



Liz Brand Education Consultant

School Monitoring Visit Spring Term 2019 VENTURE MAT

School: St Issey C of E Primary School

CEO: Sean Powers

Head of School: Chris Parham

Date of visit: 11th February 2019

Date of report: 13th February 2019

Context:

- The school was inspected by Ofsted in November 2016 when Personal Development, Behaviour and Safety and Early Years were found to be good and all other areas including Overall Effectiveness required improvement.
- The school appointed an interim Head of School who has in turn been on maternity leave and more recently decided to return to her substantive post at Trevithick Academy. Consequently the school has a new Head of School, in post temporarily since Easter 2018 and now a permanent appointment.
- On 1st October 2018 St. Issey converted to an academy and officially joined Venture MAT which had been supporting the school since the inspection. A new Local Governing Board was elected on 29th November 2018 and a new Chair appointed in January 2019.
- St Issey is a much smaller than average school but with a growing roll. The current number has increased to 59, a 40% increase since the inspection. There are 11 pupils in the current Year 6 cohort and at least 10 coming in to Reception in September. The school also has a Foundation Unit where numbers have increased to 39 and include 2 year olds.
- The number of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium support is 14, an increase to 26% of the school population and children who have special educational needs are now 33% of the school. This and the increasing number on roll is having significant impact because of the lag in funding. Both percentages are above national average.
- Children are currently taught in the Foundation Unit and two other classes. There have been some recent changes made within Foundation Unit as numbers continue to grow and the nursery and reception children have some separate areas in which to pursue their learning.
- A sensory area has also been set up for a pupil with individual needs. He also has a newly appointed Teaching assistant 1:1.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school; this is indicated by a wide variety of positive comments on the school's interactive media page from both longstanding families and new parents. A parent survey in the autumn term gained almost 100% positive responses and the vast majority of families responded.
- Community work is also a strength with the garden club which recently won a high profile competition and other links with St Issey, Padstow and the surrounding area.



- All pupils can enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum with residential visits, extended opportunities for outdoor learning, educational trips, music, a wide range of PE, sport and competitions and the Venture 60 set of ideas for adventurous activities for children to take part in while they are pupils at the school. There are many after school activities provided, currently all free of charge and the school has access to a community minibus with only a requirement to pay for fuel.
- Safeguarding: the school now has 'Safeguard My School', linked to SIMS, an online safeguarding programme accessible to all staff for reporting and the teaching staff for analysis. Only the nursery use the yellow forms as before as the nursery children are not on SIMS. This is proving successful so far.
- A new website is on the point of launch and will provide an exciting platform for the school.

This visit consisted of:

- Context update with the CEO and Head of School.
- Data trawl.
- Document sampling including the SEF and School Improvement Plan, governor reports and formats and a briefing document sent in advance.
- Learning Walks across the school accompanied by the Head of School.
- Book sampling.
- Pupil conferencing.
- Sampling of teachers' planning.
- A meeting with the Head of School and a governor.

Feedback was given to the Head of School and visiting Governor at the end of the day.

Leadership and Management

- The Head of School has been permanently employed since the end of the autumn term and the recent planned maternity leave of one of the Key Stage 1 job share teachers from the end of this term has resulted in him having no class based teaching this term. The time has been used to ensure all systems and documentation are in place and to support the other classes where possible.
- He was well prepared for the visit and sent useful documentation in advance.
- The number on roll continues to increase and this has brought several challenges to school leaders. Many of the new joiners, including in the current Year 6 cohort, have significant needs, there has been an increase in number of disadvantaged pupils and class sizes are growing so that the Key Stage 2 class with Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils now numbers 28. The CEO, Head of School and governors have discussed the possibility of moving to three classes in the mornings if this increase continues.
- Assessment and the documentation of this is good. Robust systems in line with Venture MAT are in place and teachers ensure assessment is accurate, timely and gives a clear picture of pupils' knowledge and understanding. The process of providing interventions and checking on



pupils that require further support is rigorous and followed up regularly by the Head of School with teachers. It is clear from assessment data that the vast majority of pupils who have been in the school for the majority of their education are making the best progress.

- Members of the newly appointed local governing board know the school well, are supportive but also able to challenge and are aware of the potential difficulties that the rapid rise in numbers of pupils may generate. There is currently a vacancy for a clerk and the Head of School takes minutes of meetings.
- Governors have taken up training opportunities with further training planned.
- Senco: the Venture MAT Senco is about to go on maternity leave and this will leave an interim period with the Head of School in the lead role for all SEN pupils and no planned support at the current time. The SEN documentation is a strength - again this is all online and linked to SIMS so that staff can input data and add documents and parents have an email link to appropriate information. Provision mapping is all in place with individual profiles set up and plans revisited by teachers half termly.

Action points:

- Confirm support from Venture MAT for SEN work – this is essential for the continuing capacity of leadership especially when the Head of School returns to a 0.6fte teaching role.
- Link governor monitoring to school improvement priorities.
- Keep a log of governor training.
- Appoint a clerk for LGB meetings – it is inappropriate for the Head of School to be taking minutes.
- Ensure all data documents indicate numbers within reported cohorts.
- Ensure support continues for the Key Stage 2 class as much as possible to improve behaviour for learning and increase productivity and progress for pupils.
- Consider attending the Heads and Chairs briefing provided termly by the LA – this is open to academies and would be of particular value having a new Chair.

The Quality of Learning

There are some areas of excellent practice and where teaching is strong and effective the pupils are fully engaged in their learning and keen to explain it. The children involved in conferencing gave a clear picture of the support they have from adults in school with their learning – they know what to do to improve and have good support to manage this including 'show what you know', toolkits and effective feedback. There is also welcome challenge. They are articulate, considerate and really love their school. Those who had joined recently, although less confident could see the rapid improvement in their work and the difference that the support they are receiving is making.



Foundation Unit (Mini Diggers & Piskies)

- Provision and practice continues to be very strong.
- The Foundation manager is an excellent practitioner and leads her team well. She is able to liaise with colleagues within VMAT and use this shared time to continue to improve practice and moderate writing.
- The children experience seamless transitions as they move through the lower part of the school as practice across the piece is based on shared principles.
- Both the outdoor and indoor provision is set up to create a wealth of learning opportunities for all children and adults are sufficiently experienced to support this learning where necessary but also to stand back, question and encourage the development of independence.
- Helicopter stories have been in place for Reception pupils and are being introduced for the younger pupils too where appropriate. The manager reports this as a success area and within the work sampled, writing shows good progress.
- Outcomes for this age group are very good – GLD in line or better than national datasets.

Years 1/2/3 (Gnomes)

- The teacher observed (part of a job share) is enthusiastic, has good subject knowledge and fully understands how to support learning for all ability groups.
- Adults use high quality questioning to deepen learning and encourage independent thinking.
- Children are highly engaged and motivated to succeed.
- Marking is effective and moves learning forward. Considerable time is spent on this to ensure progression for all pupils.
- Teachers' planning is a strength and the two members of staff working in this class liaise exceptionally well to ensure the transition is smooth on handover each week. Planning is easily accessed on the shared site and the use of slides in all curriculum area ensures revisits are simple and planning can be adapted as required for future cohorts.
- The learning environment is bright and engaging with a good balance of pupil work and information. The story area is very inviting and provides a focal point for the story telling approach to writing.
- Outcomes are good – phonics screening results have been consistently above national averages for the last three years and Key Stage 1 results exceed national for reading and maths at expected levels.

Action points:

- Ensure teachers return to corrections and check spellings are corrected properly.
- Ensure the Teaching Assistant is deployed effectively throughout lessons to maximise learning for all pupils.



Years 4/5/6 (Elves)

- The teacher knows the ability of her pupils and is able to differentiate work successfully across all ages and abilities. She is very committed to improving outcomes and is running booster classes for Year 6 before school starts.
- The teaching assistant works very well with groups of pupils and provides strong support.
- Marking is exceptional – clearly this is very time consuming but it is effective in moving forward the children's learning.
- Some good resources were in use for example the wipe – clean decimal place mats for maths.
- The learning environment is appropriate for the age range and has improved examples of pupil work. Again the story area provides a focal point for the story telling approach to writing.

Action points:

- Improve classroom management and raise expectations of pupils' listening skills, and behaviour for learning to increase motivation, productivity and progress for pupils.
- Ensure adults develop deeper questioning skills to take learning to the next level.
- Ensure all spellings are corrected properly.

Summary

There is clear evidence that the journey of improvement continues with much good and some outstanding practice. The school is very popular locally and is attracting many new families with the nursery unit providing an excellent foundation. The influx of 'new joiners' is currently being managed but stakeholders realise that the school's reputation must continue to be recognised as excellent and this includes the ability to have relatively small classes. Hence the discussion of the possibility of another class which will have to be managed within budget confines. There are evident challenges including narrowing the attainment gap between 'new joiners' and pupils who have been at the school longer and managing an increasing roll of SEN pupils and the need for SENCo input. The lead teacher for the Year 1/2/3 class is about to go on maternity leave and the Head of School will be teaching 0.6fte. However, morale is strong, the Head of School is confident that this can be managed well and the children are an absolute delight – articulate, well behaved, polite and very supportive of their school and one another.

The support provided VMAT continues to be strong and the schools work together well with pupils and teachers having the benefit of this.