

Polruan Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111883
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	378380
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Martyn Groucutt

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	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Mason
Headteacher	Heidi Hoskin
Date of previous school inspection	25 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. A total of four lessons taught by the school's two teachers were observed, together with a physical education lesson taught by a visiting advanced skills teacher and a forest school lesson on National Trust land which was led by one of their employees. Meetings were held with the senior managers, teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice-chair and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and data on pupils' progress, together with a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding and protecting pupils. A total of 20 parent and carer questionnaires were scrutinised, together with those received from staff and Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- The impact of joining a federation with another local primary school.
- The ways in which the school addresses identified weaknesses in overall pupil performance.
- The impact of the development of a more devolved style of leadership and management.
- The steps taken by the school to ensure that pupils with additional needs are supported in reaching their full potential.

Information about the school

Polruan Primary is far smaller than the average primary school and has only two classes, one for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the other covering Key Stage 2. In July 2011 it entered into a federation with another local primary school after a year of sharing an executive headteacher. The two schools share an executive headteacher, who was previously the headteacher at Polruan, and a single governing body although the inspection focused solely on Polruan. Virtually all the pupils are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language. Numbers known to be eligible for free school meals are around the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. A small but significant number of pupils join the school at different times. Since the last inspection a new assistant headteacher has joined the school, enabling the previous headteacher to relinquish her teaching role to become the non-teaching executive headteacher.

The school has been awarded the Active Sports award and has Healthy Schools status. It has also been awarded the local authority's PADL (Promoting Active Democracy Loudly) award for the active role played by pupils in the school council.

A room in the building is rented to a privately operated pre-school group which many of the pupils had previously attended, but this did not form part of the inspection.

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

Polruan is a good school where every pupil is given the opportunity to make the most of their potential. Parental support is extremely strong. One parent, reflecting the views of many said, 'We cannot speak highly enough of the teaching and leadership in the school.' Under the inspirational executive headteacher and staff who all demonstrate strong commitment to the school, systems have been put in place to track pupils' progress towards individual, challenging targets. A six-week monitoring cycle enables a detailed picture of every pupil's individual achievement and progress to be built up over the year, and as targets are met new ones are initiated. There is clear evidence of improving outcomes.

The whole-school picture of progress is always up to date, giving clear information on the achievement of different groups and of those identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. For example, the underachievement of boys has been a focus, and is now being addressed. Highly effective systems and procedures support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they make good progress. Close checks ensure that learning gaps between these pupils and their peers are closing. Having relinquished her teaching commitment the headteacher is now focused entirely on leading and managing the two schools. Subject leaders across the schools are starting to maximise the expertise available and systems that avoid duplication of effort are being implemented.

Pupils really enjoy school and demonstrate commitment to learning. Pupils of all ages play together well at break times. Behaviour in and around school is exemplary. When pupils who display challenging behaviour join the school, their behaviour is managed extremely well, with carefully developed behaviour plans demonstrating the strong links with other professionals. Pupils participate in the wider life of their school and local community with enthusiasm and commitment. It is not surprising that the pupils and all of the parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire said that the school keeps its pupils safe. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are outstanding and on occasions the strong links with other agencies have resulted in additional support for whole families in situations where they might be vulnerable. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average but data show that pupils who started at the school in the Reception Year at the expected levels make good progress throughout and leave Year 6 with above average attainment. In most year groups there are pupils, some of whom find themselves in vulnerable circumstances, who have recently moved into the area. Although data show these pupils are not always attaining at

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expected levels they make good progress from their starting points and achievement for all groups is at least good. The school has acknowledged that writing is its weakest area and steps taken to address this are continuing, with standards already starting to rise. Support to improve the writing of those pupils who join the school late is not always successful in closing gaps and removing barriers to learning quickly enough to maximise their potential. Some pupils need further support to undertake independent learning. Teaching is good and teachers use assessment well to keep a check on pupils' individual progress. The outstanding care, guidance and support of pupils are underpinned by this detailed knowledge of individual pupils and are an integral part of carefully managed procedures for transition into and out of the school.

Stronger leadership at all levels, action to improve the quality of teaching, individual challenge to every pupil and effective self-evaluation demonstrate the school's good capacity for sustained improvement. Senior leaders, managers and the governing body have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to get even better. Leaders are focused on raising standards and sustaining the benefits that have accrued from federation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate rates of progress and raise attainment in writing by ensuring:
 - high-quality intervention programmes are provided
 - increased opportunities for guided work and independent learning.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - subject leadership is shared across the two schools with common subject leadership seeking to always maximise expertise
 - there are full opportunities for staff to develop their expertise in, for example, assessment and moderation across the schools.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Teachers use assessment well to plan work which motivates and challenges all pupils within the mixed-age classes and ensures that identified weaknesses are addressed. Pupils respond to this in a positive way. Older pupils' positive commitment to learning provides an excellent role model for younger pupils. Pupils work well together, for example in phonic work, when grouped by ability rather than by age. Support for the pupils with a range of additional needs who have just joined the school is carefully managed and implemented so that gaps in their learning are reduced. Learning is fun and engaging. For example, Years 3 to 6 enjoyed using video interviews, paired discussion and re-enactment to hone their skills in storytelling. Years 1 and 2 pupils used phonics skills to very good effect to develop good reading skills because they were well supported by the teacher and teaching assistant to successfully sound out words and sentences. Pupils learn well and make good progress because they feel

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safe and confident. Attendance is good because pupils enjoy school. Pupils are clear about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle, which has been a priority of the school over many years and is recognised in the Healthy Schools award. The development of academic skills goes alongside pupils’ outstanding contribution to the smooth running of the school and the wider community, cooperation and teamwork in supporting future economic well-being. Pupils know right from wrong, they form strong, positive relationships and gain a good understanding of cultural diversity through the curriculum.

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	3
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	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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good because it engages pupils and makes them keen to become good learners, irrespective of their academic ability or background. English, mathematics and science are well resourced. The school is very well equipped with computers and interactive whiteboards which are used to very good effect and make learning exciting. Teachers and teaching assistants form excellent partnerships, so that pupils are well supported. The wider curriculum is moving to a more topic-based approach and this is helping pupils to apply their learning to wider contexts. Excellent use is made of the outstanding natural environment for a wide variety of learning. One example is the environmental work led by the National Trust which reflects the strong partnerships that support the curriculum and enables pupils to gain hands-on experience of practical ecology. The sports partnership enables the school to buy in the expertise of an advanced skills teacher for physical education. These lessons are

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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lively and engage the pupils in a very positive way. All lessons are marked by good pace, clear expectations and lesson objectives, and a range of activities which means there is always a high level of pupil engagement. This is central to supporting the good progress that they make.

Such small pupil numbers enable staff to develop a very good understanding of the needs of every pupil. As a result care, guidance and support are outstanding. Starting with the planned introductions for children who join from the pre-school group, through to the care taken to ensure smooth transition to secondary school, the needs of each individual are known and addressed. Those with additional needs are a focus for additional help, reflected in inter-agency working for those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. This includes continuing to track and support as needed pupils who have moved on to secondary school.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads by example and expects the very highest standards of professionalism. Consequently, staff show total commitment to the school and their pupils. Now that she has been released from classroom teaching, the headteacher has instituted supportive systems for monitoring and observation. Effective performance management ensures challenging personal targets based on the wider needs of the school. The support, training and development for this is increasingly based on expertise now available across the federation. Members of the governing body have been centrally involved in the development of the new regime and so have a detailed understanding of their role, which they carry out to very good effect. Links with parents and carers are extremely strong, with newsletters that are weekly from teachers and fortnightly from the headteacher. Care was taken to ensure the full engagement of parents in the development of the federation. External links are extremely effective and a range of professional expertise, for example services for psychology, mental health, a range of therapies and social care, are utilised to excellent effect.

Procedures for safeguarding are outstanding and ensure that all pupils feel very safe and that their emotional and social needs are met very well. For example, in the case of vulnerable pupils the school makes sure that the needs of the whole family are met. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. The creation of the

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federation has led to a full review of all policies. As a result, statutory duties, such as that to ensure equality, are fully in place, supplementing the individual support provided for every pupil and member of staff. The school’s accurate tracking system highlights any underperformance. This, together with the school’s outstanding care and guidance for all pupils, ensures that the school’s provision to secure equal opportunities and tackle discrimination is good. The duty to promote community cohesion is strongly in place in the local context and many pupils are proud of their Cornish origins, but the global perspective is not so well developed.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

While the very small numbers means that there is variation year on year, children generally enter Reception with the expected skill levels for their age. Provision is good and so they go on to make good progress, and because they are already in a mixed-age class with pupils in Years 1 and 2 they make the transition to the National Curriculum smoothly. Both the indoor and outdoor facilities have been enhanced in recent times and are now good, providing exciting opportunities for child- and adult-initiated activities. Excellent resources are set out in a series of workstations which reflect each of the areas of learning so children can access them with ease. Over the course of the year there is a well-planned transition from the balance of activities being child-initiated play towards more formal activities which prepare children for the next stage in their schooling. Early phonics work and learning about shapes in mathematics were observed, with the children responding enthusiastically because they were enjoying them so much.

Benefiting from the positive role models provided by the older pupils, the Reception children quickly develop social skills such as caring and sharing, and develop good

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patterns of behaviour which is reinforced through lots of praise from staff. Their development across all the areas of learning is logged with care and individual progress is monitored and recorded in excellent individual learning journals, which are prepared for parents.

The leadership and management of Reception is good, focusing on helping children develop their talents. Parents are fully engaged so that they can best support their children’s learning. This close collaboration supports the good progress that children make. Good links exist with the pre-school group based in the school, although independently run. Since nearly all children attend it, the transition to Reception is very smooth.

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

A higher than average response to the questionnaire reflects the overwhelming support given by parents and carers. Many positive comments were made, typical of which was, ‘There is really good leadership in the school and the environment always seems to be caring and supportive for pupils and parents alike. The positive and enthusiastic attitude of teachers is great and really seems to encourage our sons.’ The only dissent is a small level of concern expressed that following federation the headteacher will have less time to devote to Polruan Primary School. However, the inspector found that the benefits of federation far outweigh this possible concern, most notable of which is that it strengthens the position of the school for the future.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Polruan Community Primary 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 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 40 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	55	8	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	60	8	40	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	9	45	11	55	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	50	10	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	75	5	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	11	55	8	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	65	7	35	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)	13	65	5	25	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	11	55	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	45	10	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	50	10	50	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	55	7	35	2	10	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	13	75	5	25	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	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.



7 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Polruan Community Primary School, Polruan, Fowey, PL23 1PS

I am writing to thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me on my recent visit. You go to a good school and by joining with Pelynt School there is now the opportunity to benefit from the strengths that each school brings. Your teachers know you all really well. They help you to achieve your best because they have a very good understanding of what you do well and where you need to improve. Those of you who find learning more difficult are given very good help and you make good progress. You all enjoy school and you told me how proud you are of your school. You are quite right. I enjoyed watching your lessons and thought they really helped you to learn. They were fun and you enjoyed your work, but they also challenged each of you as you worked towards your individual targets. The learning you do in topics is also very effective. I saw some of you enjoying forest school. I hope you enjoyed your pine leaf tea!

The school keeps you very safe and your behaviour is excellent. You know what you have to do in order to live a healthy lifestyle and try to put this into practice. You are also keen to help out in school and in your community, and you get on really well with each other.

Your headteacher and other staff know that there is still work to be done to make the school even better. I have asked the school to do two things.

- Teachers must try to make sure that your writing reaches the same standards as your reading and mathematics; it is a bit weaker at the moment.
- All of the staff and governors of the two schools that have joined together must do their very best to ensure it results in the best outcomes for your learning by sharing all of the good things that go on in your schools.

You can play your part by continuing to do your very best at school and being so positive about learning. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Groucutt
Lead inspector

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