

Mullion Community Primary School

Willis Vean, Mullion, Helston, TR12 7DF

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress throughout the school and their achievement is broadly average.
- Pupils do not make good progress because there are not enough opportunities for them to apply new learning in increasingly challenging activities during lessons. Work is often too easy for more-able pupils so that they do not make good enough progress.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good throughout the school and pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn independently.
- Teachers lack confidence teaching mathematics so pupils do not enjoy rich and varied learning experiences in mathematics.
- Too few teachers check pupils' understanding during lessons and they fail to adjust activities in order to ensure that pupils make rapid progress.
- The leadership and management of the school require improvement because development plans have not had a sharp enough focus on improving pupils' achievement quickly.
- Curriculum plans are not checked closely enough to ensure there is an equal emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- The governing body has yet to have a strong impact on improving the school so that pupils achieve well.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' achievement in English is improving because pupils practice their literacy skills well across subjects.
- Children develop well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting is ably led. There are good arrangements for involving parents and carers in their children's learning.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of responsibility to the school community and to one another. Their behaviour is good.
- The school makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development regular involvement in community events.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 13 lessons taught by eight teachers. Three of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with representatives from the governing body, the headteacher, teachers and groups of pupils. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- There were 34 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and inspectors took account of the views of the parents and carers they met at the school.
- The inspectors looked at various documents, including the records of pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation, behaviour and attendance records and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Juliet Jaggs, lead inspector

Additional inspector

Anne Wesley

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Mullion Community Primary School is smaller than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is below average overall. This group includes pupils from service families but there are no children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receiving support at school action is average. The number supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistently good progress for pupils, particularly the more able, by improving the quality of teaching so that it is at least good throughout the school, ensuring all teachers:
 - discuss pupils' learning with them so that they understand how to achieve well on their own
 - introduce challenging activities and materials throughout lessons so that pupils can learn by applying new ideas
 - ask questions to check pupils' understanding during lessons so that they can adapt their teaching promptly
 - develop their expertise in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - the information gleaned from checks carried out by leaders is used to identify precise actions that have a measurable impact on raising pupils' achievement quickly
 - curriculum plans are checked to ensure that they include an equal emphasis on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because they do not make consistently good progress throughout the school. As a result, their attainment is broadly average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' attainment is lower in mathematics than it is in English because they do not understand mathematical principles well enough to be able to apply them confidently in solving mathematical problems.
- More-able pupils do not make good progress because they are not challenged to think in different ways or to use their knowledge creatively in responding to more complex problems. A few parents and carers expressed concern for their children in this regard.
- Pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average. Good links with parents mean that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have frequent opportunities to read to adults in and out of school. Teachers ensure that information recorded in pupils' reading diaries is helpful so that parents and carers can provide effective support at home. Pupils in Year 1 did well in the phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) screening check at the end of last summer.
- The brief daily skills sessions enable pupils to take responsibility for identifying particular literacy and numeracy skills that require improvement. This is more effective in English than in mathematics, and pupils are making better progress comprehending text and re-drafting their writing as a result.
- The achievement of pupils entitled to the pupil premium is checked regularly and they benefit from working in small groups. Some pupils supported in this way, most notably those from service families, do well and their achievement is good. For the remainder most pupils make similar progress to their classmates and gaps in attainment in mathematics and writing have narrowed. However some pupils are still approximately two terms behind in reading.
- The school liaises often with the families of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs so that they come to understand how best to respond to each individual child's needs. Their progress is carefully checked and, as a result, they make similar progress to that of their peers. Parents and carers say that they are pleased with the level of support their children receive.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good. The 'star learning' principle, which provides pupils with opportunities to choose a learning activity at the appropriate level of challenge, is generally used well to begin lessons. In some cases, particularly in mathematics, even the most challenging activity is set at too low a level for the most able pupils. Teachers often keep pupils working on these tasks for too long and there are not enough developments to help pupils make good progress by applying new learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants often step in too quickly to support pupils in completing tasks accurately so pupils are not able to make better progress by understanding how to achieve tasks well on their own.
- Too few teachers ask pupils to describe their learning so they cannot detect pupils' misconceptions or recognise when they are ready to move on more quickly. Teachers can be slow to adapt activities so that they provide the fresh levels of challenge or support required by different groups of pupils to make sustained good progress.
- Teachers' subject knowledge of mathematics is less secure so activities do not always follow on logically in lessons and pupils' understanding develops more slowly. In some instances, teachers do not vary the way they talk about mathematical principles so they are not able to clarify points for individual pupils who learn in different ways.
- Most teachers provide interesting materials and resources that encourage pupils to talk

effectively with one another throughout learning activities. For example, pupils in Year 5 had lively conversations drawing on the features of the local area and those of the pictures their teacher provided. They went on to create powerful images, such as haunted lighthouses, and thus to write evocative openings for a story.

- Following on from the previous inspection, teachers mark pupils' books regularly and pupils respond to the guidance they have received. Teachers evaluate evidence of learning in pupils' books accurately and subsequent lessons are usually modified appropriately so that there is a logical development in pupils' learning from one lesson to the next.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' conduct is good and they settle quickly to work in lessons. They can be over-reliant on adult guidance and thus reluctant to persevere when exercises are difficult or to continue working conscientiously when they are left unsupervised. This means their behaviour is not outstanding.
- The school's 'Rules for Life' give pupils a strong sense of how to play their part within a community. They enjoy their responsibilities as playground pals and leaders and say that those who fulfil these roles do much to enhance the friendly ethos of the school. Parents and carers agree that the strong sense of community is a very positive feature of the school and they are pleased that their children are happy there.
- When asked, one pupil explained that she feels 'so secure at school that it does not occur to (her) to even think about not being safe'. Other pupils agree with her that the school is very safe. They know that bullying can take several different forms but few can remember it ever having occurred at the school.
- Records show that pupils' behaviour is good over time and that their attendance is average.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the activities used to check how well the school is doing are not sufficiently objective and action plans are not sharply focused on raising pupils' achievement. As a result, improvements in pupils' progress and their levels of attainment have not been strong enough.
- The curriculum is being developed, with teams of teachers working together to plan interesting topics that promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. These plans are not checked closely enough and there is an imbalance in learning opportunities. As a result, pupils are able to use language and communication effectively in a variety of contexts but they lack confidence in applying mathematical principles.
- The school is determined that all pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve well. The headteacher leads the school in adopting a more systematic approach to gathering information on pupils' progress. There is an increasing emphasis on using this information to hold teachers to account for the progress of all pupils in their class, and this is beginning to have a positive impact on their achievement.
- Following the previous inspection, senior leaders had begun to develop the roles of middle leaders, but a number of staff changes meant that the impact was inconsistent. As new colleagues have now established their roles, they are beginning to be more effective. For example, pupils are making better progress in English because staff are benefiting from the training activities provided within school.
- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have worked closely with representatives from the local authority. Routine systems for checking the quality of teaching have been introduced and the information gathered from these activities has been used to address underperformance.
- The school makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development. Pupils enjoy representing the school in local and regional competitions and groups of pupils do well in musical and artistic events. The school encourages pupils to foster good relationships. For example, pupils in Year 6 learned how to manage different personalities within a group when they organised the video and accompanying presentation for an assembly to raise funds for Comic Relief.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is in a state of transition, with several new colleagues, including a new chair, joining those who have a longer association with the school. There has been a clear focus on ensuring that the school meets its statutory responsibilities so administrative arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare are secure. The budget has been stretched but plans are in place to reduce the deficit by the end of the year. They know the pupil premium is used effectively to provide opportunities for the pupils entitled to this funding to learn in small groups. This has had more of an impact on their achievements in English so far, which are in line with those of all other pupils nationally. Governors do not yet make their own checks on how well the school is doing or use first-hand experience to hold the school and its leaders to account. Members of the governing body understand about the quality of teaching, the management of teachers' performance and teachers' pay awards because they are reported to them. Information provided by the headteacher's systems for checking pupils' progress gives members of the governing body the basic information to challenge the school over the performance of groups. They are increasingly aware of the objectivity required to develop the school more quickly.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111817
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	401206

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	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dennis Casley
Headteacher	Carleen Dryburgh
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 November 2009
Telephone number	01326 240585
Fax number	01326 241145
Email address	secretary@mullion-ji.cornwall.sch.uk

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