

South Petherwin Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111947
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	357008
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Ian Hancock

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	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Parsons
Headteacher	Tim Gray
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors observed six teachers, visited eight lessons or part lessons and held discussions with members of the governing body, and staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's analysis of pupils' attainment and the progress they make, data on attendance, evidence of leaders' monitoring and evaluation and plans for improvement. Inspectors analysed 42 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as 61 questionnaires from pupils and 12 from the staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas:

- The current rates of progress and levels of attainment for all groups across the school.
- The extent to which leaders and managers at all levels demonstrate the capacity to sustain improvements by embedding ambition, taking robust action and ironing out inconsistencies in teaching.
- The extent to which teaching supports good learning for all groups and how effectively assessments, targets and marking are used to help pupils learn.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school serving the village of South Petherwin and the surrounding communities, including the local town of Launceston. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. However, a larger-than-average proportion of them have a statement of special educational needs. The school provides an after-school childcare facility that is managed by the governing body. There is also a privately run nursery on site that was not part of this inspection.

Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in the leadership of the school. The new headteacher took up post in September 2010. There have also been changes in the teaching staff. The school has gained a number of awards and accreditations since the previous inspection which include Healthy Schools status, the ActiveMark Gold award and the Eco-Schools Bronze award.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

South Petherwin Community Primary School is a satisfactory school. The school has improved strongly since the last inspection and has developed a number of significant strengths. The pupils' attainment and their rates of progress have risen steadily. However, these improvements are not yet sufficiently embedded to ensure that the majority of pupils make good progress or that their attainment is as high as it ought to be.

The children enter the school with attainment that generally matches the expectations for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and leave with above average standards. In Key Stage 1, the pupils take advantage of this strong start and make equally good progress. As a result, their attainment is also higher than the average when they move into Year 3. The pupils make satisfactory progress within Key Stage 2 and their attainment is broadly in line with the national average. This is partly due to historical underachievement and the need for some pupils to make up lost ground. It is also because the teaching is not consistently strong enough to ensure good learning in all lessons.

A wide-ranging programme of staff training has improved the teaching and addressed the areas for development identified in the previous inspection report. For example, a recent focus on improving writing has made a marked difference in the development of writing skills, particularly in Key Stage 1. However, in some lessons, the pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress because there is an inconsistent level of challenge.

The leaders and managers, including the governing body, are strongly committed to what the school is trying to achieve. Ambition is high and actions to improve teaching and raise standards have been pursued with energy. Procedures to evaluate the school's work need strengthening to provide the leaders with the most up-to-date picture of the school's and pupils' progress. The newly appointed headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of the whole school community. He has established an honest and accurate view of where the school is and taken decisive action to maintain a focus on the school's improvement. As a result, the pace of improvement has been maintained, despite the recent change in leadership, and the school demonstrates good capacity for further improvement.

The pupils are playing their part in the school's success by making an exceptional contribution to the school and wider community. The school's learning forum provides them with regular opportunities to discuss their learning and to contribute to decisions about the future. The involvement of the pupils in assessing their own work and that of others is also a strong feature of lessons. The teachers' comments in books inform the pupils how they are doing and suggest improvements. However, the pupils are not always clear about their longer-term targets, because they are not sufficiently involved in setting them. Opportunities to assess the pupils' learning are sometimes missed because lesson plans do not clearly identify what the pupils will learn from different tasks.

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Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They recognise the improvements and the differences being made. As one response illustrates, 'The school has undergone major changes in the last two years, which have made an enormous impact on all areas of school life.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the strengths in the teaching so that the pupils' learning becomes consistently good by:
 - providing clear expectations to individuals and groups so that they are consistently challenged within the lesson
 - matching tasks carefully to the pupils' differing needs and abilities
 - improving the quality of planning to identify more clearly what the pupils will learn in lessons and how it will be assessed
 - increasing the pupils' involvement in setting targets for their future learning.
- Strengthen the way in which the leaders and managers plan, monitor and evaluate the school's work by:
 - reviewing the progress the pupils make in their learning more frequently, so that prompt action can be taken when progress has slowed
 - breaking down end-of-year objectives into smaller steps so that progress towards the intended outcome can be evaluated more easily.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The pupils enjoy their learning because they are active in lessons and are given interesting problems to solve. They work effectively together in pairs and groups, making good use of new technology to support their learning. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. This enables the pupils to take responsibility for themselves and support the learning of others, for example, by handling craft tools safely or providing constructive suggestions on how their own work and that of others could be improved. The pupils spoken to during the inspection value their education and recognise its importance in preparing them for future employment. Consequently, their wider development and their acquisition of workplace skills are good.

The pupils talk knowledgeably about ways to improve their own health and that of others. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including managing the potential risks associated with new technology. The pupils make very good use of opportunities to contribute to the school and the wider community as house captains, playground leaders or as members of the 'GREAT' environmental team. A striking example was seen during a learning forum when older pupils organised discussions in small family groups on how individuals assess their own work. They listened to comments from younger pupils, took notes and confidently shared them with the rest of the school. As one pupil commented, 'Learning is fun because our opinions are heard.'

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The school has developed a number of strengths in its teaching. The teachers know the pupils well and relationships are very positive. Learning is enjoyable because the teachers make lessons fun and use engaging resources to involve the pupils in lively activities. The teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in lessons, working in partnership with the teacher and supporting individuals and groups. Consequently, the pupils work with sustained concentration and hold the teachers in very high regard. However, not all teaching is sufficiently ambitious for pupils' progress and the teachers do not consistently ensure that the pupils know what is expected of them and how they might improve.

The school has developed an engaging curriculum which provides frequent opportunities for the pupils to use their learning across subject areas. Learning experiences are enriched by regular visitors and visits to local facilities such as the Royal Cornwall Museum and Launceston Castle. There is a high take-up of the extensive range of after-school clubs and activities, such as gardening, cross-country running and art club. Partnerships with the local college, churches and support agencies make a strong contribution to learning.

Support plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are carefully thought through. Individual targets are reviewed regularly and revised in the light of progress made. The school makes highly effective use of expert advice to ensure that pupils with specific needs have prompt access to specialist support.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leaders and managers at all levels are increasingly playing their part in raising aspirations and changing the school for the better. This can be seen in the improvements in writing and the good provision for the pupils' care, guidance and support. The school's close attention to individuals means that all have an equal opportunity to succeed and additional support is provided when progress slows. Detailed information is collected on the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. Nevertheless, it is not reviewed frequently enough to ensure that support is always provided as promptly as possible.

The school's improvement has been supported effectively by the committed and knowledgeable governing body. Where appropriate, they challenge the leaders and hold them to account. The well-thought-out plans for improvement have been adopted by the new headteacher. However, the absence of short-term objectives makes it difficult to gain an early indication of the school's progress towards the intended outcomes.

Procedures for keeping pupils safe are robust and supported well by regular training. Record keeping is thorough and well maintained. The school understands its unique context and has taken steps to develop the pupils' understanding of a range of communities in the immediate locality and beyond.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle well due to the secure routines and high quality care they receive. They start with skills broadly at the expected levels for their age and make good progress. This is because imaginative and well-planned activities are linked to promote the children's development across areas of learning. For example, a lesson based around the book 'Owl Babies' promoted children's knowledge and understanding of animals effectively, their physical development through animal actions such as flying and crawling, and their creative development through making clay hedgehogs.

The classroom and outside areas provide a safe and stimulating environment. The children benefit from good access to outdoor learning and opportunities for robust physical activities to help them to be healthy. They develop a good awareness of safety and relate well to each other when discussing their activities or sharing their learning with the rest of the class.

The quality of leadership is good. The adults are focused on helping the children to make good progress in their learning and development. This can be seen in the high quality assessments that are made. The adults are deployed well and there is a very good relationship with parents and carers. Although there are clear plans for improvement, a more rigorous analysis of data would help the provision to improve further.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The vast majority of questionnaire responses present a very positive view of the school's work. The quality of leadership and the school's actions to ensure that the pupils enjoy school, are kept safe and learn to make healthy choices were singled out for particular praise. Parents and carers are also pleased with the quality of teaching. The inspectors found evidence to support nearly all of these views. While there are strengths in the quality of teaching, the recent changes are not sufficiently established to secure consistently good progress.

A very small number of negative comments was received. These were brought to the school's attention and, where appropriate, are reflected in the report.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	57	18	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	60	17	40	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	60	16	38	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	60	16	38	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	62	16	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	60	16	38	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	45	23	56	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	50	18	43	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	45	22	52	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	33	28	67	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	43	20	48	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	52	20	48	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	71	11	26	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



19 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of South Petherwin Community Primary School, South Petherwin
PL15 7LE**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed watching you learn in lessons and talking to you about your school. We are pleased that so many of you filled in the pupils' questionnaire. We would like to share with you what we have learned about your school.

South Petherwin Community Primary School is a satisfactory school. This means that some things are going well, but there are things that could be better. The school has got better since the last inspection and there are a number of good things about the school. Here are some of them:

- You are making an excellent contribution to the school and the community through activities such as the learning forum.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and make healthy choices.
- In the best lessons, you make good progress because you are being active and the work makes you think carefully.
- The adults in the school have worked hard to improve lessons so that you achieve more.

We have asked your teachers to ensure that most of you make good progress by making all your lessons as good as the best ones. They will do this by giving you work that stretches you without being too difficult. We have asked those who lead the school to look at the progress you are making more often so that you can have help if you are not doing as well as expected.

You can help by working hard and encouraging everybody to get better each day. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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