

St Erth Community Primary School

School Lane, St Erth, Hayle, Cornwall, TR27 6HN

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The high quality care and safeguarding of pupils' welfare provided at the school fully reflects the school's motto 'Caring, sharing, preparing for life'.
- All staff are committed to welcoming pupils with a wide range of needs and show diligence in treating all pupils equally and eliminating discrimination.
- As a result, pupils feel very safe, enjoy excellent relationships and behave in an exemplary fashion.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school, consequently all pupils achieve well in relation to their differing starting points and needs.
- Teaching is outstanding at times, especially in the Year 4, 5 and 6 class.
- The well respected and very capable headteacher is strongly supported by senior staff and governors in checking and sustaining pupils' good progress as they move through the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils don't always understand the terms used in teachers' marking and this constrains their ability to make the suggested improvements.
- The writing and mathematical skills of some pupils, especially those who find learning difficult, are not always developed in a sufficiently meaningful and systematic way as they progress through the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 15 lessons and was accompanied by the headteacher during most of these observations.
- The inspector observed morning playtime and lunch breaks and also attended an assembly and a 'Wake and Shake' physical exercise session.
- Meetings were held with members of the school council and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes. The inspector met with governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector held meetings with school staff, including senior leaders.
- The inspector also took account of 14 parents' responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection and also received 14 staff questionnaires. The inspector also spoke informally with a number of parents as they brought their children to school and examined an e-mail message from a parent.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a small school.
- All pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, children from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) broadly matches that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the normal times is above average.
- The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are accommodated in a mixed-age class with Years 1 pupils. Other pupils across the school are taught in two mixed aged classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school shares the site with a children's centre, which is subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching, lifting teaching from good to outstanding overall, and raise pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics by:
 - making sure that at all times, pupils understand what they need to do to improve, and are enabled to respond to the next steps for improvement indicated in teachers' marking
 - basing more of pupils' writing on their experiences and things that interest them the most
 - developing pupils' ability to solve real life problems in mathematics in a more step by step way as they move through the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Over time, children's skills on entry are below those normally expected, but they vary significantly from year to year within the very small year groups and at times they have been very low. This means that data of pupils' performance needs to be evaluated carefully in relation to their needs and starting points.
- Although national assessments at the end of Year 6 show below average levels of attainment, national and school data indicate that most pupils have made at least expected progress with a significant proportion of pupils often making better than expected progress. Alongside inspection observations of teaching and pupils' work, these show that pupils are now making increasingly rapid progress in response to consistently effective teaching.
- Children make good progress in Reception. They enjoy school and learn confidently together, for example, writing about the parachute tent that they had made in the outside area.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in relation to their starting points, especially in the development of their speaking and listening, expressive writing and reading skills.
- Often progress quickens in Years 5 and 6 as pupils are challenged and become more able to apply their learning skills in a mature way. For example, during an excellent mathematics lesson in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class, lower attaining pupils extended their understanding of perimeters by creating shapes out of measured pieces of string, and explanations from more able pupils showed their ability to calculate areas of irregular shapes.
- Even so, by the time pupils leave, although improving, the basic writing and mathematical skills of some pupils, especially those who find learning difficult, are still not high enough.
- Pupils now make good progress in reading because adults, at home and at school, listen to pupils read frequently and reading skills, especially phonics (letter sounds,) are taught regularly in small-group sessions.
- Parents are encouraged to comment on their children's reading at home and this positive partnership means that everyone enjoys reading. For example, the pupils' interest in reading was clearly apparent in their eagerness to take part in the local library's 'Summer Reading Challenge'.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their peers. The high proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs or who are supported at school action, often having arrived from other schools, do particularly well in developing the confidence and ability to engage productively in learning. Parents of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are very pleased with the level of support that their children receive.
- Pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding benefit from special group sessions, where they are encouraged to learn by developing skills through exploring their own ideas. For example, pupils in Year 3 were able to improve their ability to write complex sentences by creating their own story books. As a result, by the end of Year 6 previous gaps in achievement with other pupils have been closed well in reading and writing and have been narrowed to about one term's progress in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good with some that is outstanding, enabling all pupils to make good progress.
- Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire were pleased with the quality of teaching and their children's progress. All the parents who spoke or communicated with the inspector also greatly appreciated the way staff cared for the pupils and managed their behaviour. Pupils too thought that they were making good progress in lessons because, 'Teachers respect what we

have to say and encourage us to work together as partners to help each other to learn.'

- Teachers check the pupils' progress accurately and use this information and their good subject knowledge to deploy talented teaching assistants effectively to make sure that learning activities are matched well to pupils' differing needs.
- In addition, teachers ensure that disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils supported by the pupil premium all have individual educational plans to more precisely develop their skills.
- All staff model clear vocabulary well and are adept at questioning pupils at the right level. For example, in a successful English lesson in Years 2 and 3 class, the teacher varied the level of questioning to continually challenge all the pupils and extend their understanding of how to write persuasively. However, pupils' basic handwriting and mathematics skills are not emphasised or developed with such consistency as they move through the school.
- Good teaching and support in the Reception and Year 1 class begins with the practical outdoor and role play learning opportunities, including in the 'Dome' in the school grounds, and continues through the school. Teachers make full use of the school's mini-bus to undertake a wide range of stimulating visits to the local community, with pupils making specific reference to their joy in visiting Plymouth Aquarium, Trevaskis Farm and Camp Kernow, to name, but a few.
- Staff also develop good links between subjects to extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, with topic days such as the 'Five-a-Day Healthy Food Day', during the inspection, also successfully advancing the pupils' spiritual, moral, social understanding.
- Teachers give good oral guidance to the pupils and generally mark the pupils' work effectively, especially in praising pupils for their efforts. Teachers regularly indicate what pupils have to do to improve, but occasionally use complex terms that not all pupils understand and this limits pupils' ability to reflect upon the comments and make the necessary improvements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school continues to be a vibrant, close knit community where pupils' outstanding behaviour and the uplifting welcome shown to pupils newly arrived from other schools, evident at the time of the previous inspection, continue as strengths in all parts of the school.
- All those associated with the school also welcome the way pupils are warmly received into the school and enabled to grow in confidence in response to very supportive relationships between adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves.
- All parents who responded to the questionnaire and all pupils interviewed agreed that there was no bullying and expressed full confidence that adults in school would quickly resolve any problems that they may have.
- Pupils clearly know about different forms of bullying. They show empathy to those pupils with emotional needs who need, receive and respond well to close adult support and remain adamant that there is no bullying of any kind, including physical abuse and e-safety and cyber bullying when using computers.
- Pupils say they feel safe and very secure and that, 'Adults are nice to us and we have lots of friends'. Pupils, especially several new to the school, said, 'How happy and very proud they were to be at St Erth.'
- Pupils really do have a voice and their views are encouraged and responded to throughout the school. Members of the school council, for example, proudly talk about how they have contributed to charities and have raised funds through their 'Easter Egg Raffle' to provide a store shed and additional play time equipment for play time use.
- The pupils' much improved and now above average attendance reflects their enjoyment of school and the very supportive way that school leaders work in partnership with parents.

The leadership and management are good

- Sustained effective leadership and management by the headteacher, senior staff and governors and the close teamwork shown by all staff have led to rapid improvements over the past two years.
- A high level of staff morale, seen in their responses to the inspection questionnaire, further underpins the shared vision for the future development of the school.
- As a team, leaders and staff ensure that high quality care securely safeguards pupils' welfare and sustains the equality of opportunity and absence of discrimination that permeates the school.
- Well planned and regularly undertaken checks of school performance have led to successful implementation of plans to improve the achievement of all pupils. For example, careful checks of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress and firm action to bring improvement has secured consistently good teaching in all classes despite a period of staff change.
- At the same time, there has been purposeful enhancement of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through practical learning opportunities across the range of subjects. This includes the creation of an outdoor learning area for children in Reception and regular visits across the local area, which has resulted in pupils being more interested in what they are learning.
- Effective performance management with clear links between staff salary progression and school and pupils' needs has brought improved assessment of pupils' skills. For example, earlier identification of pupils' different learning needs and decisive action by senior leaders to provide additional teaching support, for example, for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium, have also accelerated pupils' progress.
- Although improving, leaders have been less effective in securing similar continuity in the development of pupils' handwriting and mathematical skills as they move from class to class.
- The local authority continues to provide light touch support for this good and improving school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body receives high-quality reports from the headteacher, which in particular, include important detail about the impact of teaching on pupils' rates of progress through the school. The governors also visit the school frequently and consequently, have an accurate picture of the quality of teaching and know well how data of the school's performance compares with other schools nationally. Governors have taken full advantage of training opportunities, in particular to raise their skills in holding senior leaders to account and safeguard pupils' welfare. They do so effectively by asking relevant questions about the school's performance and taking a full part in decisions regarding teachers' status and pay and, over the past year, in the measured appointments of new staff. Governors have also fulfilled their duties by checking and making sure that the additional staffing funded by the pupil premium funding enables pupils receiving such support to achieve as well as other pupils.

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	111850
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	413038

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	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michaela Robins
Headteacher	Niki Rogers
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2009
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