

Halwin Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	111828
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	378369
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2012
Lead inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roger Hicks
Headteacher	Mrs Stephanie Haskins
Date of previous school inspection	November 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Hazel Callaghan

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed eight lessons taught by four teachers; she observed four other sessions, including various activities planned during the Exploration Day enjoyed by children in the Reception class along with pupils in Years 1 and 2. In all, five hours were utilised in observing teaching and learning in all classes. Meetings were held with staff and pupils, representatives of the governing body and with the principal of Helston College with which the school has links. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of school documentation including that relating to safeguarding, the school's records of pupils' attainment and progress, monitoring and evaluation schedules, risk assessments, the school development plan and reports written about the school by the School Improvement Partner. The inspector reviewed the 40 questionnaires returned by parents and carers along with those completed by staff and pupils.

The school meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about the school

Halwin Primary is a very small school. Cohorts vary in size from year to year but are always smaller than in most primary schools. The vast majority of pupils come from families of White British backgrounds. No pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average but the proportion in each year group varies considerably. There are a range of needs including pupils with moderate learning difficulties, those with a statement of special educational needs for physical disabilities as well as learning needs and some pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable because of challenges in their lives. Pupils are taught mostly in mixed-age classes with pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 arranged by ability for English and mathematics.

There have been many changes in teaching staff over the last few years. The school has become a member of a local Cooperative Trust with two secondary schools, local primary schools, and various other organisations. A privately run pre-school group operates from the school site and this was inspected separately.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Halwin Primary is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly but inconsistencies in teaching and in rates of pupils' learning prevent it from being a good school at present. Weaknesses in pupils' progress in the past are being addressed, especially in writing, and most pupils are making satisfactory progress with many pupils making better progress than in the past.
- Although teaching since the last inspection has been typically satisfactory overall, teaching currently is much improved. Teachers make lessons fun, they stimulate pupils' good interest and use their improving literacy and numeracy skills effectively in other work. Sometimes, opportunities are missed to challenge pupils to achieve more, to identify and tackle gaps in pupils' learning or to use their new skills and knowledge in real-life situations and problem-solving activities. An exciting curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school has effectively maintained its caring and supportive ethos. Pupils enjoy school, feel very safe and the vast majority respond well to their activities. They work well together and want to do well. Effective strategies to support those pupils who find it difficult to consistently behave well are having a positive impact and the incidences of inappropriate behaviour are reducing rapidly so behaviour and safety are consequently now good.
- Significant difficulties created by staffing changes have slowed the school's improvement. Inconsistencies in teaching reduced pupils' progress. Senior leaders and the governing body have shown good leadership with effective plans to offset these difficulties. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good. A strong focus on improving the teaching of writing has been effective in developing pupils' interest in writing and in increasing their level of skills. The school has effectively addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is much improved.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching is consistently good or outstanding so all pupils make good progress, especially in writing, so that attainment rises by:
 - identifying gaps in pupils' learning and addressing them
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding by using their skills and knowledge in real-life situations and problem-solving activities
 - setting regular challenges for pupils to meet in terms of the quantity and quality of their work so they focus on what has to be achieved and use their time effectively.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start in the Reception class. They achieve well. Most reach the standards expected and a good proportion attain above-average standards by the time they are ready to start in Year 1. Pupils of all abilities, boys and girls, in Years 1 to Year 6 make generally satisfactory progress from their different starting points and attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Since last September this progress has accelerated due to the effective teaching now evident in the school. This current good progress is evident in the lessons observed and confirmed by the school data and through the scrutiny of pupils' work. Gaps in pupils' learning, caused by changes in the teaching staff, are closing as teachers generally identify what pupils already know and can do and plan appropriately to extend their knowledge and skills. This was effectively demonstrated in the class of the oldest pupils, predominantly Years 4, 5 and 6, as they revisited the properties of perimeter and area. Pupils responded well to the way the teacher gently eased them into questions which they had found difficult earlier in the term and quickly became quite enthusiastic in their investigations as their understanding grew. Even those who usually found learning difficult confidently explained the formula for finding the perimeter of a rectangle. On occasions, gaps in pupils' learning are not identified and tackled swiftly enough to accelerate progress.

Attainment in reading has been stronger than in writing for some years and although still broadly average in Year 2 it improves through the school so that, although still broadly average by Year 6, a good number of pupils reach the higher than expected levels. Writing has been the greatest weakness but the successful focus on developing the teaching of writing is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 confidently used imaginative ways of starting sentences and used a variety of connective words to extend their descriptions of the setting for their version of 'The Nail Soup'. Pupils were proud of their writing and

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happy to share it with the class. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers and the gaps between their attainment and the attainment of other pupils are closing because of the good range of interventions and support they receive. Parents, carers and pupils agree that learning is fun and pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics are improving daily but inconsistencies remain which mean pupils make satisfactory progress overall.

Quality of teaching

Strategies to improve teaching and learning are having a positive impact on the consistency of approaches, the accuracy of assessment and in the planning of lessons that meet most pupils' needs. Lessons are usually well structured. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they use a variety of strategies to engage the pupils and move them on in their learning. Relationships are good and there are clear expectations for pupils' attention, perseverance and positive behaviour. Pupils respond well to the teachers' questioning and many are eager to show what they know and can do. In phonics sessions, for example, where pupils were learning about letters and the sounds they make, pupils in Year 2 excitedly gave examples of words with different blends of letters which have the same sound. Pupils in Reception and in Year 1 were also making good progress as the teacher effectively helped them to hear the separate sounds so they could write them correctly on their whiteboards. Teachers monitor pupils' work carefully and regularly refocus the pupils on what they have to do to improve. This was seen well in a writing session. Sometimes, however, pupils are asked to carry on completing calculations even when they have shown they understand and are accurate in their work rather than using these new skills to solve challenging real-life problems or investigations. Occasionally, pupils were off task because they had not been given clear enough instructions on what was expected about the quantity of work they should complete or about the aspects on which they should be focusing. The quality of marking in all classes is good. Pupils say they have a good understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve. Parents and carers also say they feel teaching is good and many commented on the good progress their child is making. Inspection shows that this is an increasingly accurate view of teaching but there are still some inconsistencies which make teaching satisfactory overall.

The curriculum is used and planned well to promote pupils' interest and there is a good emphasis on promoting their spiritual, social, moral and cultural awareness. Time is provided for pupils to reflect on their ideas, to work together cooperatively and to meet new experiences and new people.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The vast majority of pupils behave well in their lessons and about the school. They show care for one another and are friendly and polite. They enjoy their activities and want to do well. Pupils state that behaviour is generally good but recognise that sometimes a few pupils do not concentrate on their work as well as they should and there is some low-level misbehaviour in lessons. Most parents and carers who

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responded to the questionnaire judged behaviour overall as good, but they also thought that some lessons were disrupted by some pupils' inappropriate behaviour. Observation showed that where there had been concerns in the past about a small group of pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, they now rarely interrupt lessons and incidents at playtime have significantly declined. Any incidents are managed well by the staff. The 'R Time' programme, recently introduced, is having a positive impact and pupils generally work together now far more amicably and sensibly than in the past. Pupils understand how sanctions and rewards are gained and respond well, showing real delight when they gain a reward for being kind and thoughtful. Pupils felt that bullying of any kind was rare. If ever there were any, they are confident that the teachers would act quickly and put things right. This is confirmed by the rarity of incidents recorded by the school. There has been one exclusion in the last year which had a very salutary impact on the pupil and also contributed to the much improved behaviour around the school.

Attendance is average. Absence is usually caused by illness or family holidays, but the latter can sometimes affect learning because sections of work are missed. Any persistent absence is due to medical conditions. Almost all parents and carers who responded said their child was safe at school. There is a good focus on keeping safe and pupils showed much common sense when discussing how they do so, showing understanding of issues such as the dangers of the internet and road safety.

Leadership and management

There is a clear drive towards improvement by all staff and leaders. The school's good capacity to improve further is reflected in the way concerns about the teaching and learning of writing have been tackled and effective improvements made. All staff have been trained in the 'Talk to Write' strategies and consistently use agreed strategies to support pupils' effective progress. The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is now good. The outside area has been developed to provide an easily accessible safe area in which children's opportunities to experiment and explore new ideas are regularly provided. There is now a clear expectation that teachers must take responsibility for the progress of pupils. Assessment procedures have been strengthened and consistent and accurate data are now collected more regularly, so that any underachievement is quickly identified. In response to concerns over the progress of pupils affected by frequent staff changes, strategies for additional support have been put in place which enabled most pupils to reach the expected levels for their age last year.

The governing body has been fully involved in school improvement and effective budgeting has enabled a new class to be created making teaching groups smaller and additional support staff provided to give well-focused support. School leaders at all levels, the governing body and staff ensure there is no discrimination and satisfactorily promote pupils' equal opportunities to achieve. Parents and carers commented very strongly about the care given to their children who had specific needs which has enabled them to play a full part in any activities, to develop socially

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and to enjoy learning. The efforts of school leaders, governors and staff ensure the school fully meets all safeguarding requirements. The school has close working arrangements with appropriate outside agencies to support pupils who may be deemed to be vulnerable.

The remodelled curriculum meets pupils' needs effectively and stimulates their interest and enjoyment in learning very well. It has a strong impact on pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Several parents and carers commented positively about how activities engage the whole family and the local community. 'For a small school, Halwin provides excellent multicultural experiences in a very positive way', wrote one parent while another said, 'The school works really hard at forming a sense of community especially with events which bring the family together'. The Indian curry evening, for example, was a great success.

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.



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Halwin Primary School, Porkellis, Helston TR13 0EG

Thank you for making me so welcome and answering my questions when I visited you recently. Here are some of the things I found out about you and your school.

- Your school has many good things to feel proud about and overall it provides a satisfactory education for you.
- You get a good start to your schooling in the Reception class.
- You told me you really enjoy your lessons, especially those on topic work and in sport.
- You are now making good progress in your learning after a few slow starts and reach standards that are similar to other pupils of your age.
- You want to do well and most of you try hard and enjoy your work.
- Most of you behave well and even those who sometimes find this difficult are getting better at playing together and listening well in lessons.
- You are polite, friendly and helpful and you told me that you have lots of friends.
- Teachers help you to get better at your work but sometimes you could be challenged more to do harder work.
- The staff work well together and some important changes are being made to help you get even better at your work, especially in writing.
- The staff look after you well so you feel safe and happy.

I have asked your headteacher, teachers and the governing body to do three main things to make your school better:

- help you to make better progress in all your work by ensuring you are given challenges to extend your thinking and to produce lots of high-quality work
- make sure that any gaps in your learning from the past are filled in so that you learn even more
- provide you with more opportunities to use your literacy, mathematical and other skills in practical learning situations and problem-solving activities.

Remember you can do your part by always listening carefully in your lessons and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Callaghan
Lead inspector

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