

Kennall Vale School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	111820
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	378365
Inspection dates	31 January – 1 February 2012
Lead inspector	Juliet Jaggs

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Jephcott
Headteacher	Ann Force
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Juliet Jaggs

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in nine part lessons taught by five teachers. She held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and observed the school's work, looked at self-evaluation documentation, development planning, assessment information and safeguarding procedures. The inspector analysed 59 questionnaires from parents and carers.

Information about the school

Kennall Vale School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. A very high proportion of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. Currently there are no pupils with disabilities but there is an average proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action level, and a relatively higher proportion with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus level. The needs of these pupils relate to speech, language and communication, behaviour, emotional and social difficulties and those associated with autistic spectrum disorder. The school has a number of awards, the most recent being Healthy Schools Plus and Eco School Silver. There have been changes to the leadership since the last inspection. A new headteacher has been appointed and more recently, the Chair of the Governing Body. The number of pupils has increased and a fourth class has been added to accommodate these pupils. This has resulted in the Reception-aged children currently being taught as a single year group but this is not the usual organisational structure of the school. The school meets the government's floor standard.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school where the strong sense of community helps pupils thrive.
- The achievement of pupils is good because they make good progress, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and through Key Stage 2 so that their attainment is above average by the time they leave.
- The quality of teaching is good because expectations in the classrooms are high. The pace of learning is typically quick and pupils work diligently, receiving advice from adults about how best to complete the tasks they have been set. Pupils are not always aware of what they are expected to be learning, which limits the time for them to develop their understanding and assess their progress. Teachers use pupils' responses to gauge progress but they do not always adapt activities quickly enough when pupils find work difficult or too easy.
- Marking is consistent and steps for improvement are highlighted in pupils' books, but teachers' questions in class can be too brief to encourage pupils to explain what they have understood about how to improve.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are as courteous as they are enthusiastic and demonstrate exceptional attitudes to taking responsibility within the community.
- Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation procedures are accurate and leaders have correctly identified where improvements are necessary. They have made important changes to the provision at Key Stage 1 so that the progress of these pupils is improving steadily.
- A full consultation about the new curriculum has meant its introduction has been a success and it is reinforcing improvements in writing.

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- Although improvement plans identify important priorities, leaders acknowledge the need to develop systems for analysing data more thoroughly. There is also scope for monitoring processes to be enhanced through the use of more objective criteria.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance pupils' understanding of what they should do to improve, by:
 - making them more aware of what they are expected to learn during lessons, rather than the activities they are going to do, so they can assess their own progress
 - using a greater variety of questioning techniques to frame more challenging dialogue with pupils so that they are encouraged to work out how they can develop ideas and apply new skills for themselves
 - being more alert to pupils' responses so that modifications and developments to activities can be introduced quickly.
- Improve the strategic function of leadership and management at all levels, including the governing body, by:
 - developing further the systems for analysing the progress of different groups of pupils so that these details can be used to evaluate provision more accurately
 - enhancing monitoring processes through the development of sharper and more objective success criteria in action planning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Kennall Vale is a vibrant learning community. From the moment pupils arrive and are joined by their parents and carers in the exercise dance session, there is vitality to learning. Pupils commit to practical tasks and then calmly apply their understanding. For example, pupils in the Key Stage 1 class took turns to dress up as a pirate so that their peers could guide them to hidden treasure. They quickly transferred this experience onto paper and made good progress learning about mathematical language and the difference between right and left.

The capabilities of children joining the Early Years Foundation Stage are typical of children of a similar age. They make good progress and move in to Year 1 with a secure range of skills. The school has successfully addressed some variability in pupil achievement during Key Stage 1 so that the progress of these pupils is improving steadily and their reading levels by the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Well-chosen reading programmes are having an impact at Key Stage 2 so that attainment in reading is above average by the time pupils leave. Pupils have responded positively to concerted efforts to improve the quality of their writing. For example, pupils in Class 4 were challenged to use adverbial phrases in their writing and they

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persevered until they were successful.

Girls and boys achieve similar standards but attainment is slightly higher in mathematics than in English. The new themed curriculum is having an impact because of its emphasis on cross-curricular literacy. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the help they receive in small groups enables them to clarify learning for themselves. For example, after a discussion about triangles, one such pupil recognised that the sun cast a shadow across the corner of his table creating a right-angled triangle. The level of care all pupils receive boosts their confidence so parents and carers have a positive view of achievement.

Quality of teaching

Teachers at the school are important role models and they bring considerable expertise in areas such as science and sport. This has a sustained impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because pupils are inspired by the far-reaching implications of their learning. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive in their views on the quality of teaching. Teachers use their subject knowledge flexibly to inspire pupils and encourage them to think more deeply. For example, pupils in Class 3 engaged in an interesting discussion of how empathy could enhance characterisation.

Planning is meticulous so that there is great variety in the way that teachers promote learning. All lessons routinely include a range of activities and materials that enable different groups of learners to achieve independently. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage adjust quickly to the thoughtful mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. There are times when teachers are not so alert to the changing needs of the pupils so there can be delays in modifying tasks. Occasionally, teachers tell pupils what they are going to have done by the end of the lesson, rather than what they will have learned. This means that pupils are less able to manage and assess their progress because they are not aware of how to be successful.

The school has recently made significant improvements to resources for pupils with dyslexia and all pupils benefit from these new approaches to learning. As a result, pupils have a pragmatic attitude to one another's differences.

Whole-class activities are fast paced but this can mean that there is less time for discussion. Teachers know their pupils well so the combination of regular marking and frequent monitoring in class means that pupils receive relevant guidance about how to improve. However, teachers' questions do not always prompt pupils to take the lead in explaining how they have interpreted that advice.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The strong allegiance to their community is a key factor in pupils' outstanding behaviour. They are well able to identify hazards and they have volunteered to become Junior Road Safety Officers to ensure one another's safety outside the

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school gates. The school council launched its own anti-bullying charter and pupils affirm that there is whole-scale rejection of bullying of any kind. Parents and carers commended the behaviour of pupils but a very few suggested that bullying was not dealt with properly. Inspection evidence shows that on the extremely rare occasions when pupils disagree with one another, teachers handle the situation calmly so that pupils learn positive strategies for resolving conflict.

Pupils have been instrumental in building the 'plastic bottle greenhouse' as part of their commitment to the Eco Schools award and the school council manages the arrangements for rewarding weekly attendance. This has had a positive impact on deterring absence and attendance figures have been above average for three years. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes and are keen to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them, including representing the school at the Penryn Partnership cross-country championships or preparing a stall for the Stithians Show.

Leadership and management

The headteacher skilfully combines high expectations of her colleagues with a strong commitment to the staff group as one of its team members. In addition to routine formal monitoring procedures, teachers regularly observe each other's lessons informally. This creates an effective internal network through which teachers share good practice but which also provides a sense of mutual accountability.

The new curriculum is a good model which includes structured opportunities for developing basic literacy combined with very practical learning experiences in the foundation subjects. For example, pupils in Class 4 combined ceramics work and poetry in their topic about rivers. These imaginative tasks were also linked to the 'sense of place' theme so pupils have a strong cultural connection with Cornwall. Visits from representatives of different faiths and regular links with schools in London and Nigeria mean that pupils gain an understanding of cultural diversity. Classroom-based learning is further complemented by other exciting opportunities, for example the Forest School, which enhances the good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Professional development has recently been used to enhance assessment procedures throughout the school. The system for recording the development of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been reviewed and a rigorous tracking system is in place for other pupils in the school. Equal opportunities are at the heart of these improvements. Leaders ensure there is no discrimination and individual pupils are monitored to ensure they make better progress. This has had a positive impact on raising attainment at Key Stage 1. The information generated by these tracking systems has yet to be fully analysed so that leaders can make the best use of data on different groups of pupils to identify strategic areas for improvement. However, leaders' ability to evaluate provision thus far and address weaknesses, in addition to implementing creative change while, for example, maintaining high attendance, means that the school has strong capacity for continuous improvement.

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The school has the overwhelming support of parents and carers. As one parent wrote in their questionnaire response, 'My child attends school happily every day and I go to work knowing he is safe, stimulated and making a valuable start to his school career'. The number of ways in which parents and carers can become involved with their child's learning, including literacy workshops and individual workbooks, means that there are effective partnerships for helping pupils make progress. The level of care provided by all members of staff is exceptionally high, especially for pupils whose situations have made them vulnerable. Senior leaders work tirelessly to ensure these families receive appropriate agency support and in so doing they provide considerable emotional support themselves.

Members of the governing body are extremely proud of their connection with the school. They are well organised, have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and have contributed to relevant development planning. Success criteria for these action points are not always specific enough and so occasionally evaluation procedures are rather too subjective. Members of the governing body bring considerable expertise and this is well deployed. This is particularly so with regard to safeguarding procedures where the governors ensure that all staff fulfil their obligations well.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kennall Vale School, Truro, TR3 7HY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking with you about your learning and hearing you read. Your views have been taken into account and I have found that Kennall Vale School is a good school. Here are some of the key findings from the report.

- You are making good progress and the standards you achieve in your work are above average.
- Your behaviour is outstanding.
- Your teachers are good, both in the way they teach your lessons and also in the way they run the school.
- Your school takes good care to make sure you are well looked after. You told us that you feel safe and this is something that your parents and carers agreed with.
- Your attendance is very good. Your parents and carers are pleased that you are happy at school.
- I like your new topic curriculum and think the Forest School is a good idea.

I have asked the teachers to continue to improve the school by:

- explaining what you are going to learn during lessons so you can check your progress while you are working
- thinking of different ways of asking you questions about your learning so you really have to think about your answers
- changing activities in lessons if you are finding them too difficult or too easy
- improving the ways leaders check how well the school is doing.

You can help by talking to your teachers about your learning and letting them know what you find easy or too difficult.

Yours sincerely
Juliet Jaggs
Lead inspector

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