

North Petherwin Primary School

Brazzacott, North Petherwin, Launceston, Cornwall, PL15 8NE

Inspection dates 17–18 July 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All groups of pupils make good progress during their time at school, especially the most able in mathematics.
- Teaching in mathematics is particularly effective because pupils are placed in small groups where they are expected to work at a fast pace on challenging problems.
- Pupils develop self-confidence in speaking because they are given plenty of opportunity to practise and they are made to feel that all their contributions are valued.
- Pupils begin to read from as early as the nursery and there are plenty of books available to suit all tastes. Many pupils were seen reading outside, choosing books from a large book box during playtime.
- Teachers mostly plan lessons well, using interesting resources which pupils enjoy, and ask challenging questions which encourage pupils to think deeply about their work.
- Teaching assistants are effective in helping pupils who find work difficult. They often rephrase instructions and ask questions in a different way to make sure that pupils understand.
- Pupils behave well, they participate enthusiastically in lessons and they are well looked after. They feel safe and happy.
- The leadership of the school has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is constantly making sure that it continues to improve even further.
- The school has undergone some significant changes in the past year. These changes have been well managed by the leaders and governors and have enabled the school to share resources, including staff, and to remain financially stable.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some English lessons, teachers do not plan tasks which stretch the most able pupils to write at length, especially those in Year 3.
- Marking does not always help pupils to see what they need to do to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons plus one session in the nursery. Short visits were made to other lessons and pupils' work was also looked at. The headteacher joined the inspector for all of the observations and work scrutiny.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including the priorities for development, achievement information, governing body minutes and documents relating to safeguarding children.
- The inspector took account of 13 responses to the staff survey, 19 responses to the on-line Parent View survey and spoke to eight parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Joanna Peach, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Children in the Reception Year are taught in the same class as pupils from Years 1 and 2. Pupils in other years are also taught in mixed-age classes.
- All pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are currently no disabled pupils and the percentage of those with special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through a statement or school action plus is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding provided by the government for pupils in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is below average. There are currently no pupils from service families or in the care of the local authority.
- In 2012 the school met the current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a nursery on site which was visited as part of this inspection.
- The school federated with another local primary school in April 2012 and a new headteacher was appointed in September 2012. The headteacher and governing body are shared with the other school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the good teaching still further by:
 - ensuring that marking better helps all pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by:
 - ensuring that pupils have every opportunity to write at length on challenging tasks, especially in Year 3.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils in all year groups achieve well because the teaching is good. In mathematics, groups of pupils of a similar ability work together and rise to the challenges that teachers set them, with the most able making very good progress.
- Most pupils improve their spelling, grammar and handwriting as they move through the school because the teaching focuses on these areas. Although, at times, some pupils continue to make the same errors because marking has not helped them to improve.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively in a variety of ways to support the very few pupils who are entitled to its support. For individuals where there have been gaps of sometimes up to two years in English and mathematics between the levels they achieved compared with their peers, the gaps are closing rapidly due to the additional support these pupils and families receive.
- Extra support is available for pupils with special educational needs, often from teaching assistants, and these pupils make good progress because the assistants are very skilled in checking that pupils have understood and explaining things again if necessary.
- Children arrive at school with the skills and knowledge at about the level expected for their age, although often their communication and social skills are less good. They make good progress, arriving in Reception Year able to talk fluently about things that interest them and recognise some words, including their name.
- They continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, especially in mathematics. Many know their multiplication tables, can produce bar charts from a survey and can tell the time. Pupils learn to read well, but numbers are too small to compare their attainment with the national phonics (the sounds that letters make) check.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils make very good progress in mathematics with the most able pupils being able to use technical language accurately. Whilst in English, overall, pupils also make good progress, with reading being a particular strength, a few more able pupils could make even more progress in their writing.
- Very small cohorts mean that there is wide variation in results from year to year. In 2012 there were only seven pupils in the Year 6 cohort, making comparisons in their results with previous years of little value. In most years, the proportion of pupils that have made at least the progress expected of them from their starting points is high. It has improved in mathematics recently so that some pupils are making very good progress in this area.
- Pupils are often given opportunities to use information and communication technology, especially to help with spelling and researching, but they rightly complain that the computers and the internet connection are slow and so they are reluctant to use them.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers know what interests their pupils and strive to make tasks as relevant, fun and challenging as possible for the full range of ages in their classes. For example, some Reception children enjoyed acting out the characters in a story about the Mousehole Cat, whilst older pupils in the same class turned the story into a play script.
- In mathematics, teachers choose resources which help pupils to relate their learning to real life. For example, they had to work out how many items they could buy with a certain amount of money. Teachers expected pupils to work at a fast pace and to do as much as they could without a calculator, so pupils really enjoyed the challenge.
- Pupils enjoy reading from as early as the nursery. Teachers are skilful in asking questions which make pupils think about their reading, frequently asking them why something is like it is or how it could be different.

- Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and they are encouraged to learn new techniques by attending training. The school employs specialists in areas such as sport and music in order to ensure that pupils learn the correct skills. Pupils of all ages also get the opportunity to learn Spanish which they thoroughly enjoy. Even very young pupils are able to say some basic phrases and to compare a Spanish school with their own.
- Teachers encourage pupils to write as often as possible. Pupils have books of 'exciting writing' that they complete which includes everything from crosswords to imaginary mystery stories. However, particularly in Year 3, pupils are sometimes given writing tasks which they find too easy and do not challenge pupils to write at length.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but sometimes the comments do not always help pupils to see what they need to do to improve. This means that some pupils repeatedly make the same errors or are not encouraged to try more advanced techniques.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave very well both, in class and beyond the classroom. They are polite and friendly to visitors and often help each other. A particular example of this was seen at playtime when older boys spontaneously went to help one of the youngest pupils in the nursery who had hurt himself.
- Teachers and pupils get on well, there is a real sense of joint purpose in the classroom, with all aiming to do their best. Pupils are encouraged to work things out for themselves, for example by researching in books or by using a dictionary. However, some of the younger pupils find it difficult to concentrate when listening to the teacher talking for a long time.
- Pupils, parents and carers feel that pupils are well looked after at school. All those who responded to the on-line questionnaire said that their children were safe and happy. The school keeps careful records of any incidents that may occur and helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that they are confident staff will sort out any problems should they arise.
- Pupils work well in groups in the classroom, listening sensitively to other people's views. They become increasingly aware of their place in the local community through the visits and trips, and they are encouraged learn about other countries and cultures in lessons.
- Attendance is below average, but is rising following measures put in place by the school, working in partnership with the local authority and families.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has undergone some significant changes in the past year, including joining in a federation with another local school. These changes have been well managed by governors and the new headteacher and so the schools have been able to share resources and to remain financially stable. The headteacher is careful to ensure that the best from both schools is shared through joint planning and shared teaching. The partnership has also brought other benefits, such as a wider range of clubs after school and, in the words of the pupils, 'even more competition on sports day'.
- The leadership has a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and correctly identifies how any weaker areas can be improved. For example, it identified that pupils were not doing as well as they should in mathematics, so it changed the way that this was taught as well as the resources and this has led to significant improvements. Leaders are aware that progress in writing is relatively less strong than in reading and mathematics. They have a robust plan in place to ensure that writing is developed still further and are ambitious for all pupils to make rapid progress in every area, although this has yet to have time to accelerate progress.
- The school keeps helpful records about how pupils are doing and is easily able to see if any pupils are falling behind. These pupils are then offered support, including individual tuition, and

make good progress. Equal opportunities are promoted well and no pupil is denied access to anything the school has to offer.

- The leaders in the school have a very accurate idea of the quality of teaching because they make sure that they observe lessons and check the quality of work in books. They work with other schools to ensure that assessments are accurate and with the local authority to check their judgements on the quality of teaching and of pupils' work.
- Teachers have training whenever they need it, for example several staff have worked with the local authority early years team to ensure that children's progress is accurately measured and followed.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a very accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has a good idea of the quality of teaching, because it constantly checks on the teaching with the leaders in the school. For example governors accompany the headteacher on walks around the classrooms to see what is being taught. Governors are involved in reviewing teachers' performance, including that of the headteacher, and ensure that the quality of teaching and leadership responsibilities are reflected in their salary progression. They strongly support the school in tackling any underperformance. Governors are experienced in analysing data and comparing it with other schools nationally. As a result, they ask challenging questions about pupils' progress and about how funding, including any extra funding such as the pupil premium, is spent. The training from the local authority makes them aware of their responsibilities and includes making sure that all staff are appropriately trained in child protection and that recruitment of staff follows national and local guidelines. They take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously.

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	111942
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	412230

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	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Taylor
Headteacher	Jo-Anne Callow
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2008
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