

# Sennen School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	111804
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	385384
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Robert Pyner HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	60
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Susan Nicholas
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Tony Phillips
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6–7 July 2010
<b>School address</b>	Sennen Penzance TR19 7AW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01736 871392
<b>Fax number</b>	01736 871392
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Robert Pyner

Her Majesty's Inspector

When Sennen School was inspected in July 2010, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on three occasions. At the last monitoring inspection, the school was judged to be making good progress.

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. The inspector visited 11 lessons or activities amounting to approximately five hours of direct observations. These included three joint observations with the executive headteacher and all the class teachers were observed. The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, staff, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority. Informal discussions were held with 10 parents and carers. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at attainment, progress and attendance data, the draft school partnership plan, pupils' work and a number of policies, guidelines, plans and local authority reviews. The inspector heard some Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read and evaluated the results from the latest school questionnaire to parents and carers.

## Information about the school

Sennen is smaller than the average-sized primary school and serves a rural coastal area in west Cornwall. All pupils are White British and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is in line with the national average; pupils' needs include sensory impairment and speech, language and communication difficulties. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or with specific provision is below the national figure. The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. A pre-school group that is not managed by the governing body is based in the school.

In autumn 2010, an acting executive headteacher was appointed to lead the school. She left in December 2011 to return to her substantive post and the current permanent executive headteacher joined the school in January 2012. He is also the headteacher of another primary school in west Cornwall.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

### Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school is now satisfactory overall. Since the last full inspection, there have been significant improvements in the achievement of pupils, the quality of teaching and the leadership of the school. The governing body, in particular, has supported the school well through a difficult period. Consequently, as a result of the overall improvements, the school now has a strong capacity to improve further. However, achievement outcomes are not strong enough for an overall effectiveness judgement of good.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is broadly average for communication, language and literacy and the children benefit from a rich language environment within the classroom. However, the current structure for the systematic teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) does not consistently maximise the opportunities for focused learning. By the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, representing a significant improvement. The progress that they make overall is satisfactory. The outcomes for more-able pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are weaker and this is confirmed by inspection evidence and school data. Additionally, the standard of presentation and handwriting in books is not consistently good across the school.
- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last full inspection. Lessons are generally well planned for middle- and lower-ability groups within the mixed-aged classes but can sometimes be less challenging for more-able pupils.
- The high quality relationships fostered by an inclusive ethos mean that pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They have good attitudes to learning and behave well.
- Effective leadership since the last full inspection has resulted in the significant improvements seen, including teaching and management of performance. The newly appointed executive headteacher has begun to implement the plans for further improvements in provision, working with the other school in the partnership.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics so that by July 2012 pupils' attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 is at least in line with age appropriate national averages at the expected and higher levels by:
  - ensuring that teaching uses progress tracking data more effectively to set challenging learning activities for all pupils but particularly the more able
  - focusing intervention strategies more sharply to support more-able pupils who are in danger of underachieving
  - ensuring a more consistent standard of presentation and handwriting across the school.
- Review the provision for the systematic teaching of phonics as part of the learning programme for reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 to ensure a more cohesive structure and time allocation.
- Use the increased opportunities offered by the school's partnership working to develop improved provision for pupils across the curriculum.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and particularly practical activities where they can apply their learning. An example of this was seen with a group of Year 6 pupils who were learning about rotation in mathematics and moving through 90, 180 or 360 degrees in a clockwise or anti-clockwise direction. Planning is effective for most groups in the mixed-age classes within the school and teaching assistants work well with teachers to support learning. Pupils discuss their work enthusiastically in pairs or small groups, and generally apply themselves to tasks with sustained concentration. Pupils know their learning targets and the whole-school progress tracking system is well embedded. Targets are reviewed regularly and pupils spoken to could explain them, say when they were achieved and how they linked with their new ones. Although the targets for all groups are appropriate, some activities for more-able pupils do not challenge them sufficiently. Consequently, outcomes for this group are below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills broadly expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress overall and school data show that rates of progress are accelerating. The children benefit from a rich and varied learning environment where they learn to be independent and confident. Currently, the structure for the systematic teaching of phonics in learning to read does not provide consistent opportunities for targeted work in groups.

Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly average. Their attainment in writing and mathematics is also average, reflecting the

sometimes wide variations that exist within small year groups. Pupils enjoy reading and talk confidently about how they record information about the books that they have read, the reading undertaken with adults from the community and the types of reading material they choose. They can satisfactorily blend letter sounds to read unfamiliar words but are less confident with the comprehension of more complex texts. In writing lessons older pupils are encouraged to discuss the vocabulary they use and reflect on the technical aspects of writing. Overall, since the last inspection, standards of presentation and handwriting have improved well but this is still not completely consistent across the school.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons in line with their peers. Appropriately planned programmes of support delivered effectively by teaching assistants ensure that tasks are clearly matched to individual needs.

Results from the latest school questionnaire for parents and carers show that they feel strongly that they are well informed about the progress made by their children. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection reinforced this view, adding that they felt their children were making good progress and recognising the range of improvements since the last full inspection.

### **Quality of teaching**

Parents and carers who spoke to the inspector recognised that teaching had improved across the planned curriculum since the last full inspection. The evidence from the three monitoring inspections over the last year supports this view and, overall, teaching is satisfactory, but with strong elements. It is not consistently good because the outcomes for more-able pupils are not as strong as they could be. However, an effective feature of lessons is the respect and cooperation between pupils and staff, leading to very positive relationships. Consequently, this leads to effective learning and ensures that pupils are motivated and enthusiastic. Other strengths include high expectations, the use of technology to support learning and teachers' planning. This last aspect uses the information from the progress tracking system effectively to match tasks to pupils' abilities for some groups, but this is less apparent in the activities for more-able pupils. During the inspection, effective use of technology was seen in a phonics session with Year 2 pupils where their learning and engagement was enhanced by being able to identify 'nonsense' words and dispatch them to the dustbin on the class screen. Teaching assistants facilitate the learning of individuals and groups well. Feedback on pupils' learning and teachers' marking are effective across the school, providing clear guidance on how individuals can make the next steps in their learning.

Where teaching is less effective, the pace of lessons can slow when introductions to lessons from the teacher are too lengthy. In some lessons opportunities to accelerate the progress of more-able pupils are lost because learning tasks are not focused sharply to challenge their understanding and skills.

There are effective contributions across the school to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a strong element of moral and social development in lessons and around the school; spiritual development is developed

through, for example, assemblies and reflection on the natural environment. Pupils' understanding of cultural differences is developed through programmes of work, for example the work undertaken by older pupils on the influence of John Lennon and The Beatles on life in the 1960's, and developing links with schools in Lancashire and abroad.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Staff know pupils extremely well and those with particular needs are cared for effectively. This was confirmed by parents and carers who spoke to the inspector. Pupils interviewed said they understood that bullying can be in a variety of forms, including cyber bullying. They could point out the e-safety rules within the school and said that they follow them. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and can explain why it is important that the school has a secure entry system.

There is a strong culture of cooperation and respect in classrooms and around the school, based on highly effective relationships between pupils and adults. This creates a good environment for successful learning. Pupils spoken to said that behaviour is good in lessons all or most of the time. They say that they are encouraged to make the most of the opportunities available to them and that the adults in the school will help them if they are worried or unhappy. Pupils' punctuality is good. Systems to check and track absences by pupils are rigorous, leading to above average, and improving, attendance rates for all groups of pupils. In the last questionnaire distributed by the school, most parents and carers felt that behaviour was good.

Pupils spoke proudly of their roles in supporting the work of the school through such activities as membership of the school council and how this helps to improve provision.

### **Leadership and management**

The acting executive headteacher appointed after the last full inspection established effective systems to track the progress made by pupils, evaluate lesson planning and monitor teaching. Throughout her time leading the school, she displayed a determined commitment to the improvement of pupils' achievement in all aspects of school life. The teaching staff, all of whom joined the school after the last full inspection, embraced this desire for development, and this strong teamwork, which includes support staff, is the main reason for the swift and significant improvements across the school. The permanent executive headteacher is now in post and his induction has been very well managed so that developments have continued at a good pace. He brings strong experience of headship and plans are already in place to develop the opportunities resulting from the partnership with the other school where he is headteacher. Staff interviewed during the inspection recognise the strength of partnership working in developing the learning opportunities available for pupils at both schools.

Members of the governing body have been faced with some difficult decisions since the last inspection. They have come through a turbulent period with resilience and the determination that pupils have a right to receive the best possible standard of

education. The governing body has used the support from the local authority effectively to develop systems to support and challenge the work of the school. It is well led, knowledgeable and understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, both staff and the governing body are aware that there is more work to do to raise achievement further and develop the opportunities available through partnership working. Consequently, taking into account the significant improvements since being subject to special measures and the drive and systems in place to build on these, the school demonstrates a strong capacity to improve further.

The school's broad and balanced curriculum enables pupils to develop their talents and skills in a wide range of activities. These are enhanced by visits and cultural activities, particularly the use of the natural environment afforded by the school's location. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and sits at the heart of this very inclusive learning community.

Safeguarding procedures are effective and meet all current government requirements. The school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity is exemplified by its effective work to support pupils with specific needs to play a full part in the life of the school as well as ensuring that they make progress and narrow the gap in achievement with other groups.



## 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](http://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.**



24 February 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Sennen School, Penzance TR19 7AW**

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school recently. You may remember that I have been visiting your school over the last year or so to check how well you are learning and making progress in your lessons. Thank you for the time you took to talk to me and show me your work. I really enjoyed talking with all the pupils I met and found what you had to say very informative and helpful.

This letter is to tell you about my findings. I am happy to say that, as a result of the hard work by the pupils, staff and the governing body since the last full inspection, your school is now satisfactory and continuing to improve. The school no longer requires any extra help. Well done!

You told me that you are happy to go to school, that you learn a lot in lessons and that staff help you in many ways to do as well as you can. Your overall attendance and behaviour are good and the school is a very pleasant place to work and learn. You make clear progress in your work throughout the school and you are ready for the challenges of secondary school by the time that you leave Sennen. The overall progress that you make in your learning has improved well since the last full inspection. Teaching is at least satisfactory and this is partly due to the high-quality relationships between you and the adults in the school.

The executive headteacher, staff and governing body lead the school well. They know that some aspects of the school could be improved further. These are the areas that I have asked them to work on.

- Raise attainment and help you to make faster progress by:
  - giving you activities in lessons which really challenge you so that you learn as well as you can, especially those of you who find some work easy
  - providing you with extra help if your teachers feel that you could manage greater challenges in your learning
  - making sure that your handwriting and the way your work is set out in your books is as good as it can be.
- Help the younger pupils even more when they are learning to read.
- Develop the plans your executive headteacher has for you to have more learning opportunities by working with your partner school.

You too have an important part to play by continuing to work hard, making the most of the wide range of opportunities you have at school and attending regularly.

Yours sincerely  
Robert Pyner  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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