

St Columb Minor School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111908
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	289096
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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	439
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Pollard
Headteacher	Jennifer Walker
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002
School address	Porthbean Road St Columb Minor Newquay TR7 3JF
Telephone number	01637 873958
Fax number	01637 877772

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Columb Minor is a larger than average primary school. Most of its pupils are of White British heritage and come from a wide spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and there is a very high level of pupil mobility which results in up to half of any Year 6 year group having joined the school midway through their primary education. The headteacher joined the school two years ago.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Columb Minor is a good school. It provides a well balanced education for its pupils with outstanding provision for equality of opportunity that has a positive impact on all aspects of their development. Pupils make good progress because of the good leadership and management, consistently good teaching and the outstanding contributions of the governing body. Achievement is good. Children enter the Reception Year with levels of attainment below those typically found. Although they make good progress because of the good provision in the Foundation Stage, for a significant proportion, standards at the start of Year 1 remain below average. Good progress continues throughout Years 1 to 6. However, standards are average at the end of Year 6 because of the very high level of pupil mobility which has a negative impact on the school's overall standards. Standards of writing throughout the school, although improving, remain below average. All pupils now benefit from consistently good teaching. As a result, this has removed past fluctuations in pupils' rates of progress. Typically, lessons are lively and interesting and, as a result, pupils take part with real enthusiasm and become confident learners. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Attendance has steadily improved due to the school's emphasis on the importance of regular attendance and is in line with national levels. Relationships are good and play a key role in the good progress pupils make in their personal development including their good behaviour. Their moral and social development is outstanding. Pupils are provided with a good curriculum that includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities, a good emphasis on physical activities and the encouragement of a healthy lifestyle. However, the school is aware of the need to improve provision for multicultural awareness. The provision for care, guidance and support is good. Staff care for the pupils well and there is a very strong ethos of inclusion. Although academic guidance is good, there is room for more consistency in marking of work and in the setting of individual targets to improve pupils' awareness of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The school has very effective systems to support newcomers. These pupils are made to feel very welcome so that they quickly settle in and do well at the school. The school works well in partnership with others to promote pupils' progress and wellbeing, and links with the local community are similarly good. The responses to the parents' questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive, one parent commenting, 'St Columb is a great learning environment due to the efforts of all the school staff.' Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection and the school has a good capacity to make the necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards of writing throughout the school.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to have direct experience of Britain's multicultural society.
- Improve the consistency of marking and individual target setting so that pupils
- have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the Reception class is below average. Provision for Reception children is consistently good and as a result, children achieve well. Although the majority reach the nationally expected goals for children of that age by the end of the Reception Year, a significant

proportion do not, and overall standards remain below average. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 to 6 due to good teaching. In 2006, over half of the pupils in Year 6 began their primary education elsewhere and a significant number joined in Years 3 to 6. As a consequence of this significant mobility coupled with high levels of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, overall standards in Year 6 are average. Pupils joining during a key stage make good progress from frequently low levels of attainment on entry due to the school's very good induction procedures and support. More able pupils have not always done as well as they should. However, the school is now providing appropriate challenge for these pupils through well planned and challenging activities. Early indications are that these changes have begun to filter through into higher levels in the Year 6 tests. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because they benefit from good support that is well matched to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils respond positively to the school's high expectations of behaviour and responsibility and as a result, behaviour is good throughout the school. They act with maturity in their roles of responsibility, such as peer mediators. Pupils confirm that bullying is rare and, if and when it does occur, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Moral and social development is outstanding and spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils develop a good understanding of people around the world but have a limited awareness of life in multicultural Britain. Pupils know right from wrong and they make an active and positive contribution to both the school and wider community. Their respect for themselves and others highlights their increasing spiritual and cultural awareness. They enjoy their lessons and take full advantage of the many lunchtime and after school activities. The high take-up of sport, coupled with healthy snacks and water in every classroom, contribute well to pupils' knowledge of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe. Their standards in key skills, their excellent co-operation with others and work in lessons provide good preparation for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are typically lively and full of pace and challenge, so that pupils are motivated and learn well. As a result, attitudes and behaviour are good. Writing tasks are carefully chosen to appeal to boys as well as girls. Teachers work hard to ensure pupils understand basic mathematical and writing concepts. Teachers provide a good mix of support and assessment for pupils joining the school part-way through their education and this helps these pupils to quickly begin to make good progress. Teachers organise teaching groups carefully so that all pupils get work at the right level to help them achieve as well as they can. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Marking is up to date and thorough but does not consistently provide pupils with enough information about what they could do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from good support from teachers and teaching assistants so that they are helped to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides many opportunities for interesting and creative work to be done. The curriculum for Foundation Stage children is clearly linked to the recommended Early Learning Goals. Pupils work across subject boundaries and generally their work has very clear relevance to their future lives. For instance, pupils may be asked to write expressively about their home town and learn how it sells itself to tourists. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy, well targeted to pupils' learning needs. All groups of pupils are well provided for and this is particularly evident for those who come late to the school or have particular learning needs and difficulties. Pupils are offered sufficiently challenging work as they progress up the school and have the added dimension of good extra-curricular provision that involves sporting and arts activities, such as some lively maypole dancing. There are trips and visits for all year groups designed to challenge and excite in equal measure. However, the school is aware of the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to have direct experience of Britain's multicultural society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a good level of care and support for all its pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They feel safe and know that anyone will help them if they have a problem. The arrangements for ensuring health, safety and welfare are good, with risk assessments carried out for the various activities around the school. Child protection procedures and safeguarding arrangements are secure. The school has good systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress on a termly basis. The quality of marking of pupils' work varies between classes with some teachers providing few constructive comments. Targets are set for groups of pupils to ensure that they know what to do to improve but not always for individual pupils. Their personal development is enhanced by the good guidance in personal and social education and other lessons. The support given to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make at least good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has overseen significant improvements to the school's systems since she joined the school. She leads a very well motivated team of colleagues who provide a clearly shared vision for the whole school. Teamwork is evident in all the school's initiatives and all staff members contribute fully to their planning and development. The school's work is evaluated continuously and rigorously and this is leading to exciting new developments in the curriculum. Subject leaders have a clear grasp of how lessons are taught and how pupils' learning needs to be supported in some areas. There are early signs of improvements in standards as a result. The governing body provides outstanding support to the school. Governors are involved in all the school's activities. They question and challenge where needed and make efforts to stay current with educational thinking. They are an integral part of the leadership team and its strategic planning. There are good relationships with parents and pupils. The school monitors parents' and pupils' opinions and, wherever possible, ensures that their ideas and needs are taken account of. The high numbers of pupils who join or leave the school outside the usual

times are being very well supported by the school's induction process which supports them and their parents through the difficult transition period. The very effective management of the school's budget allows for such innovations.

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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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	1
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?	2
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?	2

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	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

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

- 29 June 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of St Columb Minor School, TR7 3JF I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleagues and I very much enjoyed our visit. You go to a good school. Your headteacher and staff care for you very well and give you good support to enable you to learn and enjoy your lessons. They make sure that your teaching is good and that you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe, which you do well. You told us that you like school and there are lots of things to do and enjoy. We agree with you. Your behaviour is good and you work hard and try to succeed in all that you do. I have asked your school to do three things to make it even better:
- Improve standards in writing for all of you.
- Provide you with more chances to have experience of other cultures.
- Make sure that your teachers' marking of your work and setting of targets helps you better understand what you need to do to improve. Thank you again for making us feel so welcome in your school. Yours sincerely Clive Lewis Lead inspector