



Mithian School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111867
LEA Cornwall
Inspection number 278798
Inspection dates 26 June 2006 to 26 June 2006
Reporting inspector Jacqueline Ikin AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Buckshead
School category	Community		St Agnes
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Cornwall TR5 0XW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01872 552711
Number on roll	100	Fax number	01872 552711
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	3 April 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Linda Garbett

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Mithian Primary School is a small village school which is steadily growing in size as its popularity extends beyond the local community. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds and a below-average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. There have been many recent changes to the school, including a new headteacher who has been in post for just under a year, several new staff and significant extensions to the accommodation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which provides a sound education and good standard of care for its pupils. It gives satisfactory value for money. The school has already started to move forward as a result of the many recent changes and its capacity for further improvement is good. The school's own view of its effectiveness accurately reflects that of the inspection team. Standards and achievement are satisfactory and show a steadily improving trend as a result of the good leadership of the headteacher and the commitment of staff and governors. Sound leadership and management have led to satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Systems for monitoring and evaluation are better than they were, although there is not yet enough emphasis on measuring the impact of the school's work on pupils' achievement. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are all satisfactory but not enough use is made of marking to help pupils improve their work. Assessment is satisfactory but its use to plan for improvements in achievement over the longer term is not yet rigorous enough. The quality of provision and standards in the Reception class are good. Pupils' personal development is fostered well. However, pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is not as good as it should be.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more precise use of assessment and monitoring procedures to raise achievement.
- Make better use of marking to give pupils a clearer understanding of how they can improve their work.
- Improve pupils' understanding of the cultural and ethnic diversity of modern British society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards and achievement are satisfactory. Standards on entry to the school vary from year to year but are average overall. The good provision that is made when they first start school ensures that children achieve well to reach standards that are above average by the end of the Reception year. Standards in Years 1 to 6 vary from year to year according to the different proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and gifted and talented pupils in each year group. However, there is a steadily rising trend and standards are above average in reading, mathematics and science, average in writing and above average overall. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' starting points at the beginning of Year 1. The school has exceeded the challenging targets that it set itself for 2006. More pupils are now attaining the higher levels in reading, mathematics and science as a result of the school's improvement efforts. There are signs of improving standards in writing but there has not yet been enough time for the school's work in this subject to be fully effective. The school is aware that more remains to be done. Most pupils reach the standards

expected of them in information and communication technology (ICT) but few achieve above this because the school has not had enough good quality resources for the subject until recently. Gifted and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve satisfactorily, and boys' achievement is similar to that of girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. They enjoy school and most have positive attitudes to learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Behaviour is good and pupils have a good understanding of the differences between right and wrong. The good provision for personal and social development in the Reception class, where children are taught to share and take turns, lays the foundation for this. Older pupils have a good understanding of their responsibilities within the school community and contribute well to its smooth running through their work on the school council and when acting as play leaders. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the wider community and demonstrate a concern for the needs of others through their charity work. A strength in pupils' spiritual development is their appreciation of the world around them. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 delight in astounding each other with awesome facts that they have discovered, such as the number of microbes that could be fitted into a dice. One pupil could hardly wait to inform his classmates that he was made of stars blown up billions of years ago. Pupils' understanding of their own culture is good but their understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity is limited. Pupils develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and of how to keep themselves safe. They are soundly prepared for their future economic well-being. Attendance is satisfactory. However, a small number of pupils are taken on extended holidays in term time, and this limits their achievement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Good teaching such as that seen in lessons during the inspection, is beginning to making a significant impact on improving standards. Pupils are well managed and teachers' clear explanations and demonstrations are effective in helping them understand new ideas. A good range of strategies is used to make learning relevant and interesting to boys and girls of all capabilities. Good opportunities for pupils to solve practical problems in mathematics have made a significant contribution to improved standards in the subject. A clear focus on different story-writing techniques and opportunities for discussion are beginning to raise standards in writing. For example, in a Year 5 and 6, lesson, pupils honed their skills in creating suspense in their horror stories through testing their ideas on each other as well as discussing their teacher's writing. Where weaknesses lie it is in the use of marking to help pupils know what they have to do to improve. Where teachers have access to interactive whiteboards, such as in a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, they

are used well to illustrate of new ideas. However pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to use ICT as a tool for learning across the curriculum. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Greater precision in the assessment of writing is a significant factor in the improving standards in English. However, there is not enough precision in the use of assessment to plan for improvements in pupils' achievement over the longer term.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's planning provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities to meet the interests and academic development of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are talented and gifted. The curriculum is enriched well through sport and the arts, visits and visitors. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs aims at providing something for all. The impact is seen in pupils' positive attitudes towards everything they do in school. Some good links with other schools, such as the 'maths network,' are successfully contributing to the school's efforts in raising standards, and a teacher from a local secondary school provides tuition in French in Year 6. A good range of health education activity, such as the school's 'huff and puff' initiative, is effective in promoting pupils' positive attitudes towards nutrition, fitness and safety. The recent improvements to the school's accommodation and resources have greatly enhanced facilities for delivering the curriculum. A good example is the computer suite, which has been provided with up to date equipment as a result of the hard work of staff and governors, and the generous sponsorship of a local businessman. However, it has not yet had time to be fully integrated into teachers' planning and pupils are still getting used to the new computers. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children are provided with an interesting range of experiences which fully reflect their needs in all areas of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. There are good arrangements for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare, with regular safety checks and good child protection procedures in place. Parents and pupils report that children are well supported when they experience personal difficulties. The school council and circle times are used well to enable pupils to raise their own personal concerns. The school works successfully with outside agencies to support pupils who need their help. Induction procedures are good and pupils quickly settle into school. There are also good arrangements to prepare pupils for moving into their secondary school. Good links with outside agencies such as the dyslexia service contribute well to the support that the school gives to individual pupils. A strength of provision is the very good encouragement for parents to support their children's learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership. Her drive and commitment have resulted in a very well-organised and systematic approach to improvement. There is a clear sense of purpose and teamwork amongst staff and governors. This has resulted in many improvements in the short period of time since her appointment which are beginning to impact on standards and achievement.

The role of the subject leaders has improved because they now have the time that they need to monitor their subjects. Governors are now more involved in the school and have a greater awareness of its strengths and areas for improvement. Systems for monitoring and evaluation, which were a weakness in the last inspection, have improved and are now satisfactory. However, they are not yet sufficiently focused on monitoring the impact of the school's work on improvements in pupils' achievement. Pupils and parents are satisfactorily involved in evaluating the school. Finances are carefully managed to ensure that they are directed towards the school's improvement efforts and the school gives satisfactory value for money. The school's capacity to improve is good.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn and play. We can see why you like your school and think that it gives you a sound education.

What we liked about your school

We think that your school looks after you well and encourages you to be confident.

You behave well and learn and play well together.

Your headteacher, the teachers and governors are all working very hard to make the school even better than it is already.

Teachers plan lessons well to help you all make progress.

You are taken on lots of interesting visits to help you to learn.

What we think needs to be improved

The way your teachers mark your work to help you know what you have to do to improve.

The way the school helps you to learn about the culture of people who come from different backgrounds to yourselves.

The systems the school uses to check how well it is helping you to make progress.