



St Hilary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111799
LEA Cornwall
Inspection number 278780
Inspection dates 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector Laurie Lewin AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Lane
School category	Community		St Hilary
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Penzance, Cornwall TR20 9DR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01736 763324
Number on roll	254	Fax number	01736 763115
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Peter Scrase
Date of previous inspection	16 January 2001	Headteacher	Mr W Mann

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school. The proportions of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals are broadly average. Nearly all of the children are White British, with a few from other minority ethnic backgrounds. When children start school, they are slightly below the expected levels for their age. The school is accredited with the Quality Mark from the Basic Skills Agency and the Investors In People Award. It has Beacon status and successfully provides support for other schools in the region.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'It is wonderful that our child, with the challenges he has, is able to have such a rounded experience at school. He feels included and valued as a pupil. To the school's great credit, he also receives a lot of individual time, attention support and helpwe are grateful beyond words.'

This sentiment, expressed by one parent and echoed by many others who wrote to the inspection team, goes to the heart of what makes this an outstanding school. A visitor to the school is immediately struck by the warm welcome and the happy and purposeful atmosphere. As another parent put it, 'My son bounces in to school at the start of the day ... and comes out at the end of the day with the same enthusiastic attitude'. Each day starts with a lively, get fit 'wake and shake' routine in the playground, with parents occasionally staying in the yard to join in. This sets the tone for lessons getting off to a crisp start, with children ready and eager to learn. The dynamic teaching team, including teaching assistants, work closely together. The consistent message from all of them is that 'no child will be allowed to slip behind'. This is translated into action through the very thorough planning for lessons, excellent curriculum, the high quality teaching and the high quality support from teaching assistants. In addition, the school's top quality methods of checking how well the children are getting on ensure that any slight problems are identified early and support immediately provided. The excellent provision from day one means that Reception children all achieve very well, reaching the expected levels by the start of Year 1. Children continue to show outstanding progress across the school and attain above average standards by the end of Year 6. The children are proud of their achievements. The first class support, care and guidance ensures they have a clear understanding of what they need to do to be successful and all children strive hard to meet the targets set for them. They are especially keen to acquire the 'four badges' awarded for academic achievement, learning to care for each other, being a good sport and doing well in creative activities. This excellent system leads to children showing exemplary behaviour and a high level of personal development. By the time they reach the older classes, they are confident, mature and have a high degree of social awareness. They particularly appreciate the outstanding range of extra activities and visits provided - those spoken to thought the trip to London was 'fabulous and lots of fun ...going to different shows'.

The school's high quality provision has gone from strength to strength over the years as a result of top quality leadership and management and, in particular, the drive and passion of the headteacher. He has a very special talent for ensuring that staff and children feel valued, and staff in particular feel empowered ... as the staff said during discussions, 'We are all leaders in this school'. However, the main thing that sets this school apart from others is that, with so much being outstanding, the staff still feel they can do better! For example, through thorough and accurate evaluation of their performance as a school, staff have identified accurately that still more could be done to extend the skills of higher attaining children. The school is continually spurred along by its enthusiastic and skilled governors. Together with the staff, they are keen to

maintain the school's philosophy of continual improvement. There are currently all the right ingredients in the school to ensure this happens.

What the school should do to improve further

• Wherever possible, fast track higher attaining children through to work that extends their skills to the fullest possible extent.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

High achievement, from Reception through to Year 6, is what this school is all about. Staff talk constantly about the need to prevent any child from losing confidence in their abilities through falling behind, and are very proactive in stopping this from happening. Work in children's books and on display, as well as in lessons, confirms the high standards and outstanding achievement in English, mathematics and science. Children are especially keen on their sports and the school teams often excel in different tournaments and matches. A few children have been selected to play in the county cricket team. The school has rightly identified the need to accelerate the progress of higher attaining children wherever possible.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school is highly successful in creating well rounded, well balanced individuals who are determined to get the best out of their education. Children enjoy all aspects of school life and say 'It's really great here because we get lots of sports and fantastic trips ...you get interesting topics, which you can take home to work on'. Those spoken to were also very impressed by the support they receive and say 'If you are struggling with something, it's very easy to get extra help'. Children's high level of academic performance gives them the necessary skills to help secure their future economic well-being. They show all the signs of maturing into sensible and well motivated individuals. Children acquire a thorough knowledge about how to stay fit, healthy and safe. Through facilities such as the school council meetings with the governors, they learn the value of contributing to the community and make a direct impact on aiding school improvement. As one Year 5 pupil put it, 'We have a real voice in what happens at this school'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Central to the children's great progress in this school is the outstanding work of their teachers. There is a tangible feeling of everyone working together as a tightly knit team to maximise the quality of what goes on in the classrooms. There is very high

quality support for children who may need it. For example, specialist literacy and numeracy teaching assistants 'preteach' areas to some children so that they get an early introduction to new topics. These children are then more confident when the same areas of work are dealt with in whole-class sessions. In this way, staff efficiently and effectively neutralise difficulties before they occur. Children say they really appreciate the way in which teachers make lessons interesting. This was borne out in lessons seen where the energetic and enthusiastic approach of staff inspired high levels of motivation from children. In their search to continually improve, staff are now rightly focusing on devising new ways of putting more challenge into lessons for higher attaining children. Discussions with staff and lesson observations indicate that there is sometimes scope for moving higher attaining children on to extension activities sooner rather than later in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum for Reception age group children is stimulating and very well organised to meet the needs of young children. The curriculum across the whole school is continually reviewed and refined to ensure that it provides all children with lots of excellent, interesting and challenging activities to ensure learning is as much fun as possible for all ages.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

'If you are worried about something ...there's always someone to help ...you can always go and see Mr Mann (the headteacher)'. This typical child's comment illustrates how totally safe and secure they feel. The outstanding provision is apparent through the warm, friendly, family atmosphere in which all individuals are made to feel important. First class monitoring of children's academic and personal progress means that staff have a deep insight into the needs of all individuals and provide very specific, high quality support and guidance where needed. This ensures that nobody falls behind. The school draws very extensively upon outside support agencies to enhance this support where needed. The excellent systems for rewarding progress and achievements help to ensure every child develops in a confident way.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The excellent leadership and management are the powerhouse areas that drive the school along and ensure that it never stops improving. The headteacher works in a highly skilled way. He gets all members of the school community fully involved in accurately evaluating performance and devising ways forward. In all actions, he ensures the spotlight is kept firmly on developing opportunities to raise standards even higher. Staff are fully signed up to his vision of constantly raising the bar on expectations and they therefore work together as a highly successful and committed team. As a Beacon

school, the school has provided a wide range of partner schools with excellent ideas on which to build their own success. Governance of the school is excellent. Governors are strong supporters of the school but have no qualms about questioning new initiatives or current procedures. The school's great success in moving forward over recent years bodes well for its continuing success.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed coming to visit your school. Thank you for making us so welcome and helping us during the inspection. We especially enjoyed hearing about the activities you said you enjoyed, such as the Year 5 children telling us about their 'fantastic' three-day trip to London. We were very impressed by your school, which we think is outstanding.

• You work very hard in lessons and show a lot of interest in your work. • You make excellent progress and reach high standards. • Your school is a very friendly and happy place and your behaviour is really excellent. Everybody is polite and helpful. • We think your teachers do a top quality job. • You really appreciate all of the extra interesting and exciting activities that the school provides for you. • We think the school does an excellent job of taking care of you. • We were very impressed to see how much you know about the need to eat healthy foods and stay fit. • We think that your headteacher does an excellent job of organising the school, getting the staff to work together and helping you all to become so successful.

We think the school is absolutely right to keep searching for ways of making things better, for example, by ensuring that those of you who manage tasks easily move quickly on to even more challenging work to help you improve.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.