

Pensilva Primary School

School Road, Pensilva, Liskeard, PL14 5PG

Inspection dates

19–20 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' progress in learning to read and write slows in Years 3 to 6, especially among boys. This is because they have insufficient opportunities to read a wide range of material, which in turn restricts their ability to extend their comprehension and writing skills.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 does not always encourage pupils to develop their independence, and the tasks they are given are not always well matched to their individual needs.
- Staff absence has led to inconsistent teaching in Years 3 to 6 and to weaknesses in the leadership of aspects of the school's work such as provision for pupils who are disabled, or who have special educational needs. Checks on the quality of teaching and achievement are accurate and have led to improvements in mathematics, but not in reading and writing, especially among boys.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. Attainment in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 is above average.
- Pupils across the school make good progress in mathematics and by the end of Year 6 their attainment in the subject is above average.
- The achievement of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is similar to that of other pupils.
- Teachers use marking and feedback well to help pupils to improve their work. They are effective in managing pupils' behaviour. Teaching assistants are skilled in their work.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons and say there is little bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are improving.
- Recent changes in the leadership of English and mathematics, and in the governing body, have led to improvements in leadership and management. The governing body has a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is challenging senior leaders to make improvements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by seven teachers. They made briefer observations of other activities, such as an assembly. Several of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and with two members of the governing body. An inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors reviewed documentation including that relating to pupils' progress and achievement, their safety, and the school's evaluation of its own improvement. The responses of staff to a questionnaire were analysed, as were the responses of 27 parents who submitted their views on Parent View. Some parents were also spoken to in person. These views were used to form an overview of parents' opinions of the school.

Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marcia Headon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This primary school is smaller than average size and serves a village and surrounding rural area on the edge of Bodmin Moor.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is below average, as is the proportion supported by school action plus or with statements of special educational needs. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of families in the armed services.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is a member of the Caradon Cooperative Educational Trust, which was established in September 2012 and involves a number of primary schools situated in the area.
- The school shares its site with a privately run pre-school which was not inspected on this occasion. The latest report can be viewed on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
 - the more selective use of adult help when pupils are doing their tasks, to ensure that pupils develop their independence
 - varying the style of questioning of pupils to check that they are all making good progress
 - especially in Years 3 to 6, ensuring that tasks are always designed to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils.
- Raise the achievement in reading and writing of pupils, especially boys, in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - enabling pupils to read a wide range of texts, especially non-fiction that will increase their knowledge and understanding of the world and broaden the body of knowledge and ideas on which they may base their writing.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - improving the effectiveness of the leadership of support for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs
 - improving the clarity of plans to make improvements, especially to the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils', especially boys', progress in reading and writing in Years 3 to 6 is slower than it should be. The proportion making at least the expected progress in these aspects, while improving, remains below average. This is because pupils do not read across a wide range of subjects. Pupils in Year 6 have read a reasonable range of fiction by suitable authors such as J K Rowling, but their reading of non-fiction matter is often limited to personal interests such as the care of pets. This restricts their ability to understand unfamiliar texts such as passages encountered in national tests, and also limits the range of subjects and ideas that they can introduce into their writing.
- All of the small number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium attain similar levels and make similar progress in English and mathematics to other pupils, as is shown by their average points scores. However, boys' progress in Years 3 to 6 is slower than that of girls, and pupils or who are disabled or who have special educational needs, especially those at school action, make slower progress because the tasks they are given do not always meet their needs.
- Children start school with knowledge and skills that are broadly as expected for those of their age. They make good progress in Reception, especially in developing their social, communication and numerical skills. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to make good progress. By the end of Year 2 they know the letters and their sounds and are becoming confident readers. They also make good progress in mathematics and learn to solve simple mathematical problems, such as when using money.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress in mathematics. By the end of Year 6 the proportion of pupils that have made at least the progress expected of them is above average. More able pupils in Years 5 and 6 can solve complex problems involving percentages, fractions and decimals.
- Pupils make good progress in applying their numerical skills and in using information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils have adequate basic literacy, but are slower in developing higher-order skills of comprehension. Their ability to learn independently and in groups also develops relatively slowly. This, again, is due to the fact that tasks are sometimes too easy or difficult for them, and also to overenthusiastic intervention by adults who do not always allow pupils to think through the problem for themselves.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In Years 3 to 6 pupils sometimes struggle to make progress because the task does not always meet their needs. In Years 3 and 4, pupils were asked to write persuasive questions, such as to persuade a parent to allow a later bedtime. While more able pupils coped well with the task and made good progress, those whose skills were less well developed struggled with the concept and hence made less progress. While assessment has improved to a point where teachers have an accurate picture of pupils' attainment and progress, it is not always used effectively to plan work.
- Teaching in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 is good, although there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their independence. Teaching of letters and their sounds (phonics) is effective in promoting pupils' good progress at this stage in reading and writing. Tasks are generally well matched to pupils' needs, although on occasion teachers take too long to explain them and pupils start to lose their focus.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 also has positive features. Marking is used effectively to show pupils how to improve their work. Teachers use ICT well as an aid to teaching. These aspects both represent improvements since the previous inspection. Strategies to manage pupils' behaviour are consistent and effective.
- Teaching assistants are generally well trained and are effective in their work, especially when

supporting pupils with statements of special educational needs. There are often several teaching assistants in a classroom and sometimes they intervene too quickly, limiting opportunities for pupils to develop their independence.

- Teachers use questions to check on pupils' progress, but they do not always ensure that they are checking on all pupils, rather than only those who are most enthusiastic in their responses.
- The recruitment of specialist staff to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium has been successful in enabling these pupils to achieve as well as their peers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils respond willingly to adults' instructions and are keen to please. They are polite and well mannered when speaking with visitors to the school. In lessons, some lack the skills to learn effectively when working on their own or in a group.
- Pupils play sensibly and safely, and say there is little bullying, any that occurs being dealt with effectively by adults. They also value the presence of playground mediators from Year 6, who help to resolve minor disputes. This demonstrates that the school fosters good relationships between pupils and contributes to their moral and social development.
- Pupils know the dangers of different forms of bullying, such as cyber bullying, and how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet or when cycling or encountering farm animals or machinery in their rural environment.
- While some parents express concern about bullying or pupils' behaviour, the school's good records confirm the improvements that have taken place in this aspect of the school's work since the previous inspection, when behaviour was satisfactory. This also demonstrates that potential discrimination is not tolerated by the school.
- School leaders have been effective in improving pupils' punctuality through careful checking of late arrivals. Attendance has fluctuated but is now improving, again due to effective action such as an agreement between local schools on the response to requests for holidays to be taken during the school term.

The leadership and management require improvement

- In the recent past there has been an increase in staff absence. Some parents are rightly concerned about the impact this has on, for example, the consistency of teaching in Years 3 to 6. The impact of staff absence on the leadership of provision for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs has not been managed effectively, as the progress of these pupils has slowed.
- Checks on teachers' performance and on other aspects of the school's work such as pupils' behaviour are accurate. In some cases these have led to significant improvement, such as in the effectiveness of marking, the accuracy of assessment and the use of ICT. However, the resulting plans sometimes lack clarity and are not always focused on the school's most pressing needs. For example, while school leaders and the governing body recognise that boys achieve less well than girls, they have struggled to remedy this situation, which damages the school's otherwise effective commitment to equality of opportunity. However, staff have received some useful training, including in partnership with the newly developed educational trust. To some extent, the weaknesses exist because the support of the local authority has not been as effective as it should be. Requests from the school for help have not always been met in a timely manner, and support has not led to the production of more sharply focused plans.
- Recent changes to the leadership of English and mathematics are leading to improvements in pupils' achievement. Effective checking of the impact of the teaching of mathematics has enabled all pupils to make good progress in the subject.
- Leaders and managers are ambitious for the school and its pupils to succeed. This is shown, for example, by the display of many quotes from pupils about their aspirations, such as: 'I hope to

be a vet one day’.

- The pupil premium has been used effectively to ensure that pupils who are eligible to receive it make progress that at least matches that of other pupils. This is an example where data have been used well to monitor pupils’ progress, although in other cases, such as with the progress of some pupils who are disabled or with special educational needs, this has been less effective.
- The curriculum is varied and in most respects motivates pupils to learn. They are excited by work on local history and geography that contributes to their spiritual, social and cultural development, and by the number of educational visits. However, there is less emphasis on developing pupils’ understanding of the wider world and its peoples. This is reflected in the lack of opportunities for pupils to read widely. School leaders rightly plan for future visits to London and elsewhere in order to enhance pupils’ cultural understanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an accurate view of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and is beginning to successfully challenge school leaders to tackle the latter. Governors now have an accurate picture of the effectiveness of staff and, since the appointment of the new Chair, some long-standing issues that have slowed progress have begun to be tackled. Policies directly linking teachers’ performance to their pay have yet to be developed, but most staff have an appropriate level of responsibility for their grade of pay. Due to effective training, governors have a growing understanding of the school’s performance and of how this relates to the national picture. Governors check the impact of the use of resources such as the pupil premium on pupils’ achievement. They meet their responsibilities to keep pupils safe, such as by ensuring training on child protection and safe recruitment of staff. They are taking a more active approach to finding out about parents’ views, which is appreciated by parents. The governing body is growing in skill and confidence and makes a positive contribution to the school’s capacity to improve further.

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	111963
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	401220

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	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Craig Vaughnley
Headteacher	Becky Crispin
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 November 2009
Telephone number	01579 362546
Fax number	01579 363424
Email address	head@pensilva.cornwall.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', 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.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 2013

