



Liz Brand Education Consultant

School Monitoring Visit Summer Term 2019 VENTURE MAT

School: St Issey C of E Primary School

CEO Sean Powers

Head of School (HoS) Chris Parham

Date of visit: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Date of report: 13<sup>th</sup> July 2019

**This visit consisted of:**

Context updates

Learning walks accompanied by the HoS including Book sampling.

Data trawl and standards discussion

Progress since the last visit

School Improvement Plan progress

Plans for next year

Pupil conferencing with five Year 6 pupils

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

**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 went on maternity leave and then returned to her substantive post at Trevithick Academy. A permanent Head of School, in post temporarily since Easter 2018 is now in place.
- On 1st October 2018 St. Issey converted to academy status and officially joined Venture MAT which had supported the school since 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 has had until recently a growing roll. The current number is now 55 with 11 pupils in the current Year 6 cohort leaving this term and 9 coming in to Reception in September. The school also has a Foundation Unit where numbers have increased to over 40 this year and include 2 year olds. Two children have moved away from the area and two are now electively home schooled – **advice given** to follow this up with the EWO.
- The number of pupils who attract Pupil Premium funding and the proportion of SEND children is above national.
- Children continue to be taught in the Foundation Unit and two other classes though there is a possibility that the school could increase to three classes in the future depending on growth. In 2020 – 21 for example there are likely to be 18 children in the Foundation Unit who would be eligible for Reception places.
- Community work continues to be a strength with the garden club and the local church being high profile and outdoor learning a focus for the coming academic year with considerable improvements to the outdoor learning areas. Many trees have been planted, a covered outdoor learning area built and the field has been marked for football and sports. This has helped to improve competitive sport and football matches have taken place for the first time in many years – popular with parents and pupils. The school has won a football tournament as a result of these opportunities and pupils are proud of this achievement.



**Advice given:** to ensure the requirements for outdoor learning opportunities and the extended use of the garden within curriculum time are clear for teachers and monitored on planning regularly by the HoS.

- All pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum with residential visits and trips, opportunities for outdoor learning, music, sport and competitions and the Venture 60 set of ideas for adventurous activities. Recently an after school dance club, paid for by parents, has been included and held a successful performance locally shared with other schools.
- The school works in partnership with Trevithick and there are opportunities to share educational visits, training, support and moderation. The phonics lead will be working with St Issey to transition phonics learning into good sentence structure and improve vocabulary and this is one of many intended areas for improvement over the coming year.

### Leadership and Management

- The HoS was well prepared for the visit and sent useful documentation in advance.
- He has settled in to his role at the school and is confident to make necessary changes and plan for the future.
- Staffing is still not completely established with a part time member of staff on maternity leave and as yet no definite plan for her return. The HoS currently teaches two days per week in the Year 1/2/3 class and the teacher in the Year 4/5/6 class is on a temporary contract. She is an excellent teacher and it is to be hoped that her services can be retained. The HoS has considered various possibilities as to how best to achieve stability but there is no possibility of agreeing a long term solution at the present time.
- Documentation is a strength with useful information provided for governors, a thorough review of the School Improvement Plan and progress against other areas from external visits and Ofsted.
- Assessment is robust and quality assured and this has enabled the school to plan for groups and individuals to close any gaps in learning. This has been particularly useful for new joiners, many who have come into St Issey with a history of slow progress.
- Almost all areas of the School Improvement Plan indicate good progress. Where this has not yet been achieved, it will form part of next year's improvement agenda.
- Progress has also been at least good on other areas suggested for development and this has impacted on the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- The Local Governing Board are still coming to terms with the change from being school governors but are supportive of the HoS and the school. Termly meetings are now clerked and the agenda will be tightly timed. The HoS is also preparing some changes to governor documentation including reporting after visits.

**Advice given:** to train governors with prompts as to where questions may be required to indicate robust challenge and have this minuted clearly by the clerk.

- The HoS is planning various changes for the coming year including the use of word books to aid spelling across the school as this remains a high profile area for development.
- In future writing the cold task will no longer be used and Talk for Writing will be retained for fiction genres but not for non-fiction. This will be reviewed half termly as part of the broader curriculum plan. Dedicated time will be planned for publishing final work. Maths will remain the same with continued maths hub training attended by the HoS and disseminated across the school.
- The HoS and all staff have been working on a topic based broad curriculum plan and have an outline for all year groups to ensure full National Curriculum coverage



and a theme based approach. Included in this will be planned opportunities for outdoor/forest school style learning.

- The school will use comparative judgement, a nation-wide scheme to aid moderation of writing. This has been trialled by the HoS.
- It is planned to relaunch the reading spine – **advice given** to put this in place before the end of term with incentives for families who take part.
- Best handwriting examples for all children are displayed on their tables to ensure continuous effort is made and the vast majority of books show pupils taking a pride in their work.
- The school has also invested in some excellent dictionaries and thesauri which in constant use by pupils. Plans are also in place to improve notice boards so that they provide a more natural learning environment.
- The structure of the day has been reviewed to ensure the very best use of learning time and the morning break has been shortened.
- Plans are in place for the 'Learning to Learn' week at the beginning of next term with a wide range of activities and opportunities for all.
- Middle leadership in this small school has not been a priority and all subjects have been led by the HoS. In future the KS2 teacher will attend the English hub meetings and take over the English lead for the school with the HoS as the only other full time member of staff retaining responsibility for maths.
- Leaders have ensured that the school is in a better place financially and the future looks positive in this respect with any deficit likely to be removed by the end of the next financial year, assuming no unexpected changes.

### Quality of Teaching and Learning

Standards – NB very small cohorts

- This year in EYFS the Good Level of Development is in line with national data as is the result of phonics screening for Year 1. Of the two pupils who were retested in Year 2, neither passed. Both are on the SEN register and one is in the process of having an EHCP submitted.
- In Key Stage 1 (7 pupils) at Expected level the school is close to national for reading and maths and more significantly below in writing. At Greater Depth the school data is higher than national in reading, significantly higher in writing and slightly lower in maths. Spelling still remains a focus at Key Stage 1.
- Key Stage 2 results do not compare as favourably with national datasets but represent very strong progress for most pupils especially across Year 6. The school's data shows that the percentage on track in reading rose from 36% at the beginning of the year to 64%, from 18% to 55% in writing (which was externally moderated with all judgements agreed) and from 18% to 64% in maths. Progress from Key Stage 1 is difficult to determine as Ofsted inspectors were clear that the KS1 data at the time was flawed. Out of the cohort of 11 pupils only 6 have come through the school from the beginning and new arrivals have needed significant coaching to attain at or close to expected levels.
- Teaching observed on the day was at least good throughout the school. Pupils are engaged in their work, motivated to learn and enthusiastic to share what they are working on.
- In the Foundation Unit support and supply, staff have been managing long-term cover for the Nursery Manager who will be returning just before the end of term after a serious injury. The children were fully engaged and enjoying their learning and the HoS reports that the cover period has been successful.
- In the Key Stage 1 class pupils are able to work in groups with the teacher, teaching assistant or independently. Marking and feedback are good and pupils are aware of their next steps. Teachers planning is shared across the two teachers



so that children can move seamlessly from one teacher, the HoS in class for two days, to the other. Maths books tend to be somewhat worksheet based and it would be useful for pupils especially in Year 2 and 3 to be able to have more opportunities for independent recording.

- In Key Stage 2 the teacher is forensic in responding to the pupils' needs, gaps in their learning and next steps. Planning for all groups and individuals ensures children are working at an appropriate level for their age and ability and marking and feedback are exceptionally thorough and have a clear impact on progress. Children are able to work independently and are grouped according to ability. They routinely use dictionaries and thesauri and improving and editing their work is a strength.
- Attitudes to learning are positive across the school, books are well cared for and children take a pride in their work. 'Class Dojo' has improved focus for the Year 4/5/6 children and behaviour for learning is generally good.
- Adults ensure deep questioning to ensure learning is thorough and pupils are able to explain their work articulately. Teaching assistants all provide good support for individuals and groups and training given since the previous visit has been seen to have positive impact.
- Learning environments are set up with care and thought and the story areas are exemplary. There is a good balance of pupil work and information on display and improved writing is celebrated. Teachers make excellent resources for pupils to use and are building up a wide range of these for the core subjects.
- Public areas are bright and welcoming and the ethos of the school is friendly and pleasant. There are some delightful examples of pupil work and activities on display.

### Pupil Conferencing

The five Year 6 pupils met on the day were all extremely appreciative of the help and support of the staff at the school especially their teacher and teaching assistant – 'they couldn't have done more to help us and have given up so much of their own time to run booster classes and after school clubs and arrange breakfast meetings for SATS week'. The children who had come from other schools were particularly impressed with the provision. One girl said 'I am dyslexic and at my old school I never had any help. Now I have had so much help and feel confident to go to secondary school and it has been arranged that I will continue to have support.'

Their parents were all pleased with their achievement and several expressed the opinion that they had done better than expected.

Those who had come through the school from Reception commented on the changes that had been made and all were positive.

Highlights of Year 6 were the sports input – the new sports coach has clearly been very well received – camps and trips, sailing, surfing, football and dance. Their only difficulty was to find an 'even better if' but eventually one young man came up with the idea of a bike track in the school grounds!

They were delightful to meet and the staff at the school should be proud to send them on to secondary school having helped them achieve the very best possible outcomes.

### Summary

The school continues to thrive and the future looks bright. The HoS and school leaders continue to work on the journey of continuous improvement, well supported by Venture MAT and plans for next year, once in action, will help to maintain this strong trajectory. The quality of teaching is at least good and there are examples of outstanding practice. All staff clearly demonstrate their dedication to the school and the children with whom they are working and this is to be applauded and celebrated. The children continue to be a



delight – articulate, well behaved, polite and very supportive of their school and one another.

St Issey will be preparing for a further Ofsted visit possibly within the next academic year and it may be useful to have some case studies of individual pupils ready for this and also to retain some examples of Year 6 work.