

Inspection of Menheniot Primary School

East Road, Menheniot, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 3QY

Inspection dates: 10–11 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like the 'family feel' which bonds them and the staff. Pupils feel safe and are looked-after well. They proudly wear a chough on their uniforms and talk passionately about Cornish tales and legends. Pupils like to learn about their heritage. This is brought to life when they make pasties and learn traditional dances. Pupils have a strong sense of identity. This helps them to feel connected to each other and the world around them, including in the Reception Year.

Pupils are polite and kind. They play well together and show respect when listening to the views of others, such as during assembly. Pupils follow the school rules. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils say that any bullying is dealt with quickly. They learn how to care for themselves and others, helped on their way by the guinea pigs, Hero and Whisper. However, pupils do not have consistently positive attitudes in class. In some subjects, when pupils become bored, they do not take enough pride in their work. As a result, the quality of their writing and presentation suffers.

Pupils achieve well in a few subjects. For example, they learn much in personal, social and health education (PSHE) about themselves, and how to stay healthy. Pupils recall visits and special events which help them to remember what they have learned. Children in the early years learn much from 'Welly Wednesday'. However, many subjects are not planned well enough to give pupils a deep understanding or readiness for the future, including in mathematics, science and religious education (RE). Weaknesses in the phonics programme also mean that some pupils, particularly those who need to catch up, find reading too difficult.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, including governors, have not been quick enough to prevent a decline in the school's performance. Leaders do not have clear plans for what they want pupils to know, or by when, in many subjects. Subject leaders do not have a good enough understanding of their subjects, or how they want these to build pupils' knowledge over time. As a result, teachers do not have a consistent approach to how these subjects, including reading and mathematics, are being taught. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, staff and governors are united. Morale in the school is high. Leaders are fully aware that they need to improve the curriculum.

Leaders do not take enough account of either the pupils' or the school's uniqueness when thinking about what they want pupils to learn. Although this is a strength in PSHE, too many subjects are not taught with the precise needs of the pupils of Menheniot Primary in mind. Some pupils struggle to make connections or do not find sequences of learning meaningful.

Leaders have made reading a top priority for improvement. This has led to changes in how reading is taught, and more opportunities for pupils to read. For example, the expectation that all pupils will have 30 minutes of quiet reading each day is guaranteed. Pupils told us about their favourite authors. They have also benefited from the visit of a Cornish author to inspire them.

However, the approaches for teaching reading and phonics are not strong enough. The school does not have a programme to teach phonics using a well-considered and structured approach. Pupils are not taught letters and sounds with sufficiently precise steps, which makes learning phonics difficult, particularly for those who have fallen behind, or those pupils with SEND. Too many pupils do not have reading books that are well matched to their phonics knowledge, including in the Reception Year. This causes them to hesitate on too many words and stops them gaining speed, fluency and understanding when reading.

The approach to teaching reading in key stage 2 classes is not consistent. Teachers do not check pupils' reading well enough. There are times when some teachers listen to pupils read and take this opportunity to plan appropriate next steps. However, other pupils do not get the best from daily reading approaches. Teachers do not consistently find out what the pupils are able to do, and what they need further support with. This holds too many pupils back, particularly those who need to catch up quickly.

The school's strategy for pupils with SEND is weak. Support for pupils is not always matched precisely to pupils' needs. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should. This affects how well pupils are prepared for the next stage in their education, including children in the Reception Year.

Pupils understand right from wrong. They are keen to make a difference by doing jobs, such as helping in the office or operating the music in assembly. The school council is well organised and gives pupils an important voice in the school. For example, the school council chose the school's pets and even collected Hero and Whisper from the store. The pupils know how to care for the guinea pigs. Pupils like to learn about other cultures and religions, including Chinese New Year and Diwali. This helps pupils to be tolerant and have respect for others as part of life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that pupils are kept safe. Staff, volunteers and governors are fully checked before they work with pupils. Staff are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about a child. Leaders act quickly to take the right action on behalf of pupils.

Pupils feel safe. There are positive relationships and pupils trust staff. Pupils know how to stay safe online and in relation their mental health and well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some middle and senior leaders, including subject leaders and those responsible for SEND, do not have enough knowledge to hold others stringently to account. This leads to inaccurate self-evaluation and holds the school back. Senior leaders and governors must ensure that all leaders are fully trained and knowledgeable in their subjects, or areas, to secure the necessary improvement.
- The school does not have an ambitious enough curriculum to ensure that pupils acquire good knowledge over time. This leads to gaps in pupils' academic, social and emotional development, particularly those who need help to catch up, or those pupils with SEND. Leaders need to implement a context-led, high-quality curriculum that prepares all pupils well for the next stage of their education.
- The school has a daily phonics programme for younger pupils and a reading programme for pupils in key stage 2. However, there are too many inconsistencies in both, particularly in the use of teachers' assessments and staff's subject knowledge. This leads to some pupils struggling to read fluently. Leaders need to implement high-quality phonics and reading programmes to raise the standard of reading in the school.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	111975
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10122402
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Berry
Headteacher	Amanda Raynham-Dobb
Website	www.menheniot.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2007

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has remained under local authority control and has not joined a multi-academy trust or become an academy.
- The school was judged outstanding in 2007. This is the first full inspection since that time.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We worked with many leaders during the inspection, including the headteacher, the English leader, curriculum leaders (mathematics, science, PSHE and RE), and the special educational needs coordinator.
- We also met with representatives of the governing board, including the chair of the governing board. We also spoke with a local authority school improvement adviser linked to the school.
- We scrutinised the school's safeguarding records, including the single central record, and evaluated the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures.

This involved talking to staff and pupils about their understanding of safeguarding, bullying, and health and safety.

- We undertook deep dives in these subjects: reading, science, mathematics, PSHE and RE. This involved visiting lessons, talking to pupils, looking at pupils' work and talking with teachers.
- We checked Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, to find out what parents think about the school. There were insufficient responses, so we spoke with parents at the start of the second day to hear their opinions.

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Angela Folland

Ofsted Inspector

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