

Pelynt School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111976
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	357017
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Alexander 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	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Mason
Headteacher	Heidi Hoskin
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons and observed three teachers. They also attended two assemblies, observed break and lunchtime activities, and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and parents. They looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. The provision and planning for pupils who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities were evaluated. In addition, questionnaires completed by 32 parents and carers, 38 pupils and six staff were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the consistency of teaching and learning, including the use of assessment, in ensuring that pupils' differing needs are met effectively and they are enabled to make good progress
- the impact of the school's efforts to raise achievement in English and mathematics, and to increase the number of pupils across the school attaining above nationally expected standards
- given continuous changes in senior staffing in recent years, the degree to which leaders and managers at all levels work effectively to bring about and sustain continuous improvements in pupils' achievements.

Information about the school

There has been a significant reduction in the number of pupils attending this small village school in recent years. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and is much higher in some year groups. The main group of needs are related to speech and language difficulties. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. Among other awards, the school has gained Healthy School status. At the time of the inspection, in partnership with a relatively nearby school, a newly appointed part-time executive headteacher, sharing her duties equally between the two schools, had commenced her duties. The new senior leadership team also includes a newly created assistant headteacher position.

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

3

Main findings

- The quality of education provided by Pelynt School is satisfactory. Pupils' attainments by the end of Year 6 are broadly average, reflecting satisfactory progress for all ability groups. Instability in staffing, including at a senior level, has for some time constrained the school's ability to rectify inconsistencies in provision, resulting in gaps in pupils' academic learning. However, the school's ability to self-evaluate and to lift pupils' achievements, both personal and academic, has been strengthened over the past few terms by the collaborative work of acting and assistant headteachers and by the close and effective support of the governing body. This has re-established pupils' good behaviour and good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and has accelerated progress in Key Stage 2. Although very recent, the appointment of an executive headteacher in partnership with another school underpins a more planned and substantive leadership structure and also augurs well for the future. Consequently, the school shows a sound capacity for continued improvement.
- Over the past year the acting assistant headteacher has introduced an efficient mechanism for tracking pupils' achievement. Improved classroom use of assessment has also provided a clear view of what needs to be done to accelerate pupils' progress. This has enabled staff to better meet pupils' individual needs and has led to an increasing number of pupils filling gaps in their previous learning, for example improving their writing skills. Staff have also strengthened the management of the pupils' behaviour and more effective identification and support of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning has also improved and is now satisfactory.
- Other developments, such as the increased information, including in teachers' marking, given to pupils on what they have to do to improve their work are relatively new. As a result, improvement still has some way to go before the good teaching and learning evident in the Years 5 and 6 class becomes a consistent feature across the school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught satisfactorily and make a happy start to school life. However, children in Reception, and in Years 1 and 2, are not always given sufficient direction in how to become independent learners. This slows progress and still leads to some pupils, especially those with more ability in these year groups, not developing their self-enquiry and numeracy skills as well as they should.
- The pupils' good enjoyment of school, as seen in their above average attendance, reflects the good care, guidance and support and inclusive ethos provided by all the staff and volunteers who work in the school. This includes good links with parents

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and the good support of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which enables them to progress as well as their peers.

- A good range of enriching extra-curricular experiences enhance pupils' personal qualities such as their good adoption of healthy living and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, the pupils' independent learning and numeracy skills are not always extended sufficiently or used to enrich learning across the range of subjects.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Put the following in place by the end of the current school year.
- Improve pupils' mathematical skills, especially for the more able pupils, so that they become more proficient in using and applying basic number facts to solve problems.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good, especially in Reception and Years 1 and 2, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to choose and follow their own learning activities thereby enthusing them with a desire to learn
 - developing the independent skills needed to help them to contribute to their own progress.
- Strengthen staff leadership roles across the school, but especially in Reception and Key Stage 1, so that there is a more coherent whole-school approach to improving provision and pupils' achievements.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Observations of lessons show that in response to strengthening but still patchy teaching and learning, pupils' attainment is broadly average and learning and progress are satisfactory overall. In response to consistently good provision, pupils in Years 5 and 6 and an increasing number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making good progress. A scrutiny of pupils' work, especially of their writing, also shows good improvement stemming from helpful marking and the pupils' ownership of targets. Observations of lessons also show the benefits of the pupils' good behaviour. The pupils' eager engagement in the 'Good to be Green' initiative also reflects their improving enjoyment of learning. In English, the number of pupils who previously underachieved has been significantly reduced, and by the end of Year 6 this year there was a significant increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher National Curriculum levels. Although there has been some improvement in mathematics, too many pupils, especially those with more ability and those in Key Stage 1, are not fully developing their knowledge and skill in using numbers to solve problems. This is because they have not developed the independent learning skills needed to promote their future learning. Pupils' attainment is now broadly average in science and in using computers and several pupils, especially in the choir, sing extremely well.

Pupils make healthy choices at break and lunchtimes and enjoy keeping fit. They feel able to discuss any concerns with at least one adult and say that they feel safe. Pupils are polite to adults and show good empathy for each other and for those of differing faiths and cultures. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and make good contributions on

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the school council, as 'Huff and Puff' leaders, distributing play equipment at break times and to the community, and through choral performances, for example. However, not all pupils apply themselves as diligently or independently as they should in their classroom learning. Nevertheless, by the time they leave school, the pupils' satisfactory academic achievement and good relationships prepare them soundly for the future.

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	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
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 quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2, especially in Years 5 and 6, and the good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are the most improved areas of the school's work and are the key reasons for pupils' improved progress. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6, as pupils explained the reasoning within their imaginative poems, there was a strong and effective emphasis on developing and empowering pupils as effective self-evaluative learners. However, such development of the pupils' independent learning skills was a less consistent feature in other classes. Across the school, an improved use of assessment to target pupils' individual needs has had success, for example in lifting skills in reading and writing. This approach is not yet used as effectively in developing pupils' basic numeracy skills. Teachers are aware of the differing needs of their pupils and generally they adapt their planning well and set suitable targets to take this into account. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution in helping

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pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Occasionally, during whole-class introductions when pupils spend too long listening, they are not used to best effect.

The curriculum has been adapted well to develop pupils' personal qualities. This is accomplished, for example, by encouraging their good adoption of healthy living through sports, their awareness of the environment through gardening with the 'Pelynt Diggers' and of the community by participating in a local band. All staff provide good care and support and are careful to treat pupils as individuals. As a result, pupils feel valued and show them respect. All systems to ensure the pupils' welfare are securely in place and implemented to ensure the well-being of each pupil. As a result, when interviewed pupils said that they feel happy at school, 'Because we know everyone and that adults look after us well.'

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

While it is too soon to evaluate the impact of the new executive headteacher and the close partnerships with a local school, these developments reflect well-planned and strategically important decisions by the effective governing body. These actions also show a clear determination to move the school forward after a period of staffing instability. Over the past few terms, the work of the previous acting headteacher and assistant headteacher, well supported by governors, began the development of more effective provision and brought good gains in tackling previous underachievement. Now, with the guidance of the new executive headteacher, the school has a clearer view of where improvements are needed and is better placed to monitor and bring about improvement. As a result, self-evaluation and development planning are now satisfactory.

Staff are rigorous in eliminating discrimination and are committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. Currently though, the quality of provision is mixed across the school and some pupils are enabled to make better progress than others. Leaders and managers promote good links with parents and ensure that pupils' welfare is safeguarded well. Currently the sound links with outside agencies are reflected in the pupils' satisfactory overall achievement. However, there are strengths in the way the school enlists support from specialists for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and uses links with the community to promote community cohesion.

The local, national and international dimensions of community cohesion are developed effectively through events, visits to more culturally diverse parts of Britain and links with a school in Uganda. Senior managers continue to strengthen management structures, with the improved leadership of special educational needs reflecting good improvement.

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However, not all leadership roles have been sufficiently supported, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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

Given the very small size of each year group, attainment on entry to Reception varies much from year to year. In recent years, language, numeracy and personal skills have been mostly below those expected nationally for children of this age. Progress is satisfactory overall, but mixed. In response to good arrangements for children's welfare and close links with parents, children make good progress in enjoying school and relating well towards each other. As a result of improved and now satisfactory leadership, staff are improving their use of assessments to help children learn by collecting photographs and notes within each child's 'Learning Journey'. The curriculum is planned satisfactorily to include all areas of learning. A relatively new covered area offers children some varied practical learning opportunities. However, there are limited chances for children to choose activities for themselves, which constrains the development of their independence.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	3

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Stage	
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Views of parents and carers

Most of the parents and carers are happy with the school. The large majority of the high number of responses to the Ofsted questionnaire were positive, with almost all parents and carers agreeing that the school keeps children safe and that children enjoy school. A few parents and carers were interviewed informally in the playground and most also expressed positive support of the school. A small minority expressed disagreement with the statements in the questionnaire and most of the issues raised were associated with concerns about pupils' progress and behaviour. Progress has been an issue, especially in previous years, but is now satisfactory and improving. The school acknowledges that the need to place Year 2 pupils in a class with Year 3 and 4 pupils because of a falling roll was not easily accepted by several parents. The school has been successful in improving pupils' behaviour, which is now good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pelynt School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 56 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	47	16	50	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	41	19	59	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	34	17	53	4	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	19	19	59	7	22	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	25	19	59	5	16	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	19	20	63	3	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	34	17	53	4	13	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)	5	16	20	63	2	6	2	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	4	13	24	75	4	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	9	21	66	7	22	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	28	20	63	3	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	19	20	63	3	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	31	17	53	5	16	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.



20 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pelynt School, Looe, PL13 2LG

Thank you for welcoming us during our visit to your school. We enjoyed seeing you at work and talking with you. I would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to us, particularly those representing the school council. We were particularly impressed by your good behaviour and friendly relationships and by the progress of Years 5 and 6 pupils. I was particularly pleased by the excellent performance of the school choir who so kindly sang for me at short notice. We agree with your teachers and governors that Pelynt is a satisfactory but improving school.

These are the other main things we found.

- You make satisfactory progress, although some of you can do better, especially in Reception and Years 1 and 2.
- You feel safe at school, enjoy an interesting range of activities, and have a good awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there is an increasing amount of good teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6, which helps you to make better progress.
- Staff provide good care for you and develop some good links with specialist staff to give you extra support when you need it.
- The new executive headteacher, senior staff and governors are strengthening how they work together and, in close partnership with another school, are seeking to help you to achieve more.

To further improve the school, we have asked the executive headteacher, staff and governors to:

- improve your numeracy skills and help you to become better at solving mathematical problems
- improve the quality of teaching and learning in Reception and Years 1 and 2 by making sure that you have more opportunities to choose activities for yourselves and learn how to take responsibility for your work
- make sure that all staff with management responsibilities are fully supported by senior leaders.

You can help by learning to think for yourselves and always giving of your best.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter

Lead inspector

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