

# St Meriadoc CofE Nursery and Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112007
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	278828
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Pyner HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	171
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jo Wakeham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Irene Pooley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2000
<b>School address</b>	Rectory Road Camborne TR14 7DW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01209 713982
<b>Fax number</b>	01209 713982

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St Meriadoc C of E VA Nursery and Infant School is average in size and located on the western side of Camborne, where there are high levels of deprivation. The children's starting points in the Nursery are below those expected and particularly so in communication, language and literacy skills. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and a very few have English as an additional language. The school is a member of the local Excellence Cluster, which has developed a number of educational and social support initiatives. It also works in a Primary Network with four other schools. The school has been awarded 'Investor in People' and 'Active Mark' status and is a 'Healthy School.'

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'St Meriadoc Nursery and Infants is a school with a strong family feel about it. It is a truly professional school teaching children to enjoy learning. If I have ever voiced a concern, they are always ready to listen. I feel greatly valued as a parent and I also feel my child has excelled in learning and confidence. The school lives up to its motto: Learn to Love – Love to Learn.' This comment is typical of the many positive views that parents have of this school. The inspection team agree with parents and the school's own self-evaluation that it is good. The dedicated headteacher sets high expectations and leads the school well. As a result, a very positive climate for learning has been created where every child is valued as an individual learner and families are supported well. Most pupils respond well to this by demonstrating positive attitudes towards their work and good behaviour, both in lessons and around the school. The pupils' achievement is good. Most groups of pupils make good progress during their time at school, many from low starting points. Standards are broadly average in reading and mathematics but significantly weaker in writing, where limitations in pupils' speaking skills hold back their learning. This is particularly the case for boys. The quality of teaching is good, with no inadequate lessons. In satisfactory lessons, the teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, particularly for the more able. Marking is regular and praising but does not always provide pupils with clear indications of how they can improve. The support from teaching assistants is very good, particularly for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is a very inclusive school. The curriculum is broad and effectively matched to the needs of learners. A good range of activities, visits and themed weeks enhances the curriculum. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, with a strong emphasis on learning through play. The level of care, guidance and support is good. The school has introduced an effective system for tracking the progress that pupils make but it is not yet used consistently to secure progress for all groups of pupils. The learning mentor provides very good support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Leadership and management are good. Teamwork amongst the staff is a good feature where all are encouraged to make a positive contribution to school improvement. Effective partnerships have been established with the community and other agencies. School governance is very good. The governors are fully involved in school improvement and monitor its work thoroughly. The capacity for further improvement is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Promote further opportunities for speaking and listening to develop communication skills.
- Raise standards in writing with a greater focus on boys and more-able pupils.
- Ensure consistency in assessment practices, including marking, to secure progress for all groups of learners.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Standards had been rising in reading, writing and mathematics for some years and the dip in the 2006 results reflects difficulties in staffing and the high proportion of pupils in the year group with learning difficulties. Standards are now broadly average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. However, as many children enter the school with below-average skills, a significant number do not reach the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Most pupils continue to make good progress

in Years 1 and 2, although in all subjects boys do not achieve as well as girls, and particularly so in writing. In some classes, more-able pupils could be challenged more. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in reading but their writing is weaker. The school's recent focus on extending opportunities for more creative writing is making a difference and pupils' skills in this area are improving, although particular weaknesses remain in spelling and punctuation.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are very happy at school and most are keen to learn. In lessons, around the school and at playtimes, they behave well. They have good attitudes to learning and work hard on their own, in pairs and in groups. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with the spiritual element being particularly strong and well supported by lively assemblies. Pupils' social development is good. In the school's 'bistro', pupils enjoy having water jugs and glasses on tables and taking responsibility for pouring drinks. Pupils contribute well to their community through helping in lessons and acting as school 'buddies'. Class representatives contribute positively, through the school council, to community decisions. This gives pupils good experience in developing decision-making skills by, for example, raising money for play equipment. Pupils feel safe at school and say bullying is rare and dealt with quickly. Pupils know about the importance of healthy lifestyles and staying safe, and have recently achieved the Healthy School Award and Active Mark. They develop skills for later life through regular practice of sharing ideas with 'talk partners' and teamwork, although their limited language and communication skills hold them back.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers manage pupils well and use resources with imagination to make lessons interesting. Consequently, most pupils behave well, demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning and are keen to work hard. In the best lessons, teachers fully engage the interest of the pupils and plan work that caters for all abilities. However, in some lessons when teaching is satisfactory, for example, sometimes in writing, activities do not fully stretch pupils' abilities and their attention wanders. The quality of marking is satisfactory. The best examples provide pupils with good levels of feedback and set new targets for them to achieve. Pupils needing extra help are identified early and supported well through focused additional sessions. Support staff are very effective in helping pupils to learn, particularly in the development of co-ordination, communication and language skills. The learning mentor provides effective support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and enables most learners, including those with learning difficulties, to make good progress and enjoy learning. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from access to all areas of learning and this provides them with a good start to their education. Provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is good and it is adapted well to ensure that pupils have opportunities to apply their learning in other subjects. Assemblies

help develop speaking and listening skills. For example, during a class assembly, pupils enjoyed dressing up and re-enacting a poem of a train journey. However, there are not always enough planned opportunities within subjects to overcome the barrier presented by pupils' limited communication skills. The school welcomes visitors and they make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. For example, grandparents were invited to a special tea in the Nursery where children enjoyed taking responsibility for serving refreshments. There is a good range of clubs that support and extend pupils' skills. Staff work hard to promote healthy lifestyles and this is evident through the strong focus on outdoor play, exercise and healthy eating.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school looks after its pupils well and takes every step to ensure their health and safety. All requirements in relation to child protection and safeguarding are fully in place. Support provided by teaching assistants for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. Academic guidance is good and the new system for tracking pupils' progress is proving valuable in identifying pupils who would benefit from additional support in class. However, it is not yet used consistently to promote progress for all pupils. Pupils are starting to assess their own learning at the end of lessons and this is successful in enabling teachers to find out whether pupils have achieved what was expected of them. A different approach to marking has been trialled and is now in place across the school, but it is too early for staff to judge whether or not it is contributing to improvements in pupils' writing. The support for pupils' spiritual development is especially strong through the effective promotion of its Christian values.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has made a clear impact on standards over recent years. The school's system of self-evaluation is good and has identified priorities to improve provision with some success, but these have yet to have a sustained impact on standards in writing. The headteacher has led the way in developing close links with parents and outside agencies. These are particularly successful in developing support for children in the Nursery and their families, promoting pupils' self-confidence and helping pupils with learning difficulties. Imaginative management of the resources, available through the Excellence Cluster, has enabled high quality support for the development of language skills for young children and multi-agency guidance for vulnerable pupils and their families. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage promote effective learning and good progress. Subject leaders work well to bring about further improvements to the quality of pupils' learning. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and involves parents well in monitoring their children's progress. Governors contribute very effectively under the guidance of an extremely able and experienced chair of governors.



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

am writing to thank you for making Mrs. Cooper and I feel so welcome in your school when we visited recently and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed talking to you and found everything that you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we found out about you and the school. We agree with you and your parents that your school is good. These are some of the things that we liked about your school. You enjoy school and do well in your lessons. You get on well with each other and the adults in the school. You behave sensibly and are kind to each other. Your teachers work really hard to help you to learn and make your lessons interesting. All the staff work well together to keep you safe and healthy so you feel confident about all you do. Your headteacher leads the school very well and makes sure that you make the most of your time at school. She also helps your families. The governors support the school very well. We have asked your teachers to work on a few things to make sure that you can make even more progress in your learning, including those of you who could be reaching higher standards. If you have more opportunities to speak and listen to learn new words and how they are used, it will help with your writing because some of you, especially boys, find this quite tricky. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that they keep a close eye on your work so everyone knows how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve. You can also help to improve your school even more by continuing to work hard and help each other. I am sure that you will