



Pelynt School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111976
LEA Cornwall
Inspection number 278824
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Clifton AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Pelynt School
School category	Community		Pelynt
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Looe, Cornwall PL13 2LG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01503 220262
Number on roll	78	Fax number	01503 220262
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr R Hutley
Date of previous inspection	27 September 1999	Headteacher	Mr Lloyd Sluman

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 5 July 2006 - 5 July 2006	Inspection number 278824
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. There are currently three mixed-age classes, one with pupils from Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, and two with pupils from Years 3 to 6. Pupils attending come mainly from the local village and have a wide variety of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the numbers of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times are average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the progress made by pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, their teaching, the use of assessment and curriculum planning.

Until recently the school was showing strong improvement with standards rising and pupils making good progress. However, its present effectiveness is inadequate because of significant weaknesses in the provision for pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, caused by staffing difficulties. The school's own view of its effectiveness is too generous. Although much improved temporary arrangements are in place at the moment, this matter remains unresolved. The headteacher and the governors have taken appropriate steps to try to remedy the situation, using a range of external support. Parents have rightly expressed major concerns about the progress made by younger pupils but are pleased with the progress made by other pupils.

Children come into the school with skills and knowledge that are broadly expected for their age. Inadequate provision in Reception means that few reach the standards expected at the end of the Foundation Stage and most underachieve. This poor start continues through Year 1, and by the time they reach the end of Year 2 standards are exceptionally low. However, in Years 3 to 6 the picture is dramatically different and here pupils make good progress to reach average standards. Older pupils receive good teaching and a well constructed curriculum. They are confident, independent learners who behave very well and have very positive attitudes. Their relationships with staff are excellent.

Both teaching and the curriculum provided for younger pupils are inadequate. During the inspection, however, good teaching was seen as a result of the temporary staffing arrangements. Poor use of assessment has led to work ill-matched to pupils' needs. Assessments that have been made about pupils' standards and progress have not been sufficiently accurate.

The headteacher, rightly, has the very strong support of the governors. The school was improving well under his leadership up to 2005. This improvement has been maintained in Years 3 to 6. The weak leadership in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 mean that the school has made inadequate progress overall since the last inspection and gives unsatisfactory value for money. However, the significant improvements in Years 3 to 6 show it clearly has the capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 so that the needs of pupils in these years are effectively met.
- Improve the accuracy and use of assessment in these years so that work is matched to pupils' needs and progress is carefully measured.

- Strengthen leadership and management so that improvement in these years is secure.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate overall. When children enter the Reception Year they broadly have the skills expected for children of their age, but a few have weaknesses in speaking and listening and in their personal and social development. They make inadequate progress through the Foundation Stage, lose ground and enter Year 1 with skills and understanding below those expected. Pupils continue to make inadequate progress and, in Year 2, current standards are exceptionally low in reading, writing and mathematics. Many pupils have underachieved. Standards had improved for three years to 2005, when they were broadly average. The current sharp decline has been caused by weaknesses in teaching, the use of assessment and the curriculum. The school identified these weaknesses at an early stage but was unable to rectify the situation initially. However, current arrangements have halted the decline and are beginning to make up some lost ground. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, because of the individual support they receive.

The picture in Years 3 to 6 is very different. Current standards in Year 6 are broadly average, similar to those in 2005. These pupils have made good progress in relation to their starting points in Year 3. Across both classes in Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well and are highly motivated. Overall standards in Year 6 have risen strongly over the past four years as a result of good leadership and good provision. Challenging targets have been met.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy school, particularly in Years 3 to 6 where they have excellent relationships with staff and because challenging work is presented to them in exciting and interesting ways. However in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 a few pupils do not enjoy school because they feel that, until recently, much of their work was too easy. One pupil commented, 'I was wondering if they could give us harder work.'

Pupils behave sensibly and safely, and attendance is good. Behaviour is good in Years 3 to 6 and pupils report that there is no bullying. Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 find it hard to concentrate and are easily distracted. They are still getting used to classroom routines and find it hard to work independently. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Older pupils' social and moral development is good. They carry out a wide range of responsibilities around the school well such as leading 'wake up shake up' sessions each morning. Pupils respond well to fund-raising. However their knowledge about the cultural traditions of minority ethnic groups is limited.

Pupils have good knowledge of safe practices and of how to keep themselves healthy, particular in their awareness of the need for physical exercise. Levels of participation are excellent amongst older pupils and they enjoy being active in the high quality and well kept outside areas. Older pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary school and the future because of their acquisition of skills and growth in confidence; however younger pupils are ill-equipped for their next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils sensitively and promote good relationships. Currently in the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class, teaching is lively but teachers still have to reinforce messages about behaviour and deal with pupils who are easily distracted. Work provided is currently well matched to pupils' needs. In Years 3 to 6 teaching captures the interest of pupils and there are good discussions, with pupils eagerly responding to questions. Lessons have clear objectives and there is a strong sense of purpose with time being used well. Pupils work confidently and independently, and co-operate well with each other.

Until recently, however, teaching and learning in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 have been inadequate and resulted in underachievement. Pupils made a poor start to school because of weaknesses in teaching and assessment. The use of assessment to match work to pupils' needs has been poor and assessments made have been inaccurate. This has resulted in weaknesses in the pupils' ability to work independently.

Teaching assistants work effectively with groups of pupils and provide valuable in-class support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. They know the needs of pupils well and give sufficient help but also challenge the pupils to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

Overall the curriculum provided is inadequate. Despite very recent improvement, it fails to meet the needs of all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Planning for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in problem solving and attention to scientific enquiry is inadequate. Work does not build sufficiently well on what has gone before and as a result pupils are inadequately prepared for work in Year 3.

The curriculum in Years 3 to 6 is good. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is often good. Work given enables these pupils to progress satisfactory against individual targets.

After-school clubs and visits provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning. Sport features strongly and the outside areas such as the sensory garden provide a good range of stimulating activities at lunchtimes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Attention to health and safety is good and child protection procedures are effective. There are good procedures in place to identify any potential bullying and pupils know they can count on adults' support.

The support provided for older pupils is good and by the time they leave school they are confident and mature. They confidently ask for help if needed, and feel that teachers give them good quality advice and encouragement. They know their targets for improvement.

The support and guidance provided for younger pupils has weaknesses. Although it is currently satisfactory, this has not always been the case. Marking and assessment to help pupils has been inadequate and pupils have not been given sufficient guidance to help them become independent learners. Parents have rightly expressed major concerns about these issues, but also comment that current arrangements are significantly better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school's leaders have been fully aware of inadequacies in one class and took action to try to remedy the situation. Until very recently, they had no success and as a consequence the achievement of younger pupils is inadequate and standards are exceptionally low. With very strong support from the governors, the headteacher has taken further appropriate steps, including the use of external support, to deal with this difficult and complex staffing issue. However, the issue remains unresolved, despite the fact that the current temporary arrangements are working well. The headteacher has maintained good staff relationships and a positive outlook despite these difficulties.

Links with external agencies and parents are good. Parents have clearly voiced major concerns to the headteacher and governors about what is provided for the younger pupils and frustration that it cannot be resolved more quickly. Their concerns to find a permanent solution are justified.

The headteacher is clear about the school's overall strengths and weaknesses and accurately evaluates the effectiveness of all the teaching staff. This information is used effectively to guide further improvement. Staff and governors are focused on improving provision and achievement and are all suitably involved in improvement planning. Parents also have their say. The systems to monitor and track pupils' progress are satisfactory but are better in Years 3 to 6 than in other years. There have been many recent improvements in the accommodation and resources and these are now good. The steady improvement in provision and standards in Years 3 to 6 show that the school, through its leaders and managers, has a clear capacity to improve further.

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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	4	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	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	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?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	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?	4	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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	4	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	No
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 our very warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes. We were very impressed with how friendly you were and ready to give your opinions about the school. You gave us a lot of valuable information and this was a great help to us.

What we most liked about your school:

- The good work you do in Years 3 to 6 and the progress you make as a result of good teaching.
- Your good attendance.
- Your involvement in clubs and other activities.
- How well your headteacher and governors have worked together.

We have asked your headteacher and others to work on:

- Improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum in class 1.
- Making sure that the work given to younger pupils is not too easy or difficult.
- Making sure that improvement continues for younger pupils as well as it does for older ones.

We enjoyed the visit and hope your school continues to improve.