

St Erme with Trispen Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111871
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	289083
Inspection date	21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	116
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Gunn
Headteacher	Julie Orrell
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2002
School address	Trispen Truro TR4 9BJ
Telephone number	01872 279539
Fax number	01872 279539

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school has four classes, all of mixed-age including the Reception class, which also educates nursery children from age three. All pupils are of White British origin. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average, although unevenly spread in different year groups. Half the current Year 5 pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school draws its pupils mainly from the village but about one quarter of the pupils come from other areas. The pupils are from a wide social spectrum. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Three permanent members of staff out of five were absent during the inspection, two on a long-term basis.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. It is currently going through a very unsettled time because of unavoidable staff absence. The school has done its best to manage these difficulties, although inevitably they have impeded the school's development. Pupils have generally adjusted well to the enforced changes of teachers.

Pupils say that they feel safe and are well cared for, and that pupils are 'kinder than they were'. They feel that behaviour has improved since whole-school behaviour systems for managing behaviour have been put in place. This is a caring and inclusive school. Most parents support the school well. Parents express much appreciation for the support given to pupils. One parent writes, 'I feel very fortunate that our local school has such a caring approach and treats each child as an individual. I can leave my daughter every morning and know that she is safe and well cared for.' The academic guidance that pupils receive is satisfactory. Marking and systems to monitor and track individual progress across the school do not yet have enough impact on pupils' progress. Overall, care, guidance and support are satisfactory.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, reaching expected standards by the end of Reception because of good teaching, good teamwork and good on-site pre-school work. Consequently, children quickly settle at school. Overall, teaching and learning in the school are satisfactory. Teachers cater well for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and they make good progress. However, able pupils are not always challenged well enough in mathematics. Improvements have clearly been made in reading and writing with improved provision for able pupils in English. Nevertheless, pupils generally give insufficient attention to their handwriting and the presentation of written work in different subjects lacks care. This impedes accuracy.

The curriculum is satisfactory and developing further, as shown by the recent inclusion of French. However, pupils have limited opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in real life situations and in different subjects. Their personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils are cooperative with one another and relationships are good. They understand well how to live safely and healthily. They have a good appreciation of the needs of others and support charities. Behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils are supportive of one another but can sometimes be too relaxed about their learning. As a result, they sometimes do not accomplish as much in their lesson activities as they might.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear and accurate view of where further whole-school improvements need to be made. She has used her expertise in literacy well and this is shown in pupils' improvements in writing. She works effectively with the staff and the strong governing body in seeking to make further improvements. Subject leaders are developing further in their roles and are determined to improve standards even more. Given current circumstances the school has a satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the challenge for able pupils in mathematics and ensure that all pupils use their mathematics skills more effectively in real life situations and in different subjects.

- Improve pupils' handwriting skills and make sure that pupils take a greater pride in the presentation of their work.
- Improve marking and tracking systems to promote pupils' progress more effectively.

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

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and standards are average. Attainment overall on entry to the Nursery is below expectation for that age. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. Most reach the standards expected for the end of Reception and some attain above this. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. They reach average standards, although results vary in different years and between subjects because the small pupil numbers mean that the ability in each class differs on a yearly basis. They continue to achieve satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6 and mainly reach average standards. Pupils achieve well in science because they enjoy the practical nature of the subject. Results in science at Year 6 have been consistently above average in recent years. The good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities supports their good achievement, although able pupils do not always reach their potential in mathematics. There has been an improvement in all pupils' progress in English because of a concentrated and successful effort to improve the content and range of writing, although handwriting is a weaker aspect.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils much enjoy school. Their attendance is around the national average. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with good elements. For example, pupils appreciate the difficulties that some disadvantaged people face in different parts of the world and raise money for them. However, they do not yet have a well developed understanding of living in a multicultural society. They are well aware of how to live safely and healthily and know, for example, that they should eat fruit and vegetables daily. Pupils engage in regular exercise through extra-curricular sport, village and playground activities. A few older pupils can demonstrate challenging behaviour but the high ratio of adults to pupils keeps this in check so that lessons are not affected. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. The school council plays a prominent role. It has good links with the parish council and makes suggestions to them about village matters. Pupils have a range of duties as classroom and school monitors and they undertake these conscientiously. They cooperate with their teachers but some do not take enough pride in their work and it is untidy. The standards in pupils' literacy and numeracy mean that they are prepared satisfactorily for their future education and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Good teaching in the Foundation Stage assists the children's good progress. More generally teachers often match work successfully to pupils' different ages and abilities but it is matched better in English than in mathematics. Consequently able pupils make better progress in English.

Teachers share learning intentions with pupils well, but they do not often indicate to them how their learning should benefit as a result. As a result pupils cannot always assess how their learning has progressed. Marking is satisfactory. It is up to date in the core subjects but its frequency is inconsistent in other subjects. Written comments on pupils' work sometimes help pupils to improve but there is variability in their meaningfulness for pupils. Some teachers do not always ensure that pupils follow up their written requests, for example to complete unfinished work. The impact of marking is, therefore, diminished. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and preserve a pleasant classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum planning effectively caters for mixed-age classes and is supported well by the inclusion of French and the good range of extra-curricular activities. Sufficient teaching time is given to different subjects. However, pupils do not use their number skills purposefully enough in real life situations and in different subjects to reinforce them. Arrangements for personal, social and health education support pupils' understanding of safe and healthy living well. Increasing attention is given to talented pupils and is especially successful in art and writing. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good and supports their good progress. An overuse of undemanding worksheets reduces the effectiveness of the curriculum in some subjects, for example in history and geography. They limit the demands made on pupils and dampen excitement in learning. Links between subjects are developing, such as the growing use of literacy across the curriculum. This is seen in pupils' successful writing as evacuees in their Second World War studies. Links with other schools support the overall provision effectively, for example secondary school staff's teaching of the French provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care and support are a real strength and shown in the very good provision for disabled pupils. Health and safety matters are given good attention so that the school is a safe environment. Child protection arrangements are effective and staff keep up to date with training. Links with the local authority's pre-school division are most effective in meeting and supporting families and their pre-school children. This contributes to the way new Foundation Stage children quickly settle into the school. Good links with the educational psychologist ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are assessed quickly when learning difficulties are identified. There are also good links with the behaviour support service which is helping to manage pupils who show challenging behaviour. Links with other external agencies are developing.

Tracking systems and record keeping are being refined and developed. The school has a whole-school structure to track pupils' progress in mathematics but this does not yet extend to other subjects. It is not always easy, therefore, to identify quickly pupils who are not making expected rates of progress. Learning targets for groups of pupils in English and mathematics are partially successful. Some pupils remember these but some targets are written in terms that are not easy for pupils to understand fully. Pupils are not always sure, therefore, how their learning can be improved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has made a good start to the leadership of the school and persevered with improvements despite staffing difficulties. This is seen in the improvements secured in the content of what pupils write, in approaches to reading and in increased attainment in these aspects. Effective consultation with stakeholders, such as parents and governors, together with the headteacher's own accurate analysis of the school's needs, ensures that the school's priorities are the correct ones. These are well set out in the good quality school improvement plan. The headteacher has an effective working relationship with the governing body. The governing body itself is led effectively. Governors visit regularly. This ensures that they can ask challenging questions about the provision offered and see for themselves the progress being made on current initiatives.

Subject leaders are developing in their roles, increasing their skills in monitoring provision and working together as a team to improve teaching and learning. This has resulted in a shared understanding of levels reached in different aspects of work. However, the unavoidable long-term staff absences have inevitably hindered developments. Much remains to be done. For example, record keeping, tracking systems and the involvement of pupils in understanding the progress they are making are still developing. There is nevertheless a good awareness that such matters need attention. The determination and willingness to improve further are apparent.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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	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

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	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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

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?	3
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?	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	2
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

21 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Erme with Trispen Primary School, Truro, Cornwall TR4 9BJ

I enjoyed my visit to your school and also talking to you about your work and life in St Erme and Trispen. You reach standards that are expected for your age and achieve satisfactorily. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress, as do those of you who initially find learning more difficult. However, those of you who are more able could do better in mathematics. We have asked the staff to challenge all of you more in this subject and to give you more opportunities to use your mathematical skills in different ways. You have made good improvements with your writing. Nevertheless, your handwriting could be much better and many of you could take much more care in the way that you set out your work in your exercise books.

The staff take good care of you so that you feel safe in school. You know about keeping yourselves safe, such as remaining on the school premises during the day, and how to live healthily. You clearly appreciate the after school clubs and sport in which many of you take part. You enjoy school and are coping with the changes of teachers well. Your school council does some interesting work with the parish council. Your behaviour is satisfactory. The staff provide you with a satisfactory range of work. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but marking could be more helpful. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. Some of you work really hard but others could try harder.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Your headteacher has identified the correct priorities for further development of the school and works effectively with the governing body and staff to make improvements. However, the unavoidable staff absences have not made continual improvements easy such as the need to develop systems to track your progress more effectively.

Thank you once again for sharing your work with me and talking to me about your school. I wish you and your school well for the future.

Peter Sudworth Lead inspector