

Inspection of a good school: Weeth Community Primary School

Holman Avenue, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 7GA

Inspection dates:

9–10 January 2020

Outcome

Weeth Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told me that their well-being and safety is the 'number one priority'. This is seen in the positive relationships that exist throughout the school. Many parents say that they value the 'nurturing, family environment' that the school provides. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They say that teachers will listen to them during 'bubble time'. There is a 'worry box' to report anything that concerns them.

Leaders have worked hard to create the conditions needed for pupils to learn. Pupils' behaviour has improved, and attendance is slowly getting better. Pupils, for example, look forward to attending the 'Mad Hatter's tea party' and like to receive rewards in 'classopoly' when their attendance improves.

Leaders are now equally determined to ensure that pupils reach their academic potential. Leaders are disappointed with the progress that pupils made by the end of Year 6 in 2019, particularly in reading and mathematics. They understand the reasons for this and have plans in place to improve.

Staff are keen to help pupils broaden their experience and view of the world. They want pupils to understand their Cornish heritage through activities such as the singing project at Kresen Kernow. Staff also encourage pupils to consider what is happening in the world and discuss moral questions.

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

Leaders have begun to plan what pupils need to learn and when. Staff understand the need to create the small steps to help pupils build up their knowledge over the longer term. Subjects such as geography and science have more detailed plans in place. For example, pupils in key stage 2 are enthusiastic about discussing the population of local towns. Pupils in key stage 1 are keen to find photographs of places in the countries of the

United Kingdom. Nonetheless, pupils' understanding of the geographical knowledge that underpins this is not secure. Pupils have gaps in their understanding because the curriculum has not been well planned in the past. Consequently, pupils are not able to retain new information, even in the shorter term.

In other subjects, including in the early years, the planning for what pupils will learn is at an earlier stage. Subject leaders have the necessary knowledge but are largely new to their roles. They are working with leaders from across the multi-academy trust to develop subject plans so that they can lead their areas with rigour.

Reading is now a priority. The library has been reorganised to guide pupils to choose a broader selection of books. Pupils say that teachers expect them to read independently. Pupils enjoy the novels that they read together in class. Increasingly, teachers select texts carefully and think about how they can use these to support pupils to become better readers.

The introduction of a structured phonics scheme is pivotal to this. From when children begin in Reception, teachers follow an agreed approach. There is now a higher expectation of what children can do. However, there is still variability in how effective this approach is in helping pupils learn to read.

In mathematics, staff have benefited from training on how to teach the curriculum. However, teaching does not always ensure that pupils understand what they have learned before moving on. Children in the early years practise recognising numbers and sequences. However, the plan to link this to key stage 1 is still developing. While pupils have regular opportunities to practise their problem-solving skills, they are not always able to explain how they have reached their conclusions.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. The special educational needs coordinator has experience and expertise. Pupils with complex needs are cared for by skilled teaching assistants who meet the academic needs of such pupils well. Staff know even the smallest steps that pupils have made and so can see more clearly where gaps exist.

Pupils' work in physical education helps them understand how to stay fit and healthy. Pupils were keen to show me their gymnastic skills and were proud to have represented the school in the regional finals. More widely, pupils consider issues that are important to their personal development. They are now better able to manage their emotions and to cope when things do not go to plan.

Staff are highly supportive of the school. They understand the priorities and apply these. For example, many staff support pupils to form patterns of conversation correctly.

Governors are the 'eyes and ears' of the school. They work positively with trust leaders. However, governors do not look closely enough at whether the additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils is working.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that effective systems are in place to report safeguarding issues. Staff have received training and so know what to be vigilant for. They know how to report concerns. They are confident that these will be followed up swiftly and appropriately.

Leaders are aware of pupils who are considered to be vulnerable. Leaders advocate well for their interests, challenging decisions made by external agencies when necessary. Leaders work effectively with families. Initiatives, such as 'breakfast buddies', ensure that all pupils are ready for the day ahead.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders, many of whom are new in post, are keen and determined. However, they have not yet fully planned the curriculum so that pupils can build on what they have done before. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Senior leaders need to continue to ensure that curriculum leaders have the right support to continue this work.
- Leaders are developing the curriculum in reading and mathematics so that it is coherent and ambitious. Curriculum leaders now need to check that the curriculum is taught well so that pupils remember what they have learned and make better progress as a result.
- Governors know the school well but are less clear about the impact of strategies to support disadvantaged pupils. Such pupils do not achieve or attend as well as their peers. Governors need to ensure that the evaluation of the impact of additional funding is more precise.

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, Weeth Community Primary School, to be good in March 2016.

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 the school and 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	143447
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10122363
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	193
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Hosking
Headteacher	Charlene Sargent
Website	www.weeth.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In March 2017, Weeth Community Primary school became part of Crofty Multi-Academy Trust. This Trust consists of nine primary schools.
- The Headteacher was appointed substantively to this post in in March 2019. There have been several changes to senior leadership and to subject leadership roles since.
- The school uses alternative provision provided by Nine Maidens Academy, part of Wave Multi-Academy Trust.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer and the school improvement officer from the multi-academy trust. She also met with representatives from the local governing body, senior leaders and a group of staff.
- The inspector did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. She discussed the curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited.
- The inspector evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding, checked the school's single central record and scrutinised policies relating to safeguarding and pupils' behaviour. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads and reviewed a sample of

case files.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. She spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their school.
- The inspector considered 36 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 17 additional free-text responses.
- The inspector took into account 22 responses from staff to the questionnaire issued at the beginning of the inspection.

Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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