leaders responsible for English and mathematics have taken effective action to bring about improvement to the quality of teaching in their subjects. This has resulted in a positive trend for pupils' outcomes.
- Staff morale is high. Staff speak positively of the new headteacher and typically report that they feel supported and empowered. They said, 'Everybody is on the bus on a journey together and the school is unrecognisable from two years ago.' They are wholeheartedly in support of the school's leaders.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to respect others and appreciate diversity. For example, the school takes positive steps to invite members of other cultures into the school to share their religion and faith with pupils.
- The school promotes pupils' understanding of British values effectively. Leaders foster the principles of democracy well. For example, elections are held to select members of the school council. Pupils must demonstrate that they are positive role models for further leadership roles in the school. Mutual respect and tolerance permeate the school between pupils and staff.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders review the curriculum on offer to ensure that it meets pupils' needs. Pupils told the inspector that they enjoy the curriculum more now than previously. Particularly impressive is the quality of art. The school uses an art expert to teach the pupils and the impact of her work is clear to see throughout the school.
- Pupils also enjoy the extra curriculum on offer. They speak favourably about the opportunities that they have to learn about a wide range of musical instruments through visits to the school. They also speak positively about the wide range of after-school activities such as dodgeball, and opportunities to further their developments in the arts.

- Leaders use the primary physical education and sport premium funding well to develop pupils' physical skills and enjoyment of exercise. Staff undertake training from more experienced colleagues to improve their knowledge and skills. Pupils participate in a vast range of tournaments and festivals and are exposed to a range of alternative sports such as, tri-golf, ultimate frisbee and mini-tennis.
- The additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used effectively. Leaders review the support often and adapt it to continually meet pupils' needs. Leaders have invested in provision to promote pupils' achievement, respect and character (ARC). In the ARC, pupils have specialist support throughout the day that ensures they reach their full potential. The ARC is a very warm, nurturing and caring environment that enables pupils to flourish, regardless of their background or ability. Equality is a strength of the school.
- The trust has provided intense and effective support during the period of instability. However, as leaders establish a more stable footing, the support has steadily been removed. Leaders demonstrate that the additional support from within the trust is no longer necessary. This is because the school is improving rapidly.
- Parents are very positive about the leadership of the school. One parental comment that is typical of many, was: 'The school has been on a significant journey since the last inspection. It is a very different place. The strong leadership and development of the children's passion and enthusiasm for learning are clear to see. This is a fabulous school.'
- Leaders ensure that they spend pupil premium funding appropriately. Although small in number in some classes, most disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to that of their peers. Improvements to teaching are showing signs of increased rates of progress for these pupils. However, differences in progress between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are not diminishing quickly enough.
- Since the previous inspection the school has experienced significant turbulence in staffing which has hampered the pace of improvement. This has had a negative impact on the leadership of teaching. Although, not yet fully resolved, staffing is more stable.

Governance of the school

- The IAB knows the school well. This is because of members' relentless monitoring and evaluations. Minutes of meetings show that governors ask pertinent and challenging questions to hold leaders to account for the quality of the provision. They are aware of how additional funding is spent and the impact that this is having on pupils' outcomes.
- They have ensured that all of their statutory responsibilities are met, including safeguarding of pupils.
- At the time of the inspection the IAB has started to implement plans to hand over responsibility of governance to a newly formed local governing body.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Record-keeping is robust. All staff, including governors, receive regular up-to-date training in safeguarding. During the inspection the inspector checked a

random sample of staff's knowledge of: child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, neglect and female genital mutilation. Staff are familiar with signs of vulnerability and know the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a pupil.

- Pupils who spoke with the inspector are adamant that they are safe in school. This view was shared by the very large proportion of parents who completed Ofsted's survey, Parent View.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, the quality of teaching varies across year groups and subjects. This is because leaders have not been able to establish stable teaching staff. However, now that the teaching profile is more stable, teaching is improving. Nevertheless, weak teaching has meant that some pupils are not ready for the next stage of their education.
- In some classes teachers' expectations for pupils' learning are not high enough. Where they are too low, pupils' learning is not deepened effectively as work does not provide sufficient challenge. For example, in a key stage 2 mathematics lesson most-able pupils finished their tasks very quickly because the work was too easy. Work in pupils' books in other year groups confirm that pupils are not always being stretched and challenged to achieve their full potential.
- The teaching of writing is improving. Pupils learn to write for purpose and show an increasing confidence across a range of genres. Leaders have successfully motivated pupils to write for purpose through an online platform that publishes pupils' writing. However, weaknesses in writing remain. This is because some pupils have not secured the required knowledge or skills to be able to write to a standard that would be expected for their age. This is because some pupils do not have the necessary spelling and punctuation skills. This hampers the progress they make.
- Leaders have successfully secured pupils' love of reading. They have invested in new reading materials and changed the approach to reading. This is having a positive impact on pupils across the school. Pupils are motivated to read and demonstrate enthusiasm to read. During the inspection, pupils who read with the inspector read texts that were age appropriate and closely matched to their ability. They read well, using a range of skills that have been thoroughly taught. Pupils told the inspector that they like the changes to the approach to reading, particularly the new books.
- Phonics is well taught. Teaching sessions ensure that pupils are focused and that they build their skills effectively and systematically. This enables pupils to apply their skills in reading and writing. Pupils who the inspector observed reading showed good skills in applying their phonic knowledge to unfamiliar words.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. A very large majority of pupils who responded to the pupil survey say they enjoy school. They

relish the leadership opportunities that are on offer to them, such as class chaplains, play leaders, councillors and eco leaders. They say that their actions have contributed to improving the school as positive role models.

- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that staff teach them how to stay safe. Pupils know how to stay safe on the internet and what action to take if they feel vulnerable. Visits to the school by external agencies, such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children further develops pupils' understanding of how to stay safe both inside and outside of school.
- There is a real focus to raise pupils' aspirations. For example, leaders organised a careers fair to immerse pupils in the school's vision of 'dream, believe, achieve'. A wide range of professionals visited the school to share how they have an impact on society. This contributes to pupils' motivation to learn.
- Pupils show respect for each other. They cooperate well together and listen carefully to each other's ideas and views. They understand what bullying means and the difference between bullying and falling-out. A large proportion of pupils who responded to the pupil survey reported that bullying does happen, but adults are quick to sort it out. During the inspection, pupils who spoke with the inspector are adamant that bullying does not take place. They do say that staff are quick to resolve any concerns they have.
- Pupils are taught well about other cultures and faiths. To celebrate diversity within the community, parents are invited to celebrations that other faiths and cultures hold. This supports pupils in being prepared for life in modern Britain.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons, moving around the school and at social times. Pupils who spoke with the inspector reported that on rare occasions behaviour can be disruptive. They also said that behaviour has improved significantly over recent years. This view is also echoed by a large proportion of pupils and parents who completed the surveys.
- Leaders have worked hard to establish appropriate behaviour for learning. They have continually refined and developed their systems and policies to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The most recent records show a significant decline in recorded behaviour incidents. This is because staff manage inappropriate behaviour well and provide effective provision for pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly as a result of the school's concerted efforts. Introductions of rewards and celebrations have had a positive impact on pupils' attendance. Current pupils' attendance is now in line with the national average and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is well below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, published information indicates that pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 is weak, particularly in writing and mathematics. Nevertheless, it does show that leaders' actions are having a positive impact and progress is improving.

The work in current pupils' books and learning that was observed indicate that this positive trend of improvement is set to continue.

- Since 2017, attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes pupils attaining the higher standards. Although improving for current pupils, this is set to continue in writing and mathematics.
- Over time, key stage 1 attainment has been broadly average in reading. However, attainment in mathematics and writing has been well below the national average. This is a similar picture for pupils attaining a greater depth. In 2018, no pupils attained a greater depth in reading, writing or mathematics. This is because in some lessons pupils are not challenged to reach their full potential.
- As a result of leaders' actions to improve reading, current pupils are making stronger progress than in writing and mathematics. Scrutiny of pupils' books and learning observed shows that progress in writing and mathematics is improving as the quality of teaching in these subjects improve. However, weaknesses still remain.
- Pupils' progress in other subjects is good. This is because pupils enjoy the wider curriculum and learning about topics that engage them. For example, the whole school is learning about the impact of plastic waste on the environment and how this affects the ocean. Pupils were keen to share their knowledge of the impact on the environment with the inspector.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum provides pupils with every opportunity to develop their English and mathematics skills further. An example of this is where pupils in Years 2 and 3 have written letters to the South African people, portraying Nelson Mandela's plight. A further example is in Year 6, where pupils have used data and statistics to measure and study rainfall in other countries from around the world.
- The progress of pupils with SEND has been variable in the past. Current pupils are making stronger progress from their starting points. This is because the support and provision these pupils receive is effective and is having a positive impact on their progress.
- Overall, disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving. Their progress has been similar to that of non-disadvantaged pupils. Current pupils' progress is improving rapidly and there are strong signs that differences in progress between these pupils and other pupils nationally are beginning to diminish.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children join the Reception class with skill levels that are generally below those typical for their age. Staffing turbulence has had a significant impact on the children. Since September 2018, there have been three teachers in post. This has had a detrimental impact on establishing routines and expectations for learning.
- The current postholder has been in post since February 2019 and is a specialist leader of early years education. She has quickly established the strengths and the areas that require further improvement and swiftly put plans in place to improve the performance

of the provision. Although improvements are clearly evident in terms of the outside provision, it is too early to see any discernible impact on children's outcomes.

- The early years outcomes have been in line with or above the national average for the last two years. However, this is not a clear reflection of the provision. This is because the number of children leaving the Reception Year is small and varies from year to year. Nevertheless, information provided by the school indicates that outcomes for children leaving the Reception class at the end of 2019 will be below the national average.
- Over time, too much teaching has been ineffective, and this has weakened children's progress. The current teaching is much stronger, and children are catching up quickly. However, not all children have established positive behaviours and attitudes to learning. Too often, children will not challenge themselves and lack resilience and perseverance needed with more-challenging tasks. They are not able to maintain sustained periods of concentration and move from activity to activity.
- Current staff question children well to develop their thinking and build on their learning. For example, children were searching for missing lollipop sticks numbered to 20 in the sand pit. Staff encouraged children to recognise the numbers and place the sticks in the sand in order.
- Children are safe in their surroundings. They use equipment, such as scissors, safely and dress themselves appropriately when engaging in water-based activities. The vast majority of children behave well.
- Staff work well with parents. They provide parents with plenty of opportunities to share their children's learning journey and to support their children at home.
- Leaders recognise the need to improve the assessment system for children in the Reception class. Plans are underway to enable assessment to be even more effective.
- The provision meets all statutory welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	140768
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10058290

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	108
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Burnett
Headteacher	Finola Gill
Telephone number	01803 851647
Website	www.margaret-clitherow-primary.torbay.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@smcprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	23–24 February 2017

Information about this school

- St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school and is part of the Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust. The trust was formed in April 2014. The work of the trust is overseen by a board of directors. The trust is responsible for one nursery, one first school, 32 primary schools and two secondary schools across six local authorities in the south-west region.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including with an education, health and care plan, is above the national average.

- The school is designated as having a religious character and received its section 48 inspection in May 2019, when the school was graded as good.
- The headteacher has been in post since February 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in classes across the school. All observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. He also observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at social times.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND, early years and a sample of support and teaching staff.
- The inspector held a meeting with two governors, including the chair of the interim academy board.
- The inspector spoke with pupils formally and informally during their break and lunchtimes and in class. He also listened to groups of pupils read.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including minutes of meetings of the interim academy board, the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- The inspector examined a large sample of pupils' books from across the school.
- The inspector spoke with a sample of parents as they arrived at school. He also considered 48 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, two responses to the staff survey and the 53 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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