



# Gerrans School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 111860  
**Local Authority** Cornwall  
**Inspection number** 289077  
**Inspection date** 12 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Tom Simpson

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 address</b>	Tregassick Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Portscatho
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Truro TR2 5ED
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01872 580442
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	55	<b>Fax number</b>	01872 580442
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Suki Sharp
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Elvy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 April 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a small primary school serving a rural community. The pupils are all White British and none are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. An above average number of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Attainment on entry is currently around average but has been below average in the past. The school has recently opened a nursery class.

## **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 currently a satisfactory school with several strengths. One of its major strengths is the family atmosphere at the school. Pupils are known very well to staff as individuals and their care, guidance and support are good. The school also provides a good curriculum for the pupils. The quality and extent of out of class activities is outstanding. This impacts well on pupils' attitudes towards school and the overall quality of their education. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall, while their moral and social development is outstanding. One parent commented, 'We regard ourselves as extremely fortunate to have such good quality education for our children at Gerrans School.'

The school has improved in the recent past and has a good capacity to improve further. Reasons for this include the good quality leadership of the headteacher, her commitment to raising standards and the active support she has from staff and governors. The pupils themselves are well behaved and have positive attitudes towards their work. All staff work well as a team. They are keen to try out new ideas in order to improve provision for the pupils further. One example of this is the recent introduction of a new mathematics scheme. Several of these new initiatives, however, have not been in place long enough for them to have fully impacted on standards. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory.

Teaching is satisfactory and there are regular examples of good teaching at all stages of education in the school. This is impacting well on standards, which are average overall, and achievement, which is also satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Standards in Years 1 and 2 have been below average in the recent past but are now satisfactory. Current standards in science are relatively strong, while standards in writing, and particularly spelling, are relatively weaker. Systems for measuring and tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics are thorough and used to good effect in both strategic planning and setting work for pupils in lessons. These have still to be extended to other subjects. Provision in the Foundation Stage, which has been enhanced recently with the establishment of a nursery class, is good. This is already having a positive effect on the standards being reached by the younger pupils.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and spelling throughout the school.
- Extend the school's good assessment strategies to include subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Ensure that the impact of new initiatives on pupils' learning is carefully monitored and reflected in improved standards.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and there are examples of good achievement. Standards are broadly average overall. In 2005, teachers' assessments showed standards at the end of Year 2 to be below average but these improved to around average for the 2006 year group. Steps taken by the school, such as raising the profile of reading, had a positive effect on the improved standards. In national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2005 standards were above average, representing good progress with relative strengths in English and relative weaknesses in mathematics. That was reversed in 2006 with a group which included a significant proportion of pupils with learning difficulties achieving better in mathematics and science than in English to make satisfactory progress overall. With such small numbers results can vary considerably from year to year.

The school has recognised that there were some weaknesses in standards in mathematics over time and has put in place a new approach to teaching the subject in order to achieve more consistent standards. It is too soon to measure the long-term impact of this. Within English, the major relative weakness is writing, and in particular spelling. This, again, has been recognised by the school and strategies for improvement have been implemented recently. Children in the Reception Year make satisfactory progress overall, although this is now improving with the recent opening of the Nursery class. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties is also satisfactory overall and many make good progress in relation to their individual targets.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, while their moral and social development is outstanding. For example, they have a very good appreciation of the need to conserve the beautiful environment in which they live. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good. The pupils enjoy being at the school and are keen to learn. They are particularly positive about the wide variety of out of lesson activities that is available to them. They told inspectors that they felt safe at school. Attendance is satisfactory.

The pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and the school recently gained the Healthy Schools Award. Pupils enjoy the range of opportunities they have to take responsibility within the school and in the wider community, such as being members of the school council or contributing to fund raising activities. They are developing a good understanding of other cultures through, for example, personal, social and health education and religious education lessons. Opportunities within and out of lessons also ensure that they are gaining appropriate skills to prepare them satisfactorily for the world of work.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and there is good teaching at all stages of education in the school. This is already impacting positively on pupils' achievement. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. A particular strength within the teaching is the way that work is generally well matched to the needs of pupils with different levels of ability in lessons. The pupils are well managed in a positive and often humorous way with the result that relationships at all levels are good. Good use is made of learning objectives to ensure that the pupils have a clear focus on what they are expected to achieve, as seen when Years 5 and 6 pupils built carefully on their previous learning before researching the relationship between exercise and heart rates. Occasionally, discussions are allowed to go on too long, leading to a reduction in pupils' pace of learning.

There are thorough systems in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy. These are still relatively new, however, and have not yet had time to fully impact on standards. Also, they have not yet been extended to include science. A system for self and peer assessment is fully embedded throughout the school. This is well understood and used effectively by the pupils to support their own learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

A good quality curriculum is in place. Planning and provision ensure that the needs of pupils in mixed age classes are met well. An outstanding range of enrichment activities enhances the quality of pupils' learning, supports their enjoyment of school and is contributing to their overall achievement. The local environment is used well as a resource for learning, for example a residential art course for older children on the Roseland Peninsula. In addition there are excellent contributions from visits further afield and from visitors to the school such as the English Touring Opera Group. Music is a strong feature with the school band playing at the Truro Festival. Appropriate intervention programmes are in place to meet the different needs of the pupils and to give those with learning difficulties the necessary support. This is already having a positive impact on standards. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It has been improved in the last school year by the establishment of the Nursery class. This is already resulting in children having higher standards when they enter the Reception Year.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. This supports pupils' personal development well. The pupils are well known to staff as individuals and are very well cared for. Year

2 pupils, for example, told inspectors that there was always an adult in the school they could go to if they had a problem or a worry. Health issues are promoted well and rigorous health and safety and child protection procedures are in place. There is good support in place for vulnerable pupils. The school has good links with outside agencies that also offer support and guidance for the pupils.

Effective systems for academic target setting are in place, but there is some inconsistency in their implementation, with a number of pupils still not clear what their targets are.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and direction. She has a good appreciation of the school's current strengths and its developmental needs. She is rapidly developing the leadership and management skills of the other staff and sets a good role model by the quality of her own teaching. As this is a small school, teaching staff have several curriculum roles. However, they respond to this with enthusiasm and commitment and are already impacting well on provision and standards in their areas of responsibility. Supported well by the headteacher and each other, all staff work effectively together as a team.

The governing body is supportive but prepared to challenge the school management when appropriate. Governors are well involved in all aspects of school life, for example in providing extra-curricular clubs and being involved in joint curriculum planning with teachers. They are also part of the recently established cycle of monitoring of standards and provision, although it is too early to measure the impact of that.

For financial reasons, the school has recently carried out some reorganisation involving Years 3 to 6 pupils being taught together in the afternoon. This was carefully planned in advance to ensure that the needs of the different age groups were appropriately met. It is, however, unpopular with some of the parents and pupils. Again, it is too soon to measure its impact on standards and the quality of pupils' learning.

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## 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>	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	2
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	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

<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	3

### 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>	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.

## 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	2
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	2
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**

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your work. You told us how much you like your school. We enjoyed our visit and now want to share with you what we thought about your school. We found that your school is providing you with an education which is satisfactory and has several strengths.

Here are some of the things that we found to be particularly good:

- You are well behaved, which means that the school is a safe and happy place.
- You are well cared for, supported and guided by the adults at the school.
- Your social and moral development is outstanding.
- The curriculum provided for you is good and the extent of out of class activities is outstanding.

Here are some of the things we have suggested to help the school improve:

- The standards you reach in your writing, especially your spelling, could be higher.
- The systems the school has for keeping check on how well you are doing could be better. Checks should be made on how well you are doing in all subjects.
- The school needs to make sure that the new systems it has introduced result in you reaching higher standards in your work.

Thank you again for your help.