

Germoe Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	111813
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	378363
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2012
Lead inspector	Alex Baxter

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	25
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Cook
Headteacher	Paula Quinney
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alex Baxter

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited ten lessons taught by three teachers and listened to pupils reading. The inspector also observed break times, attended two assemblies and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, and 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 plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. The inspector analysed 18 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those returned by 14 pupils and 7 staff.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the normal times is also above average. There are two mixed-aged classes in the school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed Reception and Key Stage 1/Years 1 and 2 class. The second class covers Key Stage 2, namely Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress. Since January 2012, the school has been a member of the Helston and Lizard Peninsular Educational Partnership Trust. A privately-run pre-school operates on the school site and shares some of the school's facilities. As it is managed independently it was not part of this inspection.

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

- Germoe is a good school with a welcoming ethos. As one parent typically commented, 'We are really impressed with how the school works hard to create a 'family' atmosphere.' The school's strengths include high levels of care and attention for pupils and excellent outdoor learning opportunities. Very supportive relationships help all pupils learn happily together. Currently, the school is good rather than outstanding because handwriting and punctuation skills are underdeveloped.
- Children make a successful start in Reception where laughter and challenge go hand in hand to promote good progress. Pupils work hard, enjoy learning and achieve well by the end of Year 6. Progress in English, especially in speaking, listening, reading and mathematics, has improved since the previous inspection. This is because skills are developed in a systematic way to build on previous learning. Progress in spelling and writing expressively, and in the expressive arts and using computers, also remains good.
- The quality of teaching is good. Pupils are grouped effectively according to their ability. Teachers and skilled teaching assistants provide well-focused support that meets pupils' needs effectively. However, whilst teachers give good oral guidance and question pupils effectively, marking of pupils' writing and the development of pupils' self-assessment skills are inconsistent.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding and pupils' above-average attendance reflects their great enjoyment of school. Pupils and parents and carers feel that children are kept very safe. This view matches inspection findings, which also identifies excellent promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The capable headteacher, supported well by staff and members of the governing body, manages performance and teaching well. The school has lifted provision and outcomes from satisfactory to good since the previous inspection, and demonstrates a good capacity to continue this into the future.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To further support the progress pupils make, especially in writing, teachers should:
 - teach a consistent style of handwriting and develop pupils' punctuation skills more systematically as pupils move through the school
 - ensure pupils know how to improve their work by making this clear through marking and by involving them in reviewing their own progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children's skills on entry into Reception vary considerably because year groups are very small. Most children arrive with lower than expected skills, especially in communication, language and literacy. In their Reception year, children grow rapidly in confidence and learn happily with others. Throughout the school, pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those arriving later from other schools, make good progress overall. Learning in lessons shows that the pupils' broadly average attainment by the end of Year 6 reflects good achievement.

Lessons are typified by pupils' enthusiastic learning. Much stems from stimulating learning opportunities, both indoors and outside, that are relevant to pupils' own experiences. For example, Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils made significant gains during Forest School activities in the school's own copse in understanding and appreciating the natural world. Their excitement and joy in discovering fungi and insects prompted enthusiastic discussions with the teaching assistant who was then able to extend pupils' vocabulary. Back in class, the teacher was similarly successful in developing pupils' imaginative writing by joyfully exploring how they might catch a wicked Troll. Expressive writing is developed well in other year groups so that, by the end of Year 6, pupils are using connective words to extend meaningful sentences. At times though, the quality of pupils' writing is clouded by underdeveloped handwriting and punctuation skills.

The pupils' good progress across the school is evident in their vocabulary when speaking and writing imaginatively, and in their accurate recall of basic number facts when solving problems in mathematics. For instance, in a mathematics lesson in Key Stage 2, learning got off to a good pace as pupils shared their ideas about equivalent fractions with 'talk partners'. Good progress resulted from the pupils' willingness to sustain concentration and compare fractions both visually, as equal parts of shapes, as well as numerically. Similarly, pupils in the Key Stage 2 class showed much enthusiasm when tackling a 'wizard challenge'. The mutual sharing of suggestions soon led to impressive lists of words and phrases describing a bolt of lightning.

Children in Reception, and Years 1 and 2, are taught how to read by systematically

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following a scheme to learn initial letter sounds and then to blend them together to make new words. This effective teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) enables pupils who find learning difficult to narrow the achievement gap with other pupils. As with other skills, attainment in reading varies across the very small year groups. Currently, at the end of Year 2, attainment in reading is above average; in Year 6 it is broadly average. For both groups, this represents good progress, given their different starting points. Parents and carers agree their children make good progress and pupils are confident they are helped to improve. Inspection findings support these views.

Quality of teaching

The views of parents and carers and pupils that teaching is good are borne out by inspection evidence. A strong feature of the lessons observed included teachers using their in-depth knowledge of pupils to set relevant learning objectives and adapt lessons effectively to meet pupils' individual needs. Teachers are skilled in deploying talented teaching assistants to support individual pupils, especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. For example, lessons in the Key Stage 2 class begin purposefully with pupils completing regular reading and spelling tasks effectively matched to their ability. Lessons in both classes are typically introduced during lively, fast-paced question and answer sessions, with teachers questioning pupils at the right level. For example, in the Reception and Key Stage 1 class, the teacher took great care to develop the pupils' understanding of 'instructions' by initially referring to them as 'bossy words'. This enthused them in writing instructions to turn the headteacher into a toad; as always, ensuring good learning and making it fun in this class.

Staff talk constantly with pupils about their learning. As a result, pupils mostly understand the quality of their work and what they need to do next. This is also the case in pupils' mathematics books and home-school reading records, where written feedback and teachers' marking are good. Marking in pupils' writing books is inconsistent though and the pupils' ability to reflect in writing about how well they have done or how to improve is not developed in a sufficiently step-by-step way.

Teachers implement a good curriculum, make effective use of computers, visits and an impressive range of after-school clubs in the school grounds, to complement learning in lessons. Events, such as Maypole dancing at the local 'Feast Fayre', singing to local community groups and competing for the 'Gold Sing Up Award', develop the pupils' skills well across the expressive arts. The joint visit to London with another school and assembly topics, such as Mothering Sunday, which bring in other cultures, promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. In lessons and around the school, all pupils are extremely well behaved and courteous. A small number of pupils have been helped

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to overcome previously challenging emotional needs, showing how excellent relationships with pupils, and their parents and carers underpin the work of the school. Pupils talk knowledgeably about different types of bullying, for example racial abuse, cyber bullying and deliberate, hurtful teasing. They confidently report that there is no bullying of any kind and all staff will support them if they feel unsafe. Children in Reception quickly develop friendships that bring joy and enrich learning. Such excellent development of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continues throughout the school. Very supportive attitudes are clearly apparent, for example, in assemblies where pupils readily show their equal pleasure in spontaneously applauding each other's achievements.

Attendance has improved year on year and is now above average and further reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. Consistent care from staff leads to pupils feeling very safe and inspires their confidence in using the excellent range of outdoor learning equipment provided for them. As one pupil confidently said, typically expressing the views of others, 'Our school is so small that we are like one big happy family!' The positive views of parents and carers and their children about behaviour and safety are well founded. Encouraged by staff, the pupils are proud of their award winning school council members, who in the recent past have served as ambassadors assessing councils in other schools, and who regularly take the lead in raising money for charities and to purchase extra play equipment.

Leadership and management

Well led by an experienced headteacher, leaders and managers at all levels are committed to including all pupils equally and eliminating discrimination. To achieve these aims, staff and members of the governing body ensure that good self-evaluation secures an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses. This enables staff to support pupils' individual needs effectively at an early stage, especially for those who find learning difficult. In this way, the school sustains equally good achievement for all pupils in relation to their starting points. Effective literacy, numeracy and special educational needs coordination provide good opportunities for staff to enhance their professional skills. Improved teaching of mathematics, speaking and listening and reading has lifted pupils' achievements since the previous inspection, and shows a good capacity to continue this into the future.

Procedures for safeguarding, especially those for child protection, are very secure. Training for staff and members of the governing body is up to date and high-quality policies are embedded into school practice. Parents and carers contribute to out-of-school activities and as one parent wrote, typically representing the views of others, 'I have always encountered a positive attitude to children, a desire to achieve the best outcome for my children.' Members of the governing body help in classrooms and have been particularly effective in developing the school's extensive learning resources and securing good value for money. Outdoor learning provision is outstanding and, within a good curriculum, supports memorable experiences for pupils. These include using the open air theatre and adventure play equipment to promote the pupils' exemplary spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The

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governing body recognises the challenges of a small school and has recently joined the Helston and Lizard Peninsular Trust to secure further improvement and to extend pupils' learning experiences.

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.

14 March 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Germoe Community Primary School, Penzance TR20 QY

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly during my recent inspection of your school. You were all extremely polite and helpful and clearly love your school. Many thanks to the groups of pupils, including members of the school council, who talked to me so enthusiastically. You all said that you greatly enjoy school because of the many friendships that you make and appreciate the help you receive from caring adults. Your very positive responses in the questionnaire also show that you feel very safe in school. You will be pleased to know that I agree with you and almost all of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire that Germoe is a good school.

These are some of the other things I liked most.

- You make good progress as you move through the school, especially in speaking and listening and reading, which are taught very well in both classes. An increasing number of you are doing particularly well in mathematics and many of you are skilled at using computers and learning outdoors.
- You behave extremely well, work hard and enjoy your learning because you do a lot of interesting things indoors and outside and because teachers value your efforts and teach you well.
- Your headteacher, staff and governing body work well together as a team, to keep you safe and to make sure that you have lots of equipment to help you learn.

To help the school to improve I have asked the teachers to help you to make better progress, especially in writing, by improving your handwriting and punctuation. In addition I have asked the teachers to give you more guidance on what to do next to improve when they mark your work and to help you to get better at evaluating your own work.

As you told me, you can help by trying to work even harder.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter
Lead inspector

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