

St Ives Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111800
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	384340
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Hurley
Headteacher	Sue Smith
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by 12 teachers and held meetings with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including that relating to pupils' attainment and progress, the planning of the curriculum and arrangements to keep pupils safe. They analysed the responses to questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and by 41 parents and carers.

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

- The impact of the school's work to improve attainment in writing.
- The effectiveness of the initiatives to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- The success of leaders and managers in ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.

Information about the school

The school is of average size and serves a coastal town. Most pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Their needs mostly relate to moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above average, as is the proportion of children who are looked after.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Sustained, dynamic and highly effective leadership by the headteacher, other senior leaders and the governing body has brought about continuous improvement over a considerable period of time. In 2011, attainment by pupils leaving Year 6 was high in English and above average in mathematics, continuing the trend of improvement seen in previous years. This represents excellent progress by pupils, most notably in their writing, which had been a particular focus of the school's work. It is now rightly focused on bringing standards in mathematics up to the same level. All groups of pupils make equally outstanding progress. Their progress is tracked in a highly effective way, with any shortcomings being quickly identified and tackled. The school has made particularly good use of one-to-one teaching to raise attainment, and can demonstrate the positive impact of this on pupils' progress through high-quality monitoring.

A notable feature of the school is pupils' superb behaviour. They respond to teachers' instructions very quickly and calmly, enabling learning to proceed at a fast pace in all lessons. This is because of excellent teaching, in which all teachers promote equally high expectations of pupils and use an agreed common approach to teaching and classroom management. As a result, all pupils know exactly what is expected of them from early in Year 3. Lessons are exciting and pupils always carry out tasks enthusiastically. There is much high-quality discussion between pupils about their learning. Teaching assistants support those who need extra help with great subtlety and skill. The outstanding curriculum has been researched in depth and ideas from a wide range of sources are used to motivate pupils, from local Cornish history to links with schools in Africa and other parts of the United Kingdom. Opportunities in subjects such as music, drama and sport give pupils a wide range of opportunities to meet and compete with others, enhancing their excellent contribution to the community. Pupils' great enjoyment of school is shown by the fact that attendance, an area identified for improvement at the last inspection, is now high.

The school's work to support pupils and their families, especially the significant proportion whose circumstances make them vulnerable, is of very high quality. Excellent partnerships with other schools and a wide range of external agencies ensure that the needs of all are met. Parents and carers receive high-quality advice and guidance, for example on how to maintain learning during the summer holiday break. The outstanding work to keep pupils safe is exemplified by the use of a health and safety consultant who works in school on a weekly basis. Pupils have excellent knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy, and enjoy running and using their healthy

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tuck shop at break times.

The headteacher has built a staff team which is highly motivated and which is committed to ensuring that teaching is of the highest quality. Staff work together to identify the most effective approaches, to monitor rigorously the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and to challenge each other to improve. The school's work is evaluated with great accuracy, leading to very effective identification of the priorities for development. The members of the outstanding governing body understand their role very well and effectively challenge school leaders, especially on issues concerning priorities for the deployment of resources such as the purchase of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment, or the value of a trip to London for Year 6 pupils. All these very positive features mean that the school has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics to match that in English by fully implementing the existing plans to do this.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

A Year 6 pupil was observed telling her story to her partner. She did so with great expression and fluency, occasionally referring to notes. Vocabulary was of the highest order, for example: 'I made a conscious decision to ...' Her partner and the inspector listened with rapt attention. This approach leads to writing that is of very high quality. In Year 4, pupils worked on multiplication problems. Crucially, they were able to correctly reorganise the problem, for example $4 \times 6 = 24$, so $24 \div 4 = 6$. This is an advanced skill for pupils of this age to have mastered. Work in books and the school's records show that all pupils are making rapid progress from typically below average starting points. Almost all achieve their demanding targets and many make greater progress than expected. Pupils show high levels of skill in subjects such as music, drama and physical education. They have a very good understanding of other faiths and cultures because they have lots of opportunities to meet with people from a range of backgrounds.

When staff ask pupils to do something, they do it quickly and readily. This is not to say that they lack initiative, as there is often lively conversation and activity in classrooms, but this is always under the teacher's control. Pupils, parents and carers agree that pupils are very safe in school. They learn to manage risk, such as when using the climbing wall in physical education. They care for each other and have many opportunities to take responsibility. They are keen to help others, such as through collections for charity. Pupils' high attendance contributes to their excellent preparation for secondary education. Not only do they leave the school with well-developed skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, but they have also learned to study independently and collaborate with others. The school places great emphasis on developing pupils' self-esteem and hence, on leaving, they are confident and

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positive, excited to tackle the next phase of their lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently of high quality. The pace of lessons is brisk, instructions are clear and expectations are high. In English, great emphasis is placed on the teaching of grammatical structure from an early age. Year 3 pupils were introduced to the concepts of imperative verbs and sequencing connectives. While some struggled with these ideas initially, by the end of the lesson sensitive intervention by adults ensured that all made at least good progress. Identical terminology is used throughout the school, hence by Year 6 pupils are very confident in their learning. Actions, role play and recitation are used extensively and consistently to reinforce learning throughout the school and pupils clearly enjoy their involvement in these routines. Assessment is used exceptionally well to identify and plan for pupils' individual needs, which are met very well by highly effective support teachers and assistants. Pupils routinely assess their own, each other's and even the teacher's work, such as when telling a story. 'Your actions could have shown us more,' a Year 6 pupil correctly told his teacher. Well-planned work to further enhance attainment in mathematics to bring it into line with English is already having a positive impact.

Pupils enjoy an exciting range of activities. Work in Year 6, for example, was based around the story of An Gof, a Cornish hero of the 15th century, which enabled pupils to learn about their local history and environment. Additional activities are very well planned. For example all pupils have a residential experience, starting overnight in

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

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the school building for Year 3 and progressing to three days in London for Year 6.

On receiving news that an outbreak of sickness was circulating in a local school, the headteacher ensured that all surfaces touched by pupils or adults, including those such as computer keyboards, were disinfected. This is an example of the excellent care, guidance and support that pupils receive, as is the fact that each pupil has a comprehensive record of their achievements since starting in the infants’ school. This is continually updated, making clear the next steps the pupil needs to take in his or her learning and the targets they should be aiming for. Pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, such as those who are looked after, are given the support they need to succeed and, as a result, make excellent progress in line with their peers. For example, they are enabled to have full attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	1
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 outstanding leadership of the headteacher has transformed this school. Always striving to give pupils the best possible educational experience, she has built a dedicated team around her who share her drive and ambition for success. Staff are self-critical and continually strive for improvement through research into effective teaching and very well-targeted professional development. Appointments from all parts of the United Kingdom and overseas have broadened pupils’ experience of the world and have made a strong contribution to the school’s excellent contribution to community cohesion. The small but highly effective governing body shares the headteacher’s vision and has given her the tools to do her job, while rigorously monitoring progress and asking hard questions of school leaders. No form of discrimination is tolerated, as shown by the school’s uncompromising response to the occasional case of cyber bullying. The equally high achievement of all pupils demonstrates the outstanding commitment to equality of opportunity. The school’s outstanding practice to ensure pupils are safe is further enhanced by high levels of training in the requirements of child protection and excellent partnerships with, for example, the police and social services, and other schools. The school keeps parents and carers fully informed of their child’s progress and involved in their education, for example through newsletters and consultation, and not least through its excellent website.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires was relatively low, but the school had already issued its own questionnaire shortly before the inspection. Nevertheless, the results were largely very positive and supportive. Parents and carers strongly felt that their children were happy and safe, and that the school is led and managed well. A number of positive comments were typified by: 'The school sets very high standards and is a happy place'. A very small number of individual concerns raised were investigated, but they followed no particular pattern and no evidence was found to support them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Ives Junior 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 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 229 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	59	17	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	83	7	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	26	63	14	34	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	59	14	34	3	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	66	14	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	29	71	12	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	51	18	44	2	5	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)	27	66	13	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	25	61	16	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	59	15	37	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	51	17	41	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	78	8	20	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	28	68	11	27	2	5	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 8 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



22 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Ives Junior School, St Ives, TR26 1DN

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We especially enjoyed talking with you and seeing your work.

Yours is an outstanding school. You all make excellent progress in your work and by the time you leave at the end of Year 6 you reach high levels in the English tests and above average levels in the mathematics tests. We enjoyed watching you learn and saw that you all do equally well. Your excellent records of achievement also showed us this. We were most impressed with your excellent behaviour and the ways in which you learn with your partner in lessons. You told us you like your school and are happy there, so your attendance is high. Teaching is excellent and if you need extra help you receive it. We were especially impressed by the way you use actions, drama and speaking to learn. There are lots of exciting activities such as the residential visits. You are prepared very well for secondary school and are cared for well in other ways, such as being provided with healthy food and making sure the school is clean so that you do not catch illnesses.

The headteacher, staff and the governing body lead the school very well. It is obvious that they all want you to do as well as you can at school and in the future. They have spotted where the school could be better and have worked hard to make that happen. They make sure you are safe and offer you and your families help when you need it. The staff are already working on making sure that you do as well in mathematics as you do in English, and we are asking them to carry on with that work. You can help by making the most of the exciting new opportunities and continuing to try really hard in your work.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler
Lead inspector

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