

Alverton Primary School

Toltuff Crescent, Alverton, Penzance, TR18 4QD

Inspection dates

3–4 June 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 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Changes to leadership at the school, following the appointment of the executive headteacher, have secured rapid improvement. As a result, teaching is improving and standards are rising quickly across the school, as pupils are making faster progress.
- Pupils benefit from good teaching. Teachers are particularly effective in devising activities that engage and capture pupils' interests.
- Pupils who are at risk of not doing so well, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well.
- There are rigorous systems in place to check on pupils' progress. The staff understand the abilities and needs of all pupils well.
- Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They have positive attitudes towards their learning. They behave well and say that they feel very safe in school because staff provide a caring and safe place to learn.
- Children settle quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where they make good progress.
- Governors are ambitious for continual improvement at the school and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have successfully challenged leaders and teachers to improve and have supported the school very well through a period of rapid change.
- Pupils have many memorable experiences, including those in music and sport, which contribute strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teachers are not always quick enough in making sure that pupils have work which is hard enough for them.
- Pupils' understanding of how to improve their work is not being consistently checked by teachers.
- Occasionally, the work undertaken by additional adults in classrooms to support pupils' learning is not checked well enough by teachers.
- The outside environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is underdeveloped as a learning space

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 22 lessons and observed 13 teachers, including some small-group teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). An inspector observed some small groups of pupils receiving additional literacy and numeracy support from teachers and teaching assistants. The executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and acting deputy headteacher joined inspectors to observe some lessons.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books, and spoke to some about their work and other aspects of school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and other members of staff regarding pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation including records of the quality of teaching, the school's information on pupils' progress, the sports funding action plan, the school improvement plan and records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and other members, officers from the local authority and with the School Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors took account of the 43 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire. Two letters from parents or carers were also received and considered during the inspection. An inspector also spoke to some parents and carers at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

John Cavill, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Linda Rafferty	Additional Inspector
Terry Payne	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Alverton is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is currently being led by an executive headteacher, who also leads another local primary school. This arrangement has been in place since September 2013, due to the long-term absence of the headteacher. The school undertook an extensive restructuring of leadership roles and responsibilities, including at senior level, at the start of this academic year.
- The school is a member of the Penwith Education Trust made up of 18 local primary and secondary schools.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in Nursery and Reception classes. There are one and a half classes in each year group. Some pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught together, as are some in Years 3 and 4 and some in Years 5 and 6. All other pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are taught, for the majority of their lessons, in single-year classes. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in ability groups for literacy and numeracy.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs assessed as at school action is average. The proportion of those who need more extra support, assessed as at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is also average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is average. In this school this funding supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- In 2013, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A very small number of pupils are educated either full or part time at another school.
- The school operates a breakfast club for pupils, which was inspected as part of this inspection.
- A privately managed nursery is located within the school grounds but is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so more is outstanding, in order to further raise pupils' achievement, by making sure teachers:
 - challenge and speed up pupils' progress, moving them on more quickly to harder work when they demonstrate that they understand what they are doing
 - check that pupils understand how to improve their work and have responded to their written comments in pupils' books
 - check more carefully the work undertaken by additional adults in lessons to ensure it supports pupils' learning in the best possible ways.
- Improve the outdoor environment at the school to enhance outdoor learning opportunities, especially for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress and move into Key Stage 1 with much stronger skills and abilities that are nearer to, or exceed, those expected for their age.
- Over the past year, pupils in all classes have made rapidly improved progress in all subjects across the school. This is as a result of the swift action taken by leaders to secure good achievement for all pupils. Achievement is not yet outstanding because it dipped slightly in 2013, especially in mathematics. The school has successfully addressed this issue and the achievement of pupils currently at the school is similar across all subjects. The attainment of the current Year 6 pupils is set to be above average, exceeding the average attainment in 2013.
- The most able pupils are continuing to achieve well. Inspection evidence shows that increasing numbers of pupils are attaining the highest levels at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Additional funding is being used well to support eligible pupils and to include them fully in the wide range of school activities. The gap in attainment between eligible Year 6 pupils in 2013 and their peers was approximately 18 months behind in mathematics and 12 months behind in English. However, the school has addressed this issue successfully. School records show that the progress of eligible pupils across the school is at least similar to that of their peers. The gap in attainment between eligible pupils and their peers is rapidly closing with most year groups recording a halving of the gap this year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in all subjects. They are enabled to reach their potential due to the well-planned support they receive. Pupils who are educated at another school achieve well and teachers check their progress regularly.
- The results in the most recent Year 1 check on pupils' understanding of phonics was below the national average. Training for staff and additional support for pupils were provided and have resulted in rapidly improved outcomes this year that are set to be well above average. This is reflected in the way pupils have a love of reading and read with confidence. Pupils are encouraged to read widely across a range of literature and demonstrate a clear understanding of what they have read.
- Greater numbers of pupils are taking part in a wider range of sports supported by the additional school sports funding. Pupils say they are proud to represent the school in sports events and compete at county championships.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and has rapidly improved, including the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of the work in their books show that good teaching has been secured for some time.
- Overall, pupils learn effectively because teachers plan purposeful learning activities that capture their interest and motivate them to succeed. For example, pupils in Year 6 were keen to work on a series of tasks in mathematics linked to the anniversary of the D-Day landings by cracking a code. Similarly, pupils in Years 1 and 2 used a video clip of a Roald Dahl story to help them to understand how to write about a setting in their story. Pupils were keen to say how much they enjoyed their lessons and how good the teaching is.
- There is a strong focus on teaching pupils to read and they read regularly at school and at home
- Teachers check on pupils' progress regularly in lessons, often adapting the activities to speed up the learning when necessary. However, teaching is not yet outstanding because sometimes teachers do not move pupils on to harder work quickly enough when they have understood what they are doing.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers ensure that children are able to experience a wide range of stimulating activities. The inside environment is vibrant and welcoming. However, the

outside environment is underdeveloped as a learning space. This is limiting the opportunity for children to experience the benefits of learning outdoors to further promote their creative and physical development.

- Pupils' work is regularly and accurately marked. Teachers provide written comments to help pupils improve their work. However, not all teachers follow up the guidance given to check if pupils have responded well by improving their work. This limits some pupils' opportunities to make the good use of this advice to make even better progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. The planning of learning is consistent across the school and helps ensure pupils make good progress.
- Teaching assistants and other adults who support pupils' learning demonstrate a high level of commitment. They provide good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as those who are eligible for additional funding. However, some additional adults, on occasions, do not provide the most suitable support. For example, they may provide pupils with answers to questions too soon rather than challenging them to work out the answer for themselves. This is limiting their achievement. Teachers are not checking well enough on the quality of this support.
- Pupils benefit from expert teaching in music so they develop their musical skills well. They have regular opportunities to perform to an audience and in the local community and beyond, which they do with confidence from a young age.
- Parents and carers are highly positive about the quality of teaching at the school. Almost all agree that their children are taught well and make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and very considerate towards each other. They are well motivated, settle to work quickly and enjoy coming to school. They are keen to take part in all activities the school has to offer and are very proud of their school.
- Pupils are highly respectful and courteous. The relationships between pupils and adults are exceptionally strong. They arrive at lessons promptly, ready to learn, organise the equipment they need quickly and quietly, engage with their work and settle quickly. The atmosphere in the playground is happy and welcoming.
- Effective behaviour policies are understood fully by staff and pupils appreciate what constitutes acceptable behaviour. Behaviour in the breakfast club is good and provides pupils with a positive start to the school day. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because of occasional lapses in concentration in lessons by a few pupils when they fidget and waste some time.
- Pupils are clear that bullying is rare, although they are knowledgeable about all forms of bullying, such as cyber bullying and racist name calling. Pupils from Year 1 upwards act as 'Bully Busters', supporting pupils who may feel unhappy or unsafe. Pupils report that they have confidence in the adults to help them where necessary.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and the parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire or spoke to inspectors agree.
- Attendance has improved and is now average. This has followed concerted work by leaders to impress on parents and carers the importance of regular attendance to pupils' achievement.
- Pupils are keen to contribute to the school and wider community. They undertake responsibilities in school such as ministers in the school parliament or take part in the local Mazey Day parade.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher provides the school with strong leadership and direction. He has brought a great clarity to how the school judges its effectiveness, and uses this information to prioritise areas for improvement. The highly effective restructuring of leadership at the school

has allowed leaders, at all levels, to become empowered and drive the school forward to make rapid improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.

- An effective team of senior leaders ably support the executive headteacher in his continual drive for improvement. They check the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress regularly during the year. Leaders use this information to set challenging targets to promote faster rates of progress for different groups of pupils. As a result, gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils are rapidly closing. The school recognises that not enough teaching is outstanding to ensure that pupils' achievement is consistently very strong over time.
- Subject leaders are fully involved in checking performance across the school. Information from the regular scrutiny of pupils' work, on pupils' progress and from lesson observations is used effectively to check on teachers' targets and performance. Improvements in the teaching of mathematics, including the teaching of basic calculation skills, have rapidly improved progress in the subject.
- Teachers have clear and challenging targets for improving their performance, which focus on pupils' achievement and their responsibilities. Teachers know what constitutes good practice and how their pay progresses only when their targets are met.
- Improvements in teaching have been rapidly secured by leaders through effective additional training linked to whole-school improvement goals. As a result, the quality of teaching is now consistently good, with some examples of outstanding practice.
- Pupils' learning experiences across a range of subjects are varied and memorable, especially in music and sport. The school provides a wide array of enrichment activities, such as the recent school production of *Bugsy*, which contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. They appreciate the good levels of communication, particularly about how well their children are doing.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted at all times and any discrimination is tackled well. The school tailors the support carefully and effectively for those pupils supported by additional funding in order to raise their achievement. Leaders, through regular meetings, check the progress of pupils who are educated at another school.
- The local authority provided some support to recruit the executive headteacher and the subsequent process of restructuring the leadership.
- Checks on the plans for the use of the additional sports funding show that more pupils are participating in a wider range of sporting activities, such as gymnastics and multi-skills for younger pupils. Staff are able to develop their skills alongside sports specialists to help sustain these activities.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has rigorously held leaders to account and has been instrumental in driving forward the school to secure the rapid improvements over the past year. Governors provide strong challenge to the school's leaders and are committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils. They have a clear understanding of how the school's performance data compare with similar schools' and all schools' nationally. Consequently, they are able to challenge leaders well about the achievement of different groups of pupils. They are fully involved in the process of checking how well the school is doing and the school development plans, understanding areas for improvement well. They know about the quality of teaching through regular visits to school. They undertake good quality training and regularly assess the needs of the governing body to ensure they are able to fully meet the school's needs. They know how the performance of staff is managed and have been instrumental in rewarding good performance. They make close checks on how additional funding for sports and other additional funding is used and its impact on improving pupils' outcomes. They make sure that statutory responsibilities, such as safeguarding requirements, are fully in place and effective.

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	111806
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	444051

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	331
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nanette Newton-Hinge
Executive headteacher	Martin Higgs
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 June 2011
Telephone number	01736 364087
Fax number	01736 364087
Email address	secretary@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk

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