

Germoe Community Primary School

Germoe Lane, Penzance, Cornwall, TR20 9QY

Inspection dates

4–5 February 2014

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 achieve well from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- They do well because teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding, with lively and interesting topics which capture the pupils' interest.
- The headteacher and governors accurately evaluate the school's effectiveness and use their findings to ensure further improvements occur. They have improved the quality of teaching through providing training on new ways to improve pupils' writing skills which have resulted in higher achievement across the school.
- The school's work to ensure the safety of pupils is outstanding; all safeguarding policies are in place, reviewed regularly, and consistently implemented by staff.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, and this ensures their attention in lessons and their good achievement.
- The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, links with the local community and the use of the grounds for forest school activities

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Achievement in mathematics is not as high across the school as it is in writing and reading because pupils do not all have a secure understanding of calculation skills.
- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to ensure all pupils achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, including phonics sessions (learning letters and the sounds they make), five of which were joint observations with the headteacher. She joined pupils and staff to walk to the local church to observe the Christingle service.
- She listened to pupils from Years 2 and 6 reading, and made several brief observations of the teaching of phonics.
- The inspector spoke informally with pupils during break times and lunchtime, to discuss their views of the school, as well as speaking with some during lessons.
- She met with three members of the governing body and had a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed displays of pupils' work in classrooms and in the corridors, and looked at the work in their books during lessons. She also looked in more depth at a sample of pupils' books with the headteacher.
- She held meetings with the school's special educational needs coordinator, the physical education coordinator and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. She also met regularly with the headteacher.
- There were fewer than 10 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, so it was not possible to consider the results. However, the inspector spoke to a group of parents and carers in the playground, and to another parent or carer by telephone, to gain their views of the school. Eight questionnaires completed by staff were also taken into account.
- A wide range of school documentation was examined, including statutory policies relating to safeguarding. The inspector also looked at records of the school's own monitoring and self-evaluation, tracking data showing the progress of all pupils, attendance information and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Anne Newall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average sized primary school. At present, cohort sizes range from three pupils to nine pupils.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes: one for Reception and Year 1, one for Years 2, 3 and 4, and one for Years 5 and 6.
- The percentage of pupils supported by the pupil premium (funding provided by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority, or those with a parent or carer in the armed forces) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is similar to the national average, while the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the normal times is well above average.
- All the class teachers are new to the school, three having joined in September 2013, and one in January 2014.
- The headteacher is the executive headteacher of this school and another school in the locality.
- The school is a member of the Helston and Lizard Peninsula Co-operative Education Trust of over 20 local schools.
- A privately run pre-school operates on the site, but is not managed by the governing body and so was not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in mathematics by:
 - ensuring all pupils have a thorough and progressive understanding of each mathematical calculation skill before moving onto the next.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is consistently outstanding by:
 - further sharing and applying best practice from partner schools within the co-operative trust and from colleagues within school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Very small cohorts of pupils join the school in Reception each year, with varying levels of skills; overall, they are generally as expected for their age. They progress well in all areas of learning because of good provision and interesting activities which capture their imagination. For example, they have great fun at their daily 'dough disco' where they manipulate play dough to music, strengthening their fingers for writing. Children work confidently alongside their older classmates, which helps to develop their confidence and social skills.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the required standard in the government's phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening check in Year 1 has been lower than the national proportion in the past two years. However, the implementation of more systematic teaching of phonics in ability groups has ensured pupils quickly reach the required standard, and has enabled the most able pupils to progress rapidly in learning to read and write.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is good and sometimes outstanding. They benefit from specialist teaching in larger groups made up of high-attaining pupils from across the trust.
- Assessments of progress are made each term, and are discussed by the headteacher and class teachers to ensure that appropriate work is provided. As a result, by the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils make good progress from their individual starting points, reaching standards similar to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress in mathematics, while good, is not as strong as it is in reading or writing. This is because there are sometimes gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts which are not fully addressed before they move onto the next stage of learning.
- As pupils move up through the school, they continue to develop good writing skills using strategies such as 'talk for writing', where they rehearse what they are going to write through the use of symbols and actions. Pupils enjoy using 'talk for writing'. The use of talk partners to share and extend ideas also contributes to improved achievement, for example, when Year 5 and 6 pupils discussed whether 'children should be allowed to eat whatever they like'. This prompted high-level discussions between pupils.
- Pupils read regularly and from a wide range of genres, including fiction and non-fiction texts. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 carrying out research were able to scan texts to find interesting facts about inventors and inventions, and enjoyed sharing their findings with their classmates.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good, because they are well supported by skilled staff as well as by a range of different interventions which also address their social and emotional needs.
- Support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium ensures that they also make good progress, and effective teaching in class and through enrichment and interventions has increased their rate of progress over the past year, so that it is now similar to the good progress made by all pupils. There were no pupils eligible for pupil premium support in Year 6 in 2013.
- Pupils who join the school at other than the usual times arrive with a wide range of abilities; their needs are quickly identified and, where necessary, intervention programmes are provided to ensure that, once they are settled, they make similar good progress as their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers create a positive climate for learning in their classrooms, with displays which promote pupils' ability to work by themselves in using, for example, words to connect sentences and labelled pictures of cubes, triangles, spheres and rectangles which help pupils accurately spell the names when writing about the features of the shapes.
- Very good relationships between staff and pupils are characterised by respect for each other and the majority of pupils show a positive attitude to learning, trying hard with their work to please

their teacher. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of each pupil and carefully adapt their questioning to deepen their pupils' understanding.

- Through good-quality marking and discussions about their work, teachers give pupils advice on how to improve, and in most cases pupils respond to the marking by incorporating this advice into their next work. As a result, pupils can see their own progress and have a good understanding of how well they are doing. However, when teaching mathematics, a few teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils gain a thorough and progressive understanding of each calculation skill before moving onto the next.
- The strong subject knowledge of teachers ensures learning is developed at a pace which enables pupils to practise the skills they are being taught and thereby reinforce their learning.
- Support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is a strong feature and ensures that each pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed. Teaching assistants are very skilled at implementing individual and small-group support planned by class teachers.
- Teachers provide challenging activities for the most able pupils to help them reach the highest standards of which they are capable. They attend masterclasses organised through the co-operative trust, for example, on 'securing Level 6 mathematics'.
- The rich outdoor environment is effectively used to develop learning across the curriculum, including science, music and art. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their 'forest school' activities, as well as learning beyond the school grounds, for example, at the nearby beach, all of which makes a strong contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Homework provides good support for learning, and includes regular reading, spelling and topic work. The youngest pupils are encouraged to bring in examples of work done at home to go into their 'wow' books. For older pupils, homework support is offered in school at lunchtime.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in their lessons, getting on with their peers when working together in pairs or small groups. On occasions, a minority of pupils lose focus if they are not kept fully active, but their teachers are alert to this possibility and quickly bring them back on track.
- The school seeks advice from external agencies to ensure they effectively manage the emotional needs and behaviour of the very few pupils who occasionally present challenging behaviour. As a result, there have been no exclusions in recent years, and incidents of poor behaviour are rare.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school, and that bullying 'doesn't really happen, and if it does the teachers sort it out'. They have a good awareness of different types of bullying, including racial abuse, name calling, and bullying via the internet or social media.
- Parents and carers spoken to say their children are well cared for, and that behaviour is good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Safeguarding of pupils is given high priority in the school, through consistent implementation of all statutory policies, which are regularly reviewed. Risk assessments are thorough, and staff receive regular training to support safety, for example on outdoor educational visits. Pupils create their own risk assessments when using the forest school, which teaches them to manage risks for themselves.
- Attendance is monitored closely, and is above average, reflecting the pupils' enjoyment of school and their desire to attend even if they are not feeling in top form.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is proactive in working with parents, carers and governors, as well as with schools within the trust to improve the achievement of all pupils. She is ably supported by the experienced head of teaching and learning, who is responsible for the school while the headteacher is at the partner school, and who has already ensured there are improved resources

and better teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Developments since the last inspection indicate the school's continued capability for further improvement. Middle leadership is effective.

- Membership of the trust has brought numerous benefits to the school, including sharing of staff expertise, and participation in academic, musical and sporting activities for the pupils. As a result, the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils are consistently good and sometimes better, but not yet outstanding overall.
- Parents and carers spoken to were very positive about the school, and feel they have plenty of opportunities to voice their opinions, talk to teachers and find out about their children's progress. Many volunteer in the school, for example listening to readers or running clubs.
- Staff and governors work together to evaluate the school's work, and to plan future developments. For example, they identified that the teaching of writing needed to improve and so implemented training for teachers in 'talk for writing' which has already proved effective.
- The headteacher and governors are ambitious for the pupils, and show this, for example, by linking with other schools in the area to provide specialist teaching for the most able pupils to secure a Level 6 in mathematics. They demonstrate a commitment to success for every child and the elimination of any discrimination, by using the pupil premium effectively to meet not just the eligible pupils' academic needs, but also to support their artistic, musical or sporting talents.
- The quality of teaching improved during 2012/13, because good practice found within the school and across the co-operative trust was shared. Since September 2013, with the four new teachers in post, all teaching observed by the headteacher has been good or outstanding and this has led to more rapid progress being made by pupils, particularly in reading and writing.
- Pupils enjoy an interesting curriculum which is planned around their own interests, appeals to them, and which makes excellent use of the outdoors.
- Opportunities for physical education are numerous, and have been enhanced by the additional sports funding provided by the government. The physical education (PE) coordinator surveyed pupils' opinions and found they wanted a wider range of sports; as a result there are now more opportunities to take part in inter-school games, and pupils represent the school in cross-country running. The use of a PE specialist within school has improved pupils' skills, and the coordinator has developed a means of assessing pupils' skills so that lessons build accurately upon their existing abilities.
- The curriculum is enriched by a variety of interesting trips each year, including a residential visit to London for the oldest pupils. Other more local visits include to Geevor Mine, the Minack Theatre, The Hall for Cornwall and the village church. The school also regularly invites visitors to talk to the children about a wide range of subjects, including members of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute and the Fire Service to talk to pupils about safety.
- The local authority indicates its confidence in the school by providing 'light touch' support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed and closely involved with staff in monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness. They produce regular reports of their visits to school, as well as receiving reports from the headteacher. Governors have organised committees into four areas: achievement; teaching; behaviour and safety; and leadership and management, and are allocated to their areas of strength. Governors undertake training to help them in their role. They ensure that their statutory duties relating to safeguarding are met with a termly audit of policies and procedures, and closely monitor the finances. They have improved their understanding of pupil progress information, including for pupils supported by the pupil premium, and use these data to ask probing questions of the headteacher. Governors have an understanding of the performance management systems. They know that the quality of teaching in the school at present is good but as all teachers are new this year there have not been any pay recommendations for them to consider.

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	111813
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	440989

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Keeling
Headteacher	Paula Quinney
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 March 2012
Telephone number	01736 763310
Email Address	admin@germoe.cornwall.sch.uk

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