



# Threemilestone School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 111877  
**LEA** Cornwall  
**Inspection number** 278800  
**Inspection dates** 5 July 2006 to 6 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** John Carnaghan AI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Polstain Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Threemilestone
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11		Truro, Cornwall TR3 6DH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01872 263322
<b>Number on roll</b>	351	<b>Fax number</b>	01872 222995
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr F J Dyer
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs E C Jacques

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Threemilestone School is a large primary school serving the village of Threemilestone and surrounding areas. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average but there are fewer-than-average from minority ethnic groups and pupils not speaking English as their first language. The turnover of pupils at the school is high. The very good management of the large programme of building improvements by the headteacher has kept disruption to a minimum.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Threemilestone School provides a satisfactory education. The school agrees with this judgement. After a worrying decline in standards, the school reacted vigorously and creatively. There are encouraging signs that standards are rising, and teaching and learning are starting to improve. These are the 'green shoots' of recovery, but the impact of reforms is only just beginning to be felt. The school dealt well with the issues from the previous inspection and standards have been maintained. Its capacity for improvement is good. The Foundation Stage provides a satisfactory education. Satisfactory teaching and learning across the school ensure satisfactory progress, and standards in Year 6 remain above average. However, some lessons are lacklustre. Effective support for pupils with learning difficulties ensures that they make satisfactory progress. The school cares well for all its pupils and is a happy, safe place. Parents strongly agree with this; they rate the school highly and are grateful for how well it supports their children. Academic guidance is less effective and the targets set for pupils are too vague. Pupils' personal development is good. They grow up as mature and caring individuals, with a good understanding of the wider world. The curriculum is innovative and stimulating. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with good features. Clear-sighted and honest appraisal of the disturbing 2005 Year 6 national test results led to effective initiatives for improvement. These reforms are starting to bite, and results in 2006 are better. Cohesive leadership by the management team, effectively led by the headteacher and strongly supported by governors, bodes well for the future of the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching to ensure that all lessons are stimulating and challenging.
- Use information from marking and assessment to provide much more precise targets to help pupils improve.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Children start the Foundation Stage with better-than-expected standards. They leave Year 6 with above-average standards, as they did at the previous inspection. These facts indicate that achievement is satisfactory. Children settle very well into school and achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. These children's personal and social development is good and they show maturity and independence as they start in Year 1. National test results in Year 2 have been average or above in recent years, but writing has been a weakness. Provisional 2006 test results indicate that standards have been maintained and that writing has improved. There are no significant differences in achievement between any groups of pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 tests. National test results in Year 6 declined over 2003–2005, with a sharp drop in 2005, when achievement was unsatisfactory. This realisation spurred the school into immediate action. It has focused strongly on improving teaching and ensuring that all

pupils are fully challenged. As a result, the unvalidated 2006 test results have leapt upwards. Work in the current Year 6 pupils' books also provides an indication of improved standards. Achievement from Years 3 to 6 is now satisfactory. The school's targets for 2005 and 2006 were realistic and challenging. The 2005 results fell short in most areas, but performance met or exceeded most targets in 2006.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are confident and polite. They have good attitudes and behave well in and out of lessons. They enjoy school and attendance is good. The school council is valued by pupils and is a useful forum for new ideas. Pupils learn useful skills that contribute to their future economic well-being in having opportunities to vote for issues. They organise events like the 'Race for Life' and interview prospective teachers. Pupils feel safe and well cared for, knowing who to approach for help. One said he liked school because, 'You feel welcome, every day.' The buddy system, the circle of friends and the friendship bench support all pupils, especially new arrivals. Pupils' positive attitudes to healthy eating are developed through the fruit and vegetable scheme for the younger ones. Older pupils understand the importance of healthy snacks and the need to eat nutritious meals. Pupils know they need to exercise and drink plenty of water. A Year 2 pupil explained, 'If we don't drink enough we will get dehydrated.' Pupils gain greater awareness of their own and other cultures through celebrations, such as multicultural day, a Divali assembly organised by pupils of Asian origin and a range of language teaching. They support various charities, draw up rules and consider topical thoughts for the day, which help to develop a strong social and moral sense. Inconsistencies in teaching do not always ensure that opportunities for spiritual and cultural development are fully promoted.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are a number of strengths and signs of improving practice, but there is a weakness in the way assessment is used. There is good support given to pupils with learning difficulties. Adults and pupils take joint responsibility for learning and there is a caring atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils behave well, with very few exceptions. As one Year 5 boy put it, 'Overall, there's not much messing around in class.' Classrooms are purposeful, little time is wasted and many lessons are enjoyable. Some teachers use creative ideas to enliven lessons. For example, Reception children were enthused, working on a variety of tasks all related to the exciting day they had just spent in the forest. Less effective lessons have low expectations. Work set does not always provide sufficient stimulus or challenge for all pupils and some groups do not make enough progress. Teaching can be unstimulating and inflexible, so pupils lose interest. There is plenty of assessment of

pupils' work and comprehensive records are kept of their progress. However, this information does not currently translate into setting clear short-term targets for pupils, parents and teachers to use to help learning. Neither is it used to guide daily classroom practice. Marking is similar. A lot is done, but too much is uninformative, lacking the precision required to guide pupils to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good, including in the Foundation Stage. It is broad and balanced, well planned, and often provides very interesting learning opportunities for pupils. Recent innovations, strengthening links between literacy and other subjects, are already having a positive impact on learning. There are exciting plans in place to further integrate subjects. Provision for pupils' personal, social and emotional education is good. The importance of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe are well promoted. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn from an excellent selection of additional activities, such as a range of clubs, foreign language classes, daily visits, residential visits and visitors. Events, such as the creative science seashore project and annual whole-school activities, including the creative arts week and multicultural events, further extend pupils' learning opportunities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents agree with inspectors that care, guidance and support for pupils is good. Pupils needing extra support are well provided for, with many support staff, individual programmes for improvement and well-monitored targets. School reports offer handy hints to all parents and pupils about where improvements could be made. Pupils have some learning targets, but these are too general and long-term to promote achievement effectively. Threemilestone School is a safe place. The school has secure arrangements for child protection. Pupils are kept safe by rigorous health and safety procedures and there is close supervision at play times and the beginning and end of the day. The way the school manages behaviour has improved. Many effective pupil management strategies have been developed, such as minimising the time pupils spend in queues at lunchtime. All staff work hard and effectively to foster positive relationships with the pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's honest selfevaluation shows that the headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and those areas that need developing. She is well respected as a leader by staff, governors, parents and pupils. Her highly motivated leadership team, who have led the introduction of a number of effective curricular innovations, are careful to ensure that all members of the staff are involved in decision making. The new on-line school improvement plan

provides effective plans for the future. The headteacher, senior staff and governors are committed to raising standards and maintaining improvement, whilst also providing for pupils' personal development and care. The school acts promptly and well on the views of its stakeholders. Senior staff have begun to analyse pupils' performance. There are indications that teachers' better understanding of pupils' needs is having a positive impact on achievement. Management of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is efficient. The school has very good links with the local community, employers and nearby schools. Governors are extremely supportive of the school. They know the school well since their monitoring is systematic and they are proactive in visiting the school and liaising with staff. They are well aware of the questions they need to ask to provide an appropriate level of challenge to the school and they are optimistic about the school's future.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	3	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2	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	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

July 2006 Dear Pupils Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. All of us really enjoyed talking to you and thought that you behaved very well. Our chats with the school council and Year 5 pupils really helped us understand what your daily life at Threemilestone School is like. The best things about your school:

you told us that the school is a happy and safe place to learn and inspectors agree

the way you behave and get on with everybody else is very good

the subjects and topics you study are really interesting

the school has good plans to get better in the future. The school needs to improve some things. These are:

your work could be better marked and you should get better advice to help you reach high standards

some lessons should be more lively and interesting. Once again, many thanks for being so friendly; it was good working with you. Best wishes for the future John Carnaghan Lead inspector