



St Mewan Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111896
LEA Cornwall
Inspection number 278806
Inspection dates 28 June 2006 to 29 June 2006
Reporting inspector Colin Lee AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Mewan
School category	Community		St Austell
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Cornwall PL26 7DP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01726 74887
Number on roll	414	Fax number	01726 74887
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Martin Dyke
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr Paul Towe

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average rural primary school draws its pupils from a wide area that includes St Mewan, neighbouring villages and St Austell. Nearly all the pupils are of White British or European heritage. There is a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds and virtually all pupils speak English fluently. A small group of pupils are from families with travelling lifestyles. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. There is a below average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities but an above average percentage with statements of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides good value for money. By the time they leave the school, pupils' standards are usually above average. This is good progress because children's attainment on entry is generally in line with expectations.

Pupils are taught well and this helps most groups of pupils to achieve well. Those pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make outstanding progress as a result of the high quality of the provision and the excellent way in which this is coordinated. Although standards in science are good overall, the work given to higher attaining pupils is not always sufficiently challenging for them. This is because some teachers do not assess pupils' work frequently enough to make sure that they plan future work that is matched accurately to the pupils' abilities. Good provision in the Reception classes helps children achieve well. By the end of the Reception year the children reach at least the levels expected for their age. Their standards in language development are higher than those expected nationally. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and all other aspects of their personal development are at least good. Their enjoyment of all that they do is increased by their knowledge that they are looked after well and given interesting work to do through a good curriculum and an excellent range of activities outside of lessons. Pupils contribute significantly to the running of the school. Their views, as well as those of their parents, are sought regularly and taken very seriously.

Leadership and management are good and all staff and governors share the headteacher's clear vision of how the school can develop. The good improvement since the last inspection and the improvements in standards this year show there is a clear capacity to improve still further in the future. The school's view of its own overall effectiveness as satisfactory is too cautious.

What the school should do to improve further

- Achieve greater consistency in the use of information from assessment in science to plan work that matches the needs of pupils of different abilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement and the standards they attain are good. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, current standards are higher than those shown by the results in national tests in recent years. Most groups of pupils achieve equally well although there are some variations. For example, pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make outstanding progress as a result of the very high quality of support they receive. In contrast, there are some areas, notably science, where some of the higher attaining pupils could do better. Traveller pupils are making satisfactory progress.

The children in Reception classes make good progress and most attain the expected standards by the end of the year in all areas of learning, with a significant number exceeding these expectations in their language development. The good progress

continues in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing are now well above average and those in mathematics and science are above average. The school's results in the Year 6 national tests have been consistently above national averages in recent years. Current Year 6 pupils in particular have achieved well given their starting points. This is especially the case in English where a much higher proportion is now reaching above average standards. This year group were set, and have met, challenging targets. Mathematics and science are above average overall. The school identified underachievement in writing and mathematics in the recent past in many classes in Years 3 to 6. This has been successfully eradicated by teachers responding well to guidance from senior staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The positive, supportive ethos of the school contributes significantly to pupils making good progress in all aspects of their personal development. They reflect on spiritual moments and are excited about the wonders of life. They work well together and on their own, with a real sense of purpose. They have a strong sense of what is right and will not tolerate wrong-doing. They are inquisitive and knowledgeable about different cultures and faiths within multicultural Britain whilst also enjoying celebrating their own Cornish heritage. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. The older pupils feel sufficiently consulted on the behaviour policy and they value the governors' award scheme that selects them for responsibilities around the school. Attitudes to school are very positive and there is a real buzz of excitement in pupils' learning. They welcome visitors and are rightly proud of their school. Attendance rates are satisfactory. The school has successfully reduced the numbers of authorised absences. Pupils have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They understand how to cope with possible risks and play safely when in a confined area. The Year 6 school council is a forthright and well informed voice, valued by all. The younger pupils are looking forward to being included. They speak enthusiastically about their charity work. The pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and the skills needed for working life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. They vary from satisfactory to outstanding. There are particular strengths in the teaching of children in the Reception classes and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Specific strengths within most lessons include the teachers' good understanding of the subject they are teaching and their detailed planning of work that generally matches the needs of pupils of different abilities. Science lessons are the occasional exception to this. Questioning is regularly challenging and enhances the pace of the pupils' progress. Stimulating activities are provided and as a result the pupils are keen and want to learn. Pupils are well managed which leads

to very good relationships at all levels. Additionally, in the best lessons, the teachers' infectious enthusiasm and the exciting learning environment that they create result in the pupils making particularly good progress. Pupils are successfully encouraged to work effectively using their own initiative. In some lessons, however, learning objectives are not re-visited enough to help pupils to understand how well they have got on.

A wide range of strategies are in place to assess and track how well pupils are progressing over time. These still need to be developed further as the information from ongoing assessment is not used enough in some science lessons in Years 3 to 6 to match the work set to the needs of pupils with different levels of ability. This leads to occasions when some higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and ensures that pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) prepare them well for their future lives. Planning is based on national guidelines and the school is appropriately in the process of exploring ways in which it can be made even more school specific and exciting in order to raise standards further, for example by creating more links between the different subjects. These are already developing well through ICT and there are examples in other subjects. An excellent range of enrichment activities supports the curriculum well. There are many extra-curricular clubs and successful sporting activities. Regular visits to local places of interest and visitors to the school, including well known children's writers and theatre and music groups, further enhance the quality of pupils' learning. A particular example of very good curricular enrichment, seen during the inspection, was the exciting preparation for an imminent Years 3 to 6 musical production focusing on the theme of bullying.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils, with pastoral care being a major strength. A well constructed child protection policy is in place and all staff are fully aware of correct procedures. Pupils are effectively taught about possible risks and how to manage them. The staff know the pupils and their families very well and are able to give the appropriate support when needed. This is particularly so for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities where the provision is outstanding. There is excellent consultation with teaching assistants, parents, other agencies and secondary schools that has significant impact on the pupils' progress. Pupils' short-term progress is regularly assessed and targets are constantly being reset in response to the progress made. However, the use of assessment information to regularly check on all pupils' progress, particularly in science, and plan for immediate needs is not consistent throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. With clear direction from the headteacher and senior leadership team, the school is successfully raising standards and achievement. There is thorough monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on pupils' progress. Such monitoring by senior staff is used very well to identify the professional development needs of all staff. Rigorous analysis of data on pupils' standards and progress sets clear priorities for improvement and the school sets itself demanding targets. The school's drive for improvement is based on accurate self-assessment. However, inspectors have found good progress in the last year that has led to more favourable judgements than those of the school when it completed its last self-evaluation.

Responding well to a weakness at the last inspection, the headteacher has set high expectations of subject coordinators. These are now very effective in their roles, particularly in the monitoring of standards across the school and identifying the action needed for further improvement in each year group. The outstanding coordination of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and the equally effective leadership of English have contributed significantly to improved rates of progress.

Governance is good. Governors are enthusiastic, well informed through their own checking of the school's progress and have forged close working partnerships with staff. This is exemplified by the highly successful cooperation of the link governor for literacy with the coordinator, and the nomination of individual governors to monitor progress in each priority in the school improvement plan.

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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?	2	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	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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	2	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

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

We very much enjoyed visiting your school and we want to thank you for talking to us and showing us your work.

What we liked most about your school

You made us very welcome.

Your behaviour is excellent.

You are friendly to one another and always give help to anyone who needs it.

You work hard for your teachers, who teach you well and do their best to help you learn.

Teachers plan plenty of interesting work for you in lessons, and activities like sports clubs, drama and music are very good opportunities for you to learn outside lesson time.

Some of your work is of a really good standard, especially reading and writing.

The headteacher leads your school well and teachers and teaching assistants work hard to help him to improve things.

Your parents and carers are right in thinking, like you do, that you go to a good school.

What we have asked the school to do now

Check your progress in science so that your work is always carefully matched to what you need to learn.

Yours sincerely

Dr C Lee Lead Inspector