

Mullion School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112058
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	378414
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Frater HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	578
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Meridew
Headteacher	Mike Sandford
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 April 2007
School address	Meaver Road Mullion Helston TR12 7EB
Telephone number	01326 240098
Fax number	01326 241382
Email address	enquiries@mullion-comp.cornwall.sch.uk

Age group	11–16
Inspection date(s)	12–13 October 2011
Inspection number	378414

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 information 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'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 33 lessons, saw 30 teachers, and held meetings with parents and carers, groups of students, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation form, its monitoring of pupils' progress and of the quality of teaching, school improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to safeguarding children. They also looked at questionnaires completed by students, staff and 355 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 learning and progress of all students, particularly lower and higher attaining students, to ascertain whether teachers' use of targets and assessment challenges them consistently to make good and better progress.
- The engagement of all students, particularly by gender and in English, to determine how well teaching and the curriculum meet their needs, interests and aspirations.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning, to determine how rigorously the gaps in achievement between student groups and subjects are closing.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than most secondary schools. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of students from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is low. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and a high number of these students have a statement of special educational needs. Their needs relate mainly to specific learning difficulty (dyslexia) and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A few students access the school by wheelchairs. The school provides a small audiology unit for the local authority. Many more students than is usual join the school at times other than at the start of Year 7. The school's specialism of the performing arts in dance, drama and music was re-designated in 2010. The school has attained a number of awards including the silver Artsmark, Investors in People (Silver Award), Healthy School and Dyslexia Friendly School awards.

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. It meets the needs of individual students exceptionally well in most aspects of its work. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. A parent/carer wrote, 'The school is exceptionally aware of each child as an individual and concerned to meet all their needs.' Students' achievement is good and improving. Challenging targets, including for the specialist subjects, are met and exceeded. As a result of good and sometimes better learning and progress in lessons, attainment, as shown in GCSE examinations, has improved and is above average overall. In an increasing number of subjects, including science and mathematics, attainment is high. However, it is broadly average in English. This is because not all English lessons engage students, particularly boys, sufficiently to make consistently good progress. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress due to the very effective support from well-trained specialist teachers and teaching assistants. Students enjoy school very much. Their outstanding behaviour and high attendance, and their exceptionally positive attitudes, contribute well to their learning. Excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development also contribute significantly to the positive ethos for learning.

Students say they feel very safe in school and they appreciate the fact that staff know them exceptionally well. Safeguarding procedures, and the quality of care, guidance and support, are outstanding. The school works in partnership with a range of schools, colleges and businesses to support students' transition between schools and to extend the curriculum offer to meet students' changing needs. Consequently, the curriculum is outstanding. While a growing minority of teaching is outstanding, the quality of teaching is good overall. Through regular assessment, teachers know the needs of individual students very well and adjust their support for them accordingly. However, because teachers' planning does not always focus precisely enough on the differing needs of groups of students, opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge less- and more-able students to make better progress. Students are not provided consistently with detailed feedback to enable them to know how to improve their work to reach their challenging targets. This is confirmed by the completed student questionnaires. However, the school places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of all its work and gaps between groups are reducing.

All aspects of leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, very ably supported by his two assistant headteachers, is highly effective in inspiring the school community to work towards ambitious targets for all students. Self-evaluation

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

by senior and subject leaders is accurate and informs well-focused action plans. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and improving, and all other aspects of provision are outstanding. Consequently, outcomes in achievement are good and improving, and outcomes in well-being are high. Given the robust systems that are in place and the strong track record of improvement, the school demonstrates outstanding capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate students' learning and progress consistently across subjects, particularly in English, by:
 - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching
 - ensuring lesson plans focus consistently on the needs of groups of students, especially less and more-able students, and boys in English
 - providing students with detailed feedback to enable them to know how to improve their work to reach their challenging targets.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students' above-average attainment represents good progress from their attainment on entry, which is broadly average. Students particularly enjoy opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, as in science investigations, problem solving in mathematics, evaluating how to improve their products in art, design and technology and in improving their performance in dance, drama and music. In such lessons, they make exceptional progress and exceed their challenging targets. As a result of rising attainment in the performing arts, the school attained the Artsmark award. While students make satisfactory progress in English, boys make less progress than girls. This is because not all English lessons engage boys sufficiently, for example in activities such as exploring texts and discussing their own views in groups. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are integrated fully into the life of the school, enjoy their lessons and make exceptional progress from their starting points.

Students say they feel very safe in this small school where they are well known by all staff. They say incidents of bullying are rare. They are confident that, should any incidents occur, they would be addressed very effectively by staff or prefects. Students are very supportive of each other and their outstanding behaviour is a key factor in their good learning and progress. Through its work for the Healthy School award, the school is very effective in promoting students' understanding of healthy lifestyles, including awareness of the consequences of alcohol and drug abuse. Most students choose healthy food options and participate in the many opportunities for sport. Students are very proud of their school. They eagerly take responsibility for organising a wide range of events in the school and community. They are regarded highly in the local area. Students apply their work-related, literacy, numeracy and computer skills very effectively across many areas of school life. The development of

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 skills, together with high attendance, prepares students exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and employment. Almost all students continue their education on leaving the school. Students reflect deeply on a wide range of faiths in religious education and on ethical issues in citizenship. Their exceptionally positive relationships with other students and staff promote very effective social skills. Through sport, the performing arts and links with schools in inner-cities and in other countries, including Africa, students learn to value cultural experiences and cultural diversity to a high level.

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	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?

The great majority of teaching is securing good progress and learning. Typical strengths in teaching include strong and sometimes inspirational subject knowledge, high expectations, positive relationships, and effective use of resources including interactive whiteboards. The support of teaching assistants is focused very effectively on students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The few less successful lessons do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to share and improve their work. In the minority of lessons that are outstanding, no time is wasted in engaging students in activities that are matched very well to their differing needs and that lead them all briskly to challenging learning objectives. Regular feedback and probing questions are used skilfully to extend students' understanding.

The outstanding curriculum provides an extensive range of opportunities to develop basic skills, and to attain vocational and academic qualifications. Performing arts

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

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

events, educational visits and residential trips, together with a very wide range of sport and other clubs, provide students with memorable experiences and rich learning opportunities. Very well-targeted guidance and support for all students have enabled them to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. The school knows individual students and their families very well. Its work with a range of agencies to sustain the learning, development and well-being of individual students facing challenging circumstances is deeply embedded at all levels. Many parents and carers praised the support provided by the school. Their comments include, 'The school is one where, quite genuinely, every child matters.'

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 clear focus of all leaders and managers on meeting individual needs, including those of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, promotes equality and addresses discrimination very effectively. The school's success in raising achievement is resulting in morale being very high. Staff feel valued and well supported, as confirmed by the school's Investors in People award. Subject leaders support senior leaders effectively in monitoring and evaluating the achievement of all students and in identifying and addressing any underperformance. Action plans are informed by accurate self-evaluation, very effective partnerships, and regular surveys of students, parents and carers. The governing body has high levels of insight into the work of the school because members are linked to subject departments and visit regularly. It keeps the work of the school under constant review and is confident in providing high levels of professional challenge to hold the school to account. Governors and staff receive regular training in safeguarding children, in particular child protection. The school's quality assurance and risk assessment systems are very thorough and its work with other key agencies is exemplary. The school's work in promoting community cohesion is informed by an incisive audit of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context. Students learn about these three dimensions from very effective local, national and international links, including an exchange with an inner-city school. As a result, students understand the importance of community cohesion and the school community itself is highly cohesive. Given that outcomes for individuals and groups of students are outstanding overall, and resources are managed very effectively, the school provides outstanding value for money.

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	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

A much higher proportion of parents and carers than is usual responded to the questionnaire. The levels of satisfaction for each question are above average. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school, as indicated by the many comments parents and carers wrote.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mullion 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 355 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 578 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	192	54	150	42	8	2	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	207	58	144	41	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	181	51	159	45	7	2	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	166	47	167	47	9	3	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	193	54	151	43	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	133	37	192	54	15	4	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	136	38	186	52	24	7	1	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)	192	54	140	39	5	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	183	52	158	45	7	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	172	48	166	47	5	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	152	43	168	47	10	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	220	62	127	36	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	234	66	113	32	3	1	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 08 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.



14 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Mullion School, Helston, TR12 7EB

Thank you for supporting the inspection of your school. It was a pleasure to see you at work and to have meetings with some of you. The following is a summary of what the inspectors found.

Your school is outstanding. The headteacher and other managers make sure the school meets the needs of each of you exceptionally well. You told us you enjoy your lessons. We found that you make good progress, particularly in practical subjects such as science and mathematics. GCSE results are above average. Your behaviour is outstanding and your attendance is high. You told us that you feel very safe in school and we found the school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for you. You like the fact that staff know you very well. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school works with other schools and colleges to provide a wide choice of subjects for you to study in Years 10 and 11, including some work-related subjects; this is outstanding.

The quality of teaching is good overall, and some is outstanding. We have asked the headteacher and staff to increase the number of outstanding lessons so that you make even better progress in all subjects. We have also asked teachers to make sure that lesson plans focus consistently on your different needs. In addition, we have asked them to make sure that, through their feedback and marking, they enable you to know how to improve your work. You can help by monitoring your own progress towards your targets.

We wish you continuing success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Sue Frater
Her Majesty's 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.**