

Sithney Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111824
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	356987
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Palmer
Headteacher	Susan Evans
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2008
School address	Crowntown Helston TR13 0AE
Telephone number	01326 572910
Fax number	01326 572910
Email address	head@Sithney.Cornwall.Sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2011
Inspection number	356987

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed five lessons taught by two different teachers and one teaching assistant. Meetings were held with school leaders, pupils and governors. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, teachers' plans, assessment information, school tracking data and external reports. The inspection questionnaires were answered by 20 parents.

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

- Whether writing skills have improved since the last inspection.
- The rate of children's progress in literacy in the Reception class.
- The quality of community cohesion and its impact on pupils' cultural development.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school with two classes. Pupils come from the surrounding villages. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to most schools. All pupils are White British and none speaks English as an additional language. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage share their classroom with pupils in Years 1 and 2 but have their own discrete play area. There is a pre-school on site for children between the ages of two and four which also provides out-of-hours care for pre-school and school age pupils. This is not managed by the governing body.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It provides a very positive ethos in which pupils thrive. Parents and carers are very happy with the school. 'It offers a warm, welcoming, safe and happy learning environment,' wrote one. It provides outstanding care, support and guidance which contribute to pupils' positive behaviour and their good spiritual, social and moral development. Parents and carers rightly believe their children are safe and secure at school and they are confirmed in this view by pupils' exceptional awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils' outstanding contribution to the school and the local community is evident in the way the older ones play with, and take care of, younger ones in the playground. Pupils' cultural development is more limited and they lack clear understanding of the breadth of cultures in the United Kingdom today. Despite enjoying school, pupils' attendance is only average because a few do not attend as often as they should.

Pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, achieve well during their time at the school and their attainment has improved since the last inspection; pupils now attain above average levels in English and mathematics by Year 6. Pupils make better progress in mathematics and reading. The school has had significant success in improving pupils' skills through good quality teaching and the outstanding curriculum. Whole-school topics engage pupils' interests so that they are keen and eager to learn and the school's creative approach enables pupils to achieve particularly well in art. Rigorous tracking shows which pupils require additional support so they quickly catch up. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve well because of high levels of individual attention and focused targets. In a small minority of English lessons, the pace of learning slows because of too much turn-taking. As a result, not enough writing is expected of the older pupils and their skills in writing, although improving, are not as good as they are in reading.

Good leadership and management are key features of the school's success. The headteacher is at the centre of all that happens at the school and she has developed excellent partnerships with staff, local schools and the community, all of which are having a very positive impact on pupils' achievements. Safeguarding, including child protection procedures, is good.

Through effective self-evaluation, staff and governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Rising levels of attainment and improvements to the provision since the last inspection show that the school has a good capacity to continue improving.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the pace of learning in English lessons, particularly for older pupils, by:
 - making sure that pupils do enough in the time allowed
 - ensuring that turn-taking by some groups does not inhibit the learning of others.
- Work closely with pupils, parents and carers to improve attendance, particularly the small minority of pupils who do not come to school as often as they should.
- Develop the strategy for community cohesion so that it contributes effectively to pupils' awareness of the range of cultures in the United Kingdom and beyond.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school, they have positive attitudes to learning and their levels of attainment are rising. In mathematics, for example, where teachers often devise problems based on pupils' experiences, pupils engage fully with their tasks and are keen to succeed. In Years 3 and 4, pupils made good progress as they worked out how much fence a farmer would need to keep his cows in a given space. Pupils worked eagerly together to find the perimeter of the space and quickly found the correct answer. In Years 5 and 6, pupils happily solved problems linked to percentages. They quickly learned how to work out their answers and checked them with their calculators. Practical learning is a key feature of successful lessons. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 developed confidence in speaking out loud as they acted out a story. They eagerly took part, found the right clothes to wear and were keen to contribute, while their language skills and understanding of the story were extended by skilful questioning.

Pupils behave well so there is a harmonious atmosphere in all lessons. Pupils' good awareness of healthy lifestyles is reflected in the way that they choose a wide range of fruit and vegetables at lunchtime and take lots of exercise, although a few still bring crisps in their lunch-boxes. They say that there is absolutely no bullying. Pupils regularly initiate fundraising. For example, they planned and took part in a 'welly throw' in support of the Woodland Trust and had a non-uniform day recently for Shelter Box. Pupils often invite the local community, including elderly people, into school to take part in concerts, lunches, harvest festival and assemblies. Given their positive personal development and their above average attainment, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	3
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?

Teaching has improved since the last inspection because of good monitoring and staff development. An effective assessment system has been introduced and this ensures that pupils know their targets and understand what they need to do next to improve their work. Homework plays a valuable part in consolidating learning. Teachers provide activities from the rich and varied curriculum that regularly engage and excite pupils. The current topic on islands, for example, has helped to improve pupils' understanding of the wider world. It has made good use of their numeracy skills as they use grid references to find different islands on maps. Evidence of past work around the school, such as recent topics on the Titanic and 'Under the Sea', shows clear evidence of how the curriculum is enhancing pupils' learning and engaging them in many practical and creative tasks

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. Induction and transition procedures are very effective. Leaders work strenuously with pupils, support agencies and parents to improve attendance and it has risen as a consequence. Provision to support different groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are more able is very effective. Partnerships play a valuable role in providing opportunities for pupils to work with those of a similar ability and age from other local schools, whom they will meet when they go to secondary school. Pupils really like this. A recent joint art activity day for pupils from different schools was very well received and pupils say they would like more of these.

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 quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. She is ably supported by the senior teacher and other staff. Excellent partnerships with support services and with local schools contribute well to pupils' learning and personal development. The school promotes equality well and is robust about eliminating any discrimination. The headteacher, governors and staff work tirelessly to drive improvement. Links with parents are exceptional. They are kept fully informed, welcomed into the school and regularly use the staffroom for their meetings and for training. The governing body has a clear view of the school and governors regularly hold the school's leadership to account for its decisions. Statutory responsibilities are fully met. The school has made a sound start to its strategy for community cohesion, although at present links and activities to strengthen pupils' cultural development are limited.

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	2
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle happily in the Reception class alongside their older peers. They clearly enjoy coming to school and show enthusiasm for their tasks. They benefit from good accommodation and resources both in the classroom and outdoors. In their personal, social and emotional development, they learn to make healthy choices of fruit at break-times and play happily with their peers. Effective welfare arrangements keep them safe and secure.

Many children enter the Reception class with skills that are well below expected levels, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development. Although when they enter Year 1 their skills in communication, language and literacy are still below average, they make good progress in Reception and quickly begin to catch up because of some well-planned and exciting activities. This was evident in a practical task, where good questioning helped children to learn about wrapping parcels to send in the post. They made good progress as they learned that their parcels needed an address and they wrote simple labels and drew a picture or wrote a letter to go inside them. Children develop confidence, eagerly play in the playground with older pupils and confidently chatter to adults. They show good imagination in their play and select activities quickly. For example, in the outdoor area, a group of boys and girls were playing happily in their sand tray. They rapidly chose an activity and handled their toys carefully, digging and filling their trucks as they took turns.

Staff are good at planning and creating a vibrant environment. Children's achievements are regularly assessed and are well recorded in photographic and note form and their 'learning journeys' clearly show how much progress children make over time. Strong partnership with the on-site pre-school has a positive impact on children's welfare and ensures a smooth transition to school.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the school. They believe that their children are very safe and secure and that the school helps them to keep healthy. 'As parents we could not have found another school like Sithney. My son is so happy and enjoying his learning journey,' commented a parent. 'My child is thoroughly enjoying learning,' commented another. All of the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaires are happy with the school and feel well informed about their child's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspector received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 37 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	70	6	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	85	3	15	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	95	1	5	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	95	1	5	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	70	6	30	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)	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	95	1	5	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	95	1	5	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	85	3	15	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	100	0	0	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



11 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sithney Primary School, Helston TR13 0AE

Thank you for your help in my recent visit to your school. I enjoyed talking to you. This letter is to tell you what I found out about your school.

The school provides you with a good education and here are some of the best things about it.

- You behave well and get on well with all your friends at school.
- You understand how important it is to keep fit and healthy and how to stay safe.
- Most of you achieve well and make good progress in your lessons.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are trying hard to improve.
- Your teachers give you lots of exciting things to do and you really enjoy your learning.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased with the school.
- You are doing particularly well in art.

I am asking your school to:

- increase the amount of writing you do in lessons, particularly in the older class
- work closely with you and your parents and carers to make sure that you all come to school as often as you should
- teach you more about the different cultures in the United Kingdom and beyond.

You can help with all of these.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.