

# St Just Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111801
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	289053
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Clifton

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sara Olivier
<b>Headteacher</b>	D O'Brian
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 February 2002
<b>School address</b>	Bosorne Road St Just Penzance TR19 7JU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01736 788478
<b>Fax number</b>	01736 787884

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average-size school situated in the far west of Cornwall. Children come into the school with skills and abilities that vary from year to year but which are broadly below the levels expected for their age. The pupils are mainly of White British heritage. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has undergone significant changes in leadership over the past six years and a lengthy period of instability. The headteacher has been in post since September 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Just Primary is a satisfactory school with good features. It is improving because good leadership by the headteacher is enabling weaknesses to be tackled and progress to be strengthened. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent developments have improved the curriculum, which is now good. Attendance is improving too and current standards in Year 2 and 6 are higher than in 2006. These trends show a satisfactory capacity to improve. A large majority of parents support the work of the school well and comment on recent improvements in links with the community and are rightly positive about changes being made by the headteacher. Parents rightly say that children make a 'good start' in Reception, where the curriculum is adapted well to meet children's needs. As a result, children make good progress in developing personal, social and speaking skills and reach the levels expected for their age by the end of Reception.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 reach above-average standards because they make good progress in Years 1 and 2, where teaching is consistently well matched to their needs. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Progress is patchy because teaching is inconsistent. In 2006, pupils' achievement dipped sharply because of weaknesses in teaching. Leaders have taken action to remedy this and the current results in Year 6 are markedly better. However, more needs to be done to iron out the inconsistencies in progress made across Years 3 to 6 by tackling specific weaknesses in teaching more firmly. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy lessons and are eager to participate by answering questions. Although most lessons provide effectively for the different needs of pupils, giving them work which they find challenging, there are too many, mainly in Years 3 to 6, which do not. Occasionally work is too easy or the expectations about what pupils should achieve are too low.

The way the school looks after its pupils is a strength. Staff know the pupils well and are caring. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is supported well and consequently their personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well and grow considerably in maturity and confidence as they move through the school. They take on responsibility eagerly, are polite and have very positive attitudes to learning. Whilst the pastoral care provided is good and pupils feel very safe in school, their care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall because academic guidance is satisfactory. There is considerable variation in the quality of marking. Whilst marking is regular, the next steps pupils need to take in their learning are not consistently identified and the pupils do not always respond to the comments made. However, leaders have successfully introduced measures which are improving this and are helping pupils to assess their own writing. The headteacher has taken firm action to steer the school through recent uncertainties. Developments to the curriculum have been particularly effective. The pupils are much inspired by trips, visits and after-school clubs. They talk very enthusiastically about the recent school production, which was widely seen by the community as a great success.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching in Years 3 to 6 by remedying specific weaknesses and ensuring that the needs of different pupils are consistently met.
- Improve the consistency of marking to give the pupils a better understanding about what they need to do to get better.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are above average. Children make good progress in the Reception Year, reaching the expected levels across the areas of learning. This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. In the 2006 Year 2 national tests, results overall were above average. Reading standards were average and those in writing close to the above-average mark. Standards in mathematics were above average. The trend in Year 2 results since 2002 is upwards. Current results in reading, writing and mathematics all show an improvement from those in 2006.

In Year 6, overall results in 2006 were unusually below average. This was caused by specific weaknesses in teaching which have been identified by leaders. The current results show a significant improvement in all subjects and standards that are above average. Across Years 3 to 6, progress is patchy but satisfactory overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress similar to other pupils.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils say they enjoy school a lot, especially all the extra activities which are provided for them. They often find learning great fun, especially in Year 6, where they are very motivated. Personal and social development is very strong so that by the time pupils leave they are confident and well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Parents and pupils recognise that behaviour has improved in the last two years. Pupils of all ages are friendly, polite and very interesting to talk to. They have a strong sense of right and wrong, of how to stay safe and healthy and keep fit as well as protecting themselves from the sun. They really like the 'climbing wall' because it helps them 'learn to balance and stay supple'.

Pupils are open-minded and appreciate learning about other cultures and faiths because they say it 'helps us realise what other people think and believe.'

Individual achievements in and out of school are celebrated and valued in many ways, for example, the 'Wizard Learners' receive certificates in assemblies. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and improving. School councillors play an active part in school and manage a small budget effectively. Pupils agree very much with their parents that this is a friendly school where their headteacher wants the best for them.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Much of the teaching successfully captures the interest of the pupils and they respond well by working hard. Throughout the school, relationships are positive and pupils cooperate well with each other. They are keen to answer questions and give their opinions confidently. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils with learning difficulties and other groups of

pupils. However, on a few occasions they are too ready to do things for the pupils. Lessons have clear objectives which the pupils clearly understand.

Where there are weaknesses, teaching does not enable pupils to move on quickly enough, for example, when more able pupils are expected to go through work which is too easy for them before getting on to the more challenging activities. Leaders have identified this in some lessons and classes, mainly in Years 3 to 6. Also, the planning does not meet the needs of pupils of different abilities and teachers' expectations are not always high enough. This results in pupils not doing as well as they could and leaving work unfinished.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well served by the curriculum because it motivates and interests them. Personal and social education contributes very well to their personal development. The introduction of topics which span different subjects has been a popular move with pupils because it has made learning more relevant. The curriculum is adapted well to meet pupils' differing needs, such as in Reception where there is an emphasis on developing speaking. The introduction of 'reading corners' and new books are successfully helping reading standards to rise.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of well planned visits. Visitors also bring enrichment and much excitement, especially in art and literacy, PE and music. Pupils visit the woods where they 'toast marshmallows' and 'make potions'. The recent 'Trade Fair' which involved the whole school has very successfully promoted pupils' enterprise and financial skills and understanding. This has also raised the profile of the school within the community. The school is now rightly working on improving opportunities for writing across the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral care for pupils is good, with pupils saying they feel safe and happy in school because 'adults look out for us'. Policies and procedures have been carefully reviewed and follow latest guidance. Teachers assess and minimise risks to ensure that standards of welfare are good. Pupils are successfully encouraged to learn from their mistakes, manage their feelings and express their emotions openly. The success of pastoral care is evident in how the pupils develop independence as they move through the school.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. There are examples of very good marking guiding progress and learning, such as in Year 2. However, this guidance is not yet consistent across all classes. Pupils are not given effective support consistently to help them identify next steps for learning or in checking that they have responded to comments made.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has provided very strong leadership and introduced a clear set of values which permeate the school's work. Most staff have rightly supported this well. However, a few have found it difficult to embrace change and improvement has been slower than it might otherwise have been.

The headteacher has evaluated the strengths and weaknesses in provision well, including the effectiveness of teaching. This work has improved aspects of teaching across most of the school. However, leaders have not followed up sharply enough on specific weaknesses identified and, as a result, progress remains patchy. Teachers are provided with very helpful information about the progress that their pupils are making. This is enabling the early identification of pupils who need extra help to receive it.

There are clear plans in place to guide the school's further development. Governors are acutely aware of strengths and weaknesses and have helped to steer the school through its recent uncertainty. They rightly have confidence in the headteacher to build on strengths and tackle weaknesses. They have supported her well and have provided an appropriate level of challenge.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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	3
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	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<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>	3

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 July 2007

Dear Pupils, St Just Primary School, Boscorne Road, St Just, Cornwall TR19 7JU

Thank you for our very warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes and were very impressed with your friendliness and confidence. The valuable information you gave us was of great help. We think your school looks after you very well and is giving you a satisfactory education. The curriculum is good and teaching is satisfactory. You are making satisfactory progress which is now improving because your headteacher is providing strong leadership.

What we most liked about your school.

- The good start you make in Reception.
- The good progress you make in Years 1 and 2.
- The school ensures that you are safe and secure.
- You are polite and thoughtful towards each other.
- You have positive attitudes to learning and you behave well.
- The after-school clubs and visits to different places help you to learn and develop your skills well.
- The curriculum offers you a wide range of exciting and interesting activities.

We found that improvements are needed and have asked your headteacher and others to:

- improve the consistency of teaching by making sure that the work given to you is not too easy or too difficult
- improve marking so that you have a clearer idea about how to improve. We hope your school continues to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton Lead Inspector