

Sennen School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111804
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	289055
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian W Simpson
Headteacher	Edwina Jeffery
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001
School address	Sennen Penzance TR19 7AW
Telephone number	01736 871392
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is about average. There are no pupils with English as an additional language and the number of pupils from ethnic backgrounds is smaller than average. The headteacher is relatively new to the post.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Its key strength is the personal development and well-being of pupils, which are good. Pupils behave well and much enjoy school life. They have positive attitudes to learning and are helpful to each other. Pupils work well with the local community and raise significant funds for charities such as Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). They reflect carefully on their own lives and on the lives of people around the world. They are well aware of the need to stay safe. Pupils are well prepared for their futures. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved gradually over the past three years.

Standards are average overall. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, where they receive a high degree of support from adults. At times they lack opportunities to engage in practical and creative activities, but the school does its best to provide these during the afternoons. Other pupils make satisfactory gains in learning from their starting points. Because the school is small the reliability of data is limited, but in 2006 standards were below average by Year 2 and well below average in Year 6. This was due to the high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in Year 2 and to some past slow learning in Year 6 along with high levels of mobility in the year group. In the current Year 2 and Year 6 standards have improved and are now average, and pupils have made the gains expected of them during their time at the school. Standards in writing are not as good as they are in reading. This is because presentation is often untidy, marking is not rigorous enough and pupils are not always sure how to improve their work.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is improving and examples of good teaching, which engaged pupils and helped them to achieve well, were seen in both classes during the inspection. Relationships are strong and teachers know pupils very well. However, not enough attention is paid to marking pupils' work and pupils are not clear enough about the targets they are set as this is a new feature of the provision that is not yet fully embedded. The curriculum is good. It has improved significantly this year. It provides a rich and varied range of learning for all pupils and impacts positively on their personal development. The overall care, guidance and support that pupils receive are satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for by the whole school community. They say that there is always an adult to talk to. The support given to individual pupils, both in lessons and around the school, is good. Procedures to keep them safe are also good. Academic guidance, however, is not as strong, although it is satisfactory. Good new tracking procedures have recently been introduced that are beginning to identify how well pupils are doing, but the day-to-day assessment of pupils' achievements, including the progress they make towards their targets, is not as good as it could be.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school and since her appointment 20 months ago she has worked extremely hard to improve the provision and raise standards. This has resulted in significant changes to the school environment and to the way the school works. Although there is still much to do, standards are improving. Staff are very supportive and clearly share her vision. Parents praise the school and its leadership very highly. Governors are supportive and aware of the need to improve standards and achievement, although they could be more challenging in their approach.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing, especially by ensuring that teachers have higher expectations of its presentation.

- Improve the frequency and rigour of the marking of work in pupils' books.
- Ensure that pupils know what their targets are so that they are aware of what they need to do to achieve them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average. They have improved this year. The very small numbers in each year group mean that reliable trends are difficult to find. Overall, children in the Foundation Stage enter school with broadly average attainment, although a few are below average, particularly in literacy and mathematical development. They achieve satisfactorily, making the progress expected of them in Reception. Throughout Years 1 and 2 pupils also make satisfactory gains in learning. Although standards were below average in the 2006 assessments, due to the high levels of learning difficulties and disabilities in that class, standards in the current Year 2 class are broadly average and pupils have made satisfactory progress from their starting points. Standards were well below average in the 2006 test for pupils in Year 6. Slower learning in the past meant that some pupils did not make sufficient progress in Years 3 to 6. Teaching and learning have now improved and this has led to improvements in achievement and standards across Years 3 to 6, so that the current Year 6 pupils attain the levels expected of them, with a small minority attaining higher standards. They have made satisfactory progress from Year 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are gifted or talented achieve as well as other pupils due to the good support that they receive. Standards in writing across the school are not as good as those in reading. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory during their time at the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The overall personal development of pupils, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils behave well in and around school. They show respect to others and are polite and helpful and say that they really enjoy school. They work together happily and care for those younger than themselves. Attendance is satisfactory and slowly improving. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community and are involved in many aspects of local life. For example, they are currently very excited about their forthcoming production of 'Grease' in the local village hall. Opportunities to learn about other communities and lifestyles are good, as the school curriculum offers many experiences to widen pupils' horizons through visitors and visits. Pupils have a good grasp of how to lead healthy lifestyles and the school has recently been awarded Healthy School status. They are very aware of the need to keep safe. Pupils' good personal development means that they are well prepared for their futures. The school council is beginning to have an impact on provision but pupils feel that they could do more to influence the life of the school. Many parents comment on the way their children gain in confidence and develop good self-esteem during their time at the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some good teaching seen during the inspection was characterised by good pace, clear questioning and very positive relationships, which gave

pupils the confidence to respond and try out answers. However, teaching lacks rigour in relation to presentation in English, and in marking pupils' work and ensuring that they know how to improve. A good range of training has been provided and evidence from monitoring suggests that teaching is improving across the school. Past weak teaching has been eradicated and teachers are working hard to raise standards. Teaching assistants are well deployed and play a valuable part in supporting all pupils in lessons. Teachers set challenging targets but pupils do not always know what these are.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good curriculum has been established in all parts of the school. It has improved significantly because of the rich range of learning activities that now engage pupils and keep them interested. A local network has recently been set up to provide opportunities for pupils to work with others of their own age. Good attention is paid to planning for different ability groups and to extending those who are capable of attaining high standards. These procedures are beginning to work and are helping to raise standards. The strong emphasis on personal, social and health education (PSHE) means that pupils' personal development is particularly good. Very good extra-curricular opportunities are well attended. Links with local schools and professional support from Plymouth Argyle Football Club, for example, help to improve pupils' willingness and their efforts to do well. The school takes the lead among other local schools in promoting sport, ensuring that pupils achieve well in all aspects of physical activity. However, there is too little evidence of homework being set, particularly for the oldest pupils. They say that they could do more work at home.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There is a strong ethos of care for all pupils across the school resulting in good care and support for all aspects of pupils' personal lives and for pupils of all abilities. All reasonable care is taken to keep pupils safe and secure. Staff show high levels of respect for the pupils in their care resulting in the good personal development seen in all classes. Risk assessments are rigorously undertaken. The academic guidance provided for pupils is satisfactory. The good new tracking system is just beginning to have an impact on informing how well each pupil is doing. However, day-to-day assessment is not as strong as it could be and pupils sometimes do not know what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The relatively new headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school that is shared by staff and governors alike. She has already made significant changes to the way the school is managed. Upon arrival, she clearly evaluated what needed to be improved and set about making changes that have improved the school quickly. The staff team is now settled, past weak teaching has been eradicated, and many new features have recently been added to the accommodation, including a good new information and communication technology (ICT) suite. The schools' development plan is rightly focused on improving standards in English and mathematics. The headteacher is aware of the need to continue moving the school forward speedily but some of the goals set in the plan are not achievable in the time allocated.

Monitoring of the now improved provision has identified the need to improve teaching and raise standards further and has resulted in the headteacher identifying the issues raised by this inspection. Governors are supportive but could do more to challenge the leadership of the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Links with other agencies and with parents are strong. Parents are extremely supportive. 'It is a good school', they say. The school knows what it needs to do to improve and is working hard to achieve it. Because of this the capacity for further improvement is good.

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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>	School Overall
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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?	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	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	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

23 May 2007

Dear Pupils,

Sennen Primary School, Sennen, Penzance, Cornwall TR19 7AW

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I really enjoyed my visit. You told me many interesting things about your school. I think yours is a satisfactory school with many good things happening.

You said you enjoy school, and I think you do. I know that you are working hard to improve your attendance and come to school more often. You make satisfactory progress at school and you achieve appropriately in your lessons. You behave well and look after each other. Teaching is satisfactory. Your teachers know you well and provide some good things for you to do. Your work is not marked as fully as it could be so you sometimes do not know how well you are doing. You all have targets but many of you told me that you did not know what these targets were. The range of activities that the school provides for you to do is good. I know how much you enjoy your sports and you are achieving well in them.

Your headteacher and other staff work hard to help you and keep you safe. They lead the school well. There are three things that I am asking the school to do to help you improve your work and achieve well:

- Improve standards in writing by helping you to improve the way you present your work.
- Improve marking of your books so that you know what you need to do next to improve your work.
- Make sure you know what your targets are so that you can work towards achieving them.

You could help by working closely with your teachers.

Thank you once again for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Denise Morris Lead inspector