

Inspection of St Hilary School

School Lane, St Hilary, Penzance, Cornwall TR20 9DR

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Robin Hamshar. The school is part of Leading Edge Academies Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Kelley Butcher, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jackie Anne Eason, MBE.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Hilary School is welcoming and inclusive. Pupils are respectful to adults and their peers alike. One pupil said, 'everyone is kind here'. The school's values support pupils to develop positive friendships and to learn well. They like earning their 'school badges' and are proud members of the school community.

The school empowers pupils to be the best that they can be. Pupils are keen to meet the expectations that the school has for them, both in their learning and broader development. Older pupils fully embrace the opportunity that they have to become an elected member of the school parliament. They take writing their election speeches and subsequent responsibilities seriously.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn about, and engage with, their local community. For example, some pupils found out about careers and employment by talking to local villagers about their jobs. Pupils also enjoy attending the variety of extra-curricular clubs on offer, which range from sporting clubs to choir, art and British sign language.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. Important knowledge and vocabulary for pupils to learn are carefully identified. The school has further enhanced this offer through the thoughtful use of technology. This enables pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to learn with independence and develop resilience. However, in some subjects, the curriculum has undergone recent developments. As a result, the teaching of these subjects is not yet consistent. This can sometimes hamper how well pupils learn.

The school has a steadfast focus on reading. Through developing the school library to regular reading of class novels, staff support pupils to develop a love of reading. In the Reception class, children read stories with their friends in their inviting book area. The school has also considered a range of authors and texts that celebrate their local heritage.

The school's newly introduced phonics curriculum is well thought out. Children learn the sounds that letters make as soon as they start school in the Reception Year. Staff make regular checks on how well pupils can read and provide additional help to those pupils who might need it.

Pupils enjoy learning. Most pupils meaningfully engage in their lessons and with class projects. For example, in geography, pupils benefit from regular fieldwork activities. The school considers how to check what pupils know and remember in their current learning. Pupils complete quizzes to remind them of important knowledge which they recently learned. However, this is not yet fully considered over longer periods of time or between units of work. Sometimes this hinders pupils'

recall of the important knowledge and vocabulary they need to deepen and make links in their learning.

The school supports pupils to understand how they should behave. Classrooms are calm places for pupils to learn in. From the very beginning of school, children in Reception learn important routines and how to play well with others. Pupils who need support to manage their feelings and emotions, including some pupils with SEND, receive timely support from staff. The school ensures that all pupils get the help they need, when they need it.

Pupils' broader development is at the heart of the school's work. Staff support pupils to have high aspirations for future learning and beyond. The school implements the personal, social and health education curriculum well. Pupils learn what they need to know about relationships, personal safety and physical health. Pupils also learn about, and respect, different families and people. They understand that equity, one of their school values, is important so that 'people get the help that they need'. The school fully supports pupils to nurture their talents and interests. Many pupils learn to play a musical instrument throughout their time in school.

The trust and school are unwavering in their approach to school improvement. Leaders, at all levels, understand their roles and responsibilities and fulfil them with pride. The school engages with the parental community meaningfully. This enables families to feel well supported, fully informed and listened to. Similarly, staff are overwhelmingly positive about the care and support they receive from the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Where the curriculum is new, implementation of these subjects is not yet as effective as the more established subjects. This means that pupils do not always learn the curriculum as intended. The school and the trust should ensure that the teaching of all curriculum subjects is consistent, so pupils learn more.
- In some subjects, the school has not considered how to check what pupils remember over time. As a result, pupils can struggle to recall important vocabulary and knowledge to enable them to make deeper connections in their learning. The school and the trust need to ensure that the checks made on how well pupils learn lead to them knowing and remembering more over time.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136879
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10256682
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jackie Anne Eason, MBE
CEO of the trust	Kelley Butcher
Headteacher	Robin Hamshar
Website	www.st-hilary.eschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Leading Edge Academies Partnership.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with the chief

executive officer (CEO) of the trust and the primary lead. She met with the vice chair of the trust board and representatives from the local academy council.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils throughout the inspection to gauge their views of the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Donna Briggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Barton

Ofsted Inspector

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