

St Minver School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111921
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	289103
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Anna Sketchley

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	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frank Cox
Headteacher	N B Lane
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2001
School address	Rock Road St Minver Wadebridge PL27 6QD
Telephone number	01208 862496
Fax number	01208 863007

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in St Minver Lowlands some four miles from Wadebridge. It is very popular and some pupils travel from considerable distances to attend. The numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are below average.

Pupils join the school with skills expected for their age. There are a few pupils from minority ethnic groups and some are in the early stages of learning English. A private nursery has recently opened on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which is highly regarded by parents. They say it is 'a fantastic school that we are proud to send our children to'. They are right to say this because it does have many outstanding features. Care, guidance and support are outstanding because every child is known well and treated as an individual both pastorally and academically. Excellent relationships are fostered between adults and pupils and an enthusiastic yet calm atmosphere pervades the whole school community. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those whose first language is not English are especially well catered for. They are warmly welcomed and fully included in all that the school offers. As one parent put it, 'St Minver is a lovely school to arrive at in the morning'. Pupils have many responsibilities, are trusted and fully involved in the life of the school. As a result, their personal development and well-being are also outstanding. Their behaviour is exemplary and they have excellent attitudes to learning because of a rich and exciting curriculum, stimulating lessons and good teaching. They are always to be found concentrating well and doing their best. Pupils say that they love coming to school and 'would not want to change anything!' Despite pupils' obvious enjoyment, attendance is below what is expected mainly because a significant number of parents take their children on holiday during school term time. The school has good procedures in place to address non-attendance but it is hard for them to maintain it at an acceptable level.

Pupils achieve well. Generally they enter school with skills expected for their age, although a significant number have lower than expected skills in some aspects of mathematics and communication and language. Children receive an excellent start in a vibrant and well organised Reception year. As a result they make good progress. They continue to make consistently good progress throughout the school, reaching standards that are above average by the time they leave and are ready for the challenge of secondary education. The good progress they make is largely as a result of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching they receive. However, in some lessons pupils do not focus sharply enough on what is to be learned. The use of learning objectives to enable pupils to gauge whether or not they have been successful at the end of a lesson is inconsistent.

The success of the school has been achieved through good leadership and management which have outstanding features. Through the infectious enthusiasm of the headteacher and his dedication to improvement, the school has a very happy and strong team of committed and hardworking staff and governors who all get on well together and are effective in their roles. They, like the pupils, love coming to school and this contributes significantly to the progress pupils make both personally and academically. An outstanding curriculum is enriched by the excellent links with outside agencies, enabling pupils to make valuable contributions to the community, such as through the National Trust Guardianship Project, where they look after a local beach. Many of these links also provide the school with impressive resources and as a result, over time, the environment for learning has become stunning. The consistent and rigorous monitoring of everything the school undertakes is also an outstanding feature. This has ensured good improvement since the previous inspection and also has enabled the school to clearly identify areas for further development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share outstanding practice in teaching, especially the use of learning objectives, so that all pupils focus sharply on what is to be learned and are helped to review their progress at the end of the lesson.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language also achieve well. In Reception, pupils get off to a flying start; a great strength of the school because by the end of the Foundation Stage almost all pupils achieve the standards expected and many exceed them in all areas of learning. Standards in personal and social education are especially high and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' future achievement. Good progress is maintained throughout the infant years. The school has worked hard to improve the achievement of boys in Years 1 and 2, especially in writing. Tracking of pupils' progress shows that strategies used to help the boys are effective and standards continue to rise. Pupils keep on achieving well throughout the junior years. Last year six new pupils, five of whom had learning difficulties, joined the school during Year 6 and this caused test results to dip. However, in the current Year 6, standards are above average again and the school is on course to exceed its challenging targets.

Standards are also high across other areas of the curriculum especially in art and music. Many pupils play instruments and a substantial number are invited to play in the North Cornwall Schools' Orchestra.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate a high level of respect for adults and for each other and have an immense pride in their school. They look after one another well and say they feel very safe in school because there is no bullying. If an issue did occur they are confident that adults would help them to deal with it. They really enjoy their lessons, clubs and activities and are enthusiastic about all that is on offer for them. Year 6 pupils respond wholeheartedly to the prefect system and make a considerable contribution to the school community as do class monitors across the school. Pupils know about the importance of keeping fit and healthy, participating in a wide range of sport and a whole-school exuberant 'Wake and Shake' session at the beginning of each day. Many enjoy the healthy school meals but packed lunches do not yet reflect the use of their knowledge and understanding about following a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are very well prepared for the transition to secondary school. They are confident because they have well developed skills to help them in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. High expectations and firm but warm and friendly relationships combine to create an excellent climate for learning in which pupils' exemplary

behaviour and attitude to their work ensure they make consistently good progress. Planning is very thorough and includes detailed instructions for the highly trained teaching assistants so that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported. Pupils are especially motivated by the interactive whiteboards which focus their attention and ensure a swift pace to learning. Assessment is very good and leads to every pupil having individual targets which they know well and use to improve their work. Within lessons, work is matched correctly to pupils' needs and questioning is skilful. Teachers often ask questions of pupils who do not have their hand up to make quite sure they understand and are taking a full part in the lesson. Pupils produce high quality, beautifully presented work. Occasionally, the learning intention for the lesson is not made clear enough to pupils so they are not sure what it is they are expected to have learned by the end of the lesson and therefore cannot judge the extent of their own success.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides pupils with an outstanding curriculum which makes learning exciting. Not only is it carefully planned but it is rich in opportunities that extend learning such as the specialist teachers employed for French, physical education and music. Pupils reach particularly high standards in music. Through participation in concerts in the local community, the pupils' cultural experiences are enriched. A parent commented, 'our daughter has an active mind which has been exercised fully by her inspiring teachers and extra activities like French and music'. The impressive number of trips, visits and visitors is much valued by pupils and generates high quality work, for example books made following their annual involvement with the National Trust. A wide range of clubs and other extra-curricular activities is fully inclusive and praised and enjoyed by all pupils.

Children in the Reception year benefit from a dynamic and stimulating environment. An interesting exploration of symmetry included creative and physical activities and the use of computers. Developments in literacy and numeracy in Years 1 and 2 are having a successful impact on the standards boys reach and the progress they make, especially in reading. An effective programme for pupils' personal and social development helps them to grow in confidence, keep safe and healthy and understand how they can make a useful contribution to their community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils. All adults know and care for the pupils very well. Those who have transferred from other schools have nothing but praise for their new surroundings. The quality of the environment is exceptionally high and contributes substantially to the pupils' sense of well-being and enjoyment in their learning. Very good use is made of data and the progress of each individual pupil is carefully tracked. Pupils have individual targets and are usually very clear about what they need to do next to improve their work, enabling them to make good progress. Targets in individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are not always sharp enough. Consequently, in some cases these do not provide a suitable process for involving pupils in their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has created a very real team spirit throughout the school and is highly valued by the whole school community. As a result, staff and governors are very supportive of one another and dedicated to improvement, the plans for which are correctly prioritised and include challenging targets. Self-evaluation is modest but monitoring and evaluation of all that is in place are very effective, for example extra strategies to help pupils both academically and socially are rigorously tracked on an individual basis to ensure progress. Governors exercise their responsibilities very well, carefully monitoring value for money, for example when the school introduced interactive whiteboards. The use of resources is outstanding and is one of the chief reasons for the sparkling school environment and the pupils' good progress. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly, giving the school an accurate picture of its quality. However, the outstanding practice that exists in some areas of the school is not used sufficiently to raise the quality of all teaching to the same high standard, enabling pupils to make even better progress.

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and the school has a very good capacity to continue to raise standards further.

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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
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	1
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

11 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Minver School, St Minver, PL27 6QD

Thank you very much for such a friendly welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and talking to you. Your parents told us what a very good school they think St Minver is and we agree with them. These are some of the best things we found:

- You learn well and make good progress right through the school.
- You enjoy coming to school because you are given so many interesting things to do. You are proud of your school.
- You are taught well and present your work beautifully.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you work hard in lessons.
- You are very well cared for and told us that you feel safe and happy in school.
- Your headteacher, all your teachers and helpers and the school governors lead your school very well.

Your school knows what it needs to do next and we have asked them to do something to make your learning even better:

- We have asked your teachers to make sure that you know exactly what you are going to learn about in each lesson so that at the end of the lesson you can judge for yourselves what you have learnt.

With best wishes

Anna Sketchley Lead inspector