

St Minver School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111921
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	378390
Inspection dates	14–15 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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Townsend
Headteacher	David Cantin
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. A total of 14 lessons taught by seven teachers were observed and meetings were held with the senior and middle managers, representatives of the governing body, staff and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and data on pupil progress, together with a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding and protecting pupils. A total of 144 parent and carer questionnaires were scrutinised, together with 14 from staff and 100 from 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 developments for the tracking of pupils' progress.
- The effectiveness of systems for identifying underachievement or any additional needs of individuals or groups of pupils.
- Efforts made to raise the level of attendance since the last inspection.

Information about the school

St Minver is close to the average size for primary schools. The number of pupils from minority ethnic communities is well below average, as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is around the national average.

A new headteacher was appointed from Easter 2011 and a new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in November 2011 just prior to the inspection. There is a privately run pre-school group based on the school site, but this was not part of this 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

St Minver is a good school with several outstanding features. The whole school is committed to achieving excellence. Middle managers are becoming more strategic in considering whole-school issues, although there is still sometimes a tendency to think in terms of separate key stages. There is a focus on promoting effective teaching and learning, and arrangements for professional development are based on the wider needs of the school as well as individual needs identified through lesson observation and performance management. Effective management is therefore raising the quality of teaching and learning.

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. They benefit from excellent provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Overall, pupils make good progress from their starting points and by the time they leave the school attainment in English and mathematics is above the national average. Teaching is at least good, but for the youngest and the oldest in school it is outstanding. Teachers show a tremendous dedication to the school and to their pupils, who in turn respond by showing a commitment to learning. Teachers and teaching assistants form strong teams, so there is very good support for pupils in class. Learning is supported by the lively, exciting learning environment that exists throughout the school. Teachers show good subject knowledge and use this to create an effective curriculum that includes good topic work, supported effectively by trips and visits. Tracking and assessment is being further refined, and the successful trialling of a system of enhanced assessment of pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 has brought immediate improvements in mathematics. As a result, this process will be implemented throughout the whole school. Marking of work is thorough and consistent, but at the moment there is little advice given on how work might be improved. In some lessons opportunities are not promoted for peer or self-assessment of work.

Care, guidance and support throughout the school are outstanding because adults know pupils so well. This is also ensured because individuals and of groups of pupils are tracked very carefully. As a result there is outstanding equality of opportunity and no discrimination. The identification of and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is exceptional. Assessment of need is thorough and pupils' progress is tracked in detail. The transition arrangements into and out of the school are extremely supportive and arrangements for moving up through the school equally reassuring for pupils. Parents and carers testify to the strength of home-school partnerships.

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There is a positive rapport between staff and pupils. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils, and their parents and carers, say that they feel extremely safe in school and there is no evidence of bullying. However, attendance remains no better than average, although recent initiatives to promote better attendance have led to improvement. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they make an excellent contribution to the school and local communities.

With the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body both only recently in post it is too early to predict their impact on sustaining improvement into the future. However, the school's self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, and early evidence shows that steps already implemented are supporting the continued improvement of the school. With the evident commitment of the whole school towards achieving excellence, the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the use of assessment by ensuring that:
 - more lessons provide opportunities for pupils to assess their own and each other's work
 - teachers give clear advice on how pupils' work might be improved.
- Sustain the drive to improve attendance by working with the small number of families for whom attendance remains a problem.

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

Attainment is above average and the quality of learning and progress are both good overall. Children enter Reception at around the levels expected nationally and make excellent progress, entering Key Stage 1 performing above the national expectation. Here pupils remain above the national average in literacy and numeracy achievement, but progress is good rather than outstanding. In Key Stage 2, progress in all areas of learning is rapid and sustained, so by the end of Year 6 attainment is significantly above average, as it has been consistently over several years. The progress of those identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities throughout the school is outstanding. These pupils show a strong desire to develop their skills and commit to improvement. As a result there is clear evidence that the gap in academic performance between them and their peers is declining. This is supported by impressive systems for tracking individuals and the high expectations of staff.

The best lessons are stimulating and challenging, such as the Year 6 art lesson in which pupils produced work of the highest standard because they had the confidence to be successful. Practical skills in physical education in Year 1 were being promoted through filming pupils so they could review their performance, a very good use of technology. A Year 5 English lesson demonstrated pupils' skills in working together to

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produce a range of 'wow words' to write exciting first sentences for stories. Examples of good or outstanding lessons producing positive outcomes such as these can be found throughout the school.

Pupils feel extremely safe in a school where there is a pervasive atmosphere of mutual support and respect. The pupils' extremely positive attitudes are also reflected in the ways in which they enjoy contributing to the school and wider community. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and continues to do so. As a result there has been an improving pattern of attendance, although it remains no better than average because of the small number of persistent absentees. Wide-ranging opportunities for sport and physical activity support healthy lifestyles, although pupils do not always put into practice their knowledge of healthy eating. Skills for future economic well-being are not just promoted through literacy, numeracy and computer skills, but also through the development of teamwork, collaboration and skills of independent learning. The vast majority of pupils think deeply about their experiences and the lives of others. Regular school trips to Plymouth and London enhance understanding of other cultures in the United Kingdom, while practical links with schools and young people in Uganda, Japan and the United States promote understanding of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity.

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	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	1

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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How effective is the provision?

Teaching is generally good and some is outstanding. This is central to the overall progress of pupils, which ultimately allows them to reach above-average attainment. Teachers use a range of data to monitor progress and this is being further enhanced through the successful trial of a scheme in Key Stage 1 mathematics. The teachers are skilled practitioners, although occasionally there is a lack of pace and challenge in lessons, especially when it comes to developing skills of independent or collaborative learning. All the adults in classrooms, including parent volunteers, work together as effective teams to enhance learning. Classrooms are stimulating learning environments and the use of technology across the school is currently being enhanced so that it can support even more effective practice.

There has been a traditional focus on the skills of literacy and numeracy, but this is underpinned by a broad and stimulating curriculum that includes excellent opportunities for topic work to reinforce and widen the use of more formal learning. Strong partnerships, including those with partner schools, broaden and enrich the curriculum. Opportunities for trips and visits add enjoyment and immediacy to learning that means that the value of topic work is also appreciated. This broad range of experiences contributes effectively to pupils' development and well-being. Overall it means that pupils are thoroughly engaged in learning and are highly motivated. In terms of care, guidance and support, the very well-targeted support for all enables them to make the best of the opportunities provided for them. The work undertaken with families, pupils and a wide range of external services sustains learning, development and well-being, particularly for the small number who face challenging circumstances. Work with families is now being undertaken to emphasise the importance of regular school attendance, and this is starting to bear fruit.

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?

Under the guidance of the highly effective headteacher, management structures are being enhanced and a more strategic, whole-school view developed. This remains, to some extent, a work in progress as staff adapt to their more strategic roles. The entire staff have responded extremely positively to the recent changes and are ambitious for their pupils and for the school. The processes for classroom monitoring have been revamped, with a clear priority being to inspire the school community and

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to sustain ambitious outcomes for pupils. The well-respected Chair of the Governing Body had decided to step down shortly before the inspection was announced, but evidence shows that the governing body has traditionally played an effective role in challenging and supporting the school. It carries out all its statutory responsibilities effectively. Safeguarding is good because the school goes beyond the basic requirements for ensuring good practice in all its work and has developed strong and effective links with a range of professional agencies. Staff training, particularly in the area of child protection, is rigorous and effective. The school's excellent tracking of pupils who may be vulnerable ensures that all individuals and groups of pupils are enabled to succeed, with a commitment to equality of opportunity that is strong and tangible.

Community cohesion is supported well by a range of active global links that include schools in Uganda, Japan and the United States, while all pupils get opportunities to visit urban areas within the United Kingdom, where they gain first-hand experiences of different types of community to their own. Much of the excellent practice seen in school is supported and sustained by a range of very effective links with external professional agencies that include a range of health and social care professionals. Parents and carers greatly value the extremely strong links that have been built up, personified by the fact that the senior leadership are on duty and available to meet parents every morning before the start of school. Questionnaires confirm that adults feel fully consulted and involved so they are well informed, with many taking up opportunities to volunteer their services to support the school and its work.

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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to an outstanding start during their Reception year, not only in terms of getting ready to learn but also in terms of developing independence, curiosity and concentration, demonstrated in child-initiated choices. They start with skills that are around the national expectation and make outstanding progress overall. There are excellent relationships at all levels and teamwork among adults is of the highest order. Assessment and tracking of the children is a key strength, reflected in excellent 'learning journals'. It is clear that children are safe, happy and confident and links with parents and carers are outstanding, as is provision in all the main areas of learning. High quality outcomes are supported by a learning environment that is stimulating and exciting, both indoors and outside. There are many well-planned and well-organised tasks and the teaching observed was outstanding. Excellent use of data enables areas where performance has not been so strong to be identified and addressed effectively. This reflects the outstanding quality of leadership and management and clear strategic overview. Excellent induction is a strength, as are partnerships and teamwork, which also contribute to the creation of an extremely safe environment where children thrive.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a higher-than-average response to the questionnaire. Parents and carers show great support for the school, reflected in the comment, 'We feel privileged to be part of the St Minver family; please thank all the staff for doing such a fantastic job.' Many commented on the positive impact made by the new headteacher and the high quality of the teaching in the school. They feel fully involved in the running of the school. Inspectors took up a small number of points raised and found that in virtually every case parents and carers had been able to discuss their concerns directly with the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Minver 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 144 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 204 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	106	74	36	25	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	121	84	21	15	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	82	57	59	41	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	103	72	40	28	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	109	76	32	22	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	96	67	41	28	2	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	89	62	52	36	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)	99	69	42	29	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	92	64	47	33	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	79	55	54	38	3	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	85	59	50	35	2	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	109	76	32	22	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	111	77	29	20	1	1	1	1

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.



16 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Minver School, St Minver, Wadebridge PL27 6QD

I am writing to thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to the inspectors on our recent visit. You go to a good school which has several outstanding features and works very well to ensure that each of you achieves the very best that you can.

You told us how much you enjoy school and we saw this wherever we went. Your behaviour is outstanding and you support and help each other very well indeed. We saw no sign of bullying and school is a safe place for you to learn and grow up as such positive young people. The standards you reach throughout school are above those found nationally. This is helped by the good or outstanding quality of the teaching you receive and by the fact that you have such positive relationships with your teachers. Mr Cantin and the school's governors work very hard to ensure that you are always encouraged to do your best and they are excellent at identifying things that will make the school even better.

They have spotted two things in particular to work on, and the inspectors fully agree with them. Firstly, we would like you to be given more opportunities to assess your own work and that of your classmates in lessons, and we have suggested that you always receive detailed feedback from your teachers so you know exactly how to improve your work. Secondly, it is important for all pupils to attend school every day unless there is a good reason why they can't come. The school would like to work with families so that everyone understands this.

The vast majority of you do attend very regularly and the experiences you get at St Minver School stand you in very good stead for your futures. You become confident, mature learners by the time you go on to secondary school and you get such enjoyment from learning from the very first days in Reception. If you maintain such positive attitudes you will be playing your part in maintaining the high standards that we saw during our visit. Well done to you all.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Groucutt
Lead inspector

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