

Halwin School

Porkellis, Helston, Cornwall, TR13 0EG

Inspection dates

6–7 November 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Since the last inspection, because of a period of significant staffing instability, efforts to establish consistently good teaching and pupils' progress through the school have been constrained.
- In particular, pupils' progress in mathematics has varied too much, limiting attainment. Steps taken to bring improvement have not been operating long enough to secure pupils' good achievement.
- At times, especially in mathematics, teachers do not strengthen learning quickly enough by expecting more work from pupils and providing harder tasks when they find them too easy.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to learn by solving problems and finding things out for themselves and this restricts their ability to learn independently.

The school has the following strengths:

- Senior leaders, including governors, have worked with determination through a difficult period of change to strive for improvement and disrupt pupils' learning as little as possible. This has sustained high-quality pastoral care and also brought improved teaching and learning in all aspects of English across the school.
- Dynamic leadership from the acting headteacher, effectively supported by governors and partnerships across the wider educational trust, is now quickening the pace of improvement.
- Improved marking of pupils' work and the development of pupils' self-evaluation skills are strengthening teaching and pupils' progress.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy many friendships at the school. Staff safeguard pupils' welfare very diligently and communicate fully and work supportively with parents and carers. As a result, pupils say that they feel happy and very safe at school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited nine lessons and was accompanied by the acting headteacher during some of these observations.
- The inspector observed morning playtime and lunch breaks and also visited the breakfast club.
- 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 who also represent the school on the educational trust. The inspector met and also held a separate telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector held meetings with school staff, including senior leaders.
- The inspector received eight responses to the staff questionnaire. The inspector also spoke informally with a number of parents and carers as they brought or collected their children to and from school. The inspector also took account of 22 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection and also received a letter from a parent or carer.
- 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 school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most 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 below the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below 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) is below that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the normal times is slightly above average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are accommodated in a combined Reception and Year 1 class.
- Other pupils are taught in mixed-age classes with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 arranged by ability for English and mathematics.
- The school is a member of the Helston and Lizard Cooperative Educational Trust with two secondary schools, local primary schools and various other organisations.
- A privately run pre-school also operates on the school site. This is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has experienced significant instability in teaching staff due to maternity leave and retirements, including at a senior level, since the previous inspection and staffing in two of the three classes has been subject to change during the past year.
- A newly appointed acting headteacher, commenced his duties at the school at the beginning of this autumn term 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistently good teaching and pupils' achievement across the school by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensuring that the amount of work that pupils should complete is sustained at a high level
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their independence as learners by finding things out for themselves.
- Raise pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils develop and apply their basic numeracy and problem solving skills in a step-by-step way as they move through the school
 - increasing the pace of learning, checking pupils' understanding and moving them on to harder work more quickly when it is clear they find tasks too easy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Past national test results in mathematics at the end of Year 6, school assessments of pupils' skills through the school and a scrutiny of pupils' work, show that their progress in this subject has continued to vary since the previous inspection.
- Observations of teaching also show inconsistency in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, especially in mathematics in parts of the school, which results in overall achievement still requiring improvement.
- Even so, efforts to raise pupils' English skills, including by extending their vocabulary, have been successful. In response to an effective whole-school focus on strengthening the teaching of pupils' speaking and listening skills, phonics (letter sounds) and guided reading, there has been positive quickening of pupils' progress in reading and writing since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils have shown above average performance in the phonics screening checks at the end of Year 1 over the past two years. In addition, more pupils are demonstrating above expected levels of attainment across the school in reading and, especially in Years 5 and 6, in writing.
- Children's skills on entry mostly match those expected for their age, but they vary significantly from year to year because of the small numbers who start in the Reception class. Some year groups also vary as pupils leave or arrive from other schools, further indicating that data of pupils' achievement need to be evaluated carefully in relation to their needs and starting points.
- Children make a good start and do well in Reception, especially in developing the self-confidence and very positive attitudes that support their enjoyment of learning as they move from class to class. For example, they eagerly and confidently retell stories, and write about and design robots in Years 2, 3 and 4. At times though, and also as pupils move through the school, opportunities to further extend their numeracy skills are missed and this leads to pupils having difficulty using and applying these skills to solve mathematical problems.
- There is some evidence that gaps in pupils' mathematical skills are being closed, especially in Years 5 and 6, where pupils capably investigated number sequences. However, pupils' skills in working more independently are not consistent throughout the school limiting their ability to make even better progress.
- All staff promote equality of opportunity and include disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those arriving from other schools fully in all activities. Similarly the few pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding receive effective additional adult assistance. As a result, all these groups of pupils now make good progress in English and similarly variable but improving progress in mathematics as other pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although improved since the previous inspection there is still some variation in the quality of teaching and as it is not yet consistently good enough in mathematics, teaching requires improvement.
- Even so, in response to strong leadership the quality of teaching continues to improve with the management of pupils' behaviour, engendering caring relationships and promoting positive attitudes continuing as supportive features in all parts of the school. The increasing involvement of parents and carers in support of their child's learning is also helping to accelerate pupils' progress.
- These aspects, which are commented upon and much appreciated by parents and carers, have underpinned success in strengthening the teaching of all aspects of English in all classes since the previous inspection. For example, in response to the teachers' good modelling of descriptive

vocabulary and thought provoking questioning, pupils are eager to share ideas and answer questions. These were evident in the Reception and Year 1 class when children excitedly discussed how to arrange their bricks when building a Norman Castle.

- Additionally, teachers and teaching assistants and often volunteers provide effective additional assistance for groups of pupils, especially disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those receiving pupil premium support, to enrich their reading and writing skills.
- Teaching of writing in all classes is supported by high expectations of well-presented work and younger pupils, for example, in Years 2, 3 and 4, use story maps effectively to sequence their expressive writing.
- At times though, there is inconsistency in teachers' expectations so that some pupils are not always producing enough work in the time allocated and this slows progress.
- In mathematics in particular, pupils' basic numeracy skills are not reinforced in a sufficiently step-by-step way as they move through the school and opportunities to move pupils on to harder work and to work more independently when they begin to find tasks too easy are not taken quickly enough.
- Teachers are now using computers more frequently to enthuse pupils, as for example in Years 5 and 6 when pupils worked well in pairs using computer netbooks to investigate and write about synagogues.
- Significant improvement this term in the way teachers mark pupils' work and involve them in thinking for themselves about what they need to do next is also quickening pupils' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents, carers and their children recognise that the school has undergone much change in recent years, but express the view that staff have continued to look after the children very well.
- There is full agreement too that behaviour is and has been consistently good and that pupils show good attitudes to learning and willingly share and express their ideas in class. At times though, inspection shows that a few pupils could work even harder in lessons and produce more work in the time given.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe because, 'If we ever feel sad or worried there is always someone to cheer us up.'
- Parents and carers too, express full confidence in the staff of the school and say, 'Staff are always willing to listen and help.'
- Pupils know about the different forms that bullying can take, for example, verbal and physical abuse.
- They also say that bullying, if ever, is a very rare event and that should it occur they have full confidence that the acting headteacher and other staff would deal with it very quickly and work closely with parents and carers 'to sort it out'.
- Pupils welcome the increased opportunities now available following recent updating of the school's information and communication technology equipment and know about e-safety and how to keep safe from cyber bullying when using desktop and notebook computers.
- The large majority of pupils attend well with, for example, a significant proportion of pupils not having missed a day of school so far this term. However, despite the school's diligent efforts to encourage good attendance, a few pupils still miss school because of holidays taken during school time and this reduces overall attendance to a level that matches that found nationally.

The leadership and management are good

- The very positive views of all those associated with the school show appreciation of the care and deliberation taken by senior leaders, including governors, to bring the school successfully through a period of staffing instability.
- In particular, parents, carers and their children are quick to mention the diligence of staff in treating pupils equally by 'listening to everyone's point of view'. All staff are rigorous in implementing agreed procedures to safeguard pupils' welfare. Leaders and managers ensure that the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully met and that pupils arriving from other schools are warmly included into the day-to-day life of the school.
- Leaders and managers continue to demonstrate effective consideration of staff change and financial management, especially the link between staff performance and salaries and the impact on pupils' achievement. Their close checking of additional funds such as the pupil premium, for example, continues to ensure that the pupils receiving such support are enabled to achieve as well as other pupils.
- Senior managers acknowledge the degree to which changes in staff and budgetary concerns constrained efforts to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics. Nevertheless, evidence shows that the leaders' and managers' sustained commitment to drive the school forward has been successful in raising the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in English.
- Partnership working across the trust continues to further extend the already good range of stimulating learning opportunities, including in competitive sport, now supported by additional funding to lift pupils' health and well-being. Topic studies, for example, the current topic of 'Toys', make links across subjects and strongly promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- More recently this term, the refreshing drive and expertise of the new acting headteacher, increasingly supported by a strengthening team approach to leadership, are quickening the pace of improvement, including in mathematics, demonstrating the school's capacity to continue this into the future, for example, by lifting staff morale, working more closely with parents and carers and improving the marking of pupils' work.
- The local authority provides effective assistance, particularly in supporting the new leadership.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors visit the school regularly to see teaching and learning at first hand and to talk to staff, pupils and parents and carers; consequently they know the school well. By also making full use of the expertise across the educational trust the governing body has played a key role in managing finances effectively during a period of continued budgetary concern. Governors take proper heed of teachers' performance management when considering their deployment and salaries and this, for example, has supported continued improvement in the teaching of English. Although not all steps to bring improvement have been as successful, governors ensure that additional funds such as the pupil premium are used effectively to include these pupils in the full range of school activity and help them to achieve as well as other pupils. Governors are also carefully checking to ensure that the use of additional sports funding to increase swimming and competitive sports sessions improves the pupils' well-being, fitness and health.

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	111828
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	426735

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	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Loveday Jenkin
Acting Headteacher	John Smith
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 February 2012
Telephone number	01209 860329
Fax number	01209 860329
Email address	head@halwin.cornwall.sch.uk

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