



Polperro Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111955
Local Authority Cornwall
Inspection number 289115
Inspection date 3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Brentfields
School category	Community		Looe
Age range of pupils	4-11		PL13 2JJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01503 272249
Number on roll (school)	88	Fax number	01503 272249
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	John Taylor
		Headteacher	Roger Carter
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is housed in a pleasant modern building that has been adapted well to meet the needs of disabled pupils. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average but a high proportion of these pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school is organised into four classes, two for pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2, and two for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Class sizes vary from 8 to 32.

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, described by a parent as one of 'pure delight, fun, laughter and love'. Children start in the Reception Year with language and mathematical skills that are below average. When they leave at the end of Year 6, they attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are a little above average. This is good achievement.

Pupils are cared for very well and as a result their personal development is good. They behave well and play and work together happily. Their social skills are excellent and they are articulate and confident when talking with adults. They have a very good understanding of how to lead healthy lives, showing great enthusiasm for sport and eating healthily. Many walk or cycle to school, in some cases up very steep hills! They also understand how to keep safe, for instance, by wearing cycle helmets.

Teaching is good. Teachers plan interesting lessons and use resources well, especially information and communication technology (ICT). Children in the Reception/Year 1 class are taught through a good range of approaches that develop their learning skills well for later life. Teachers generally have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, but do not always ensure that those of average ability move on at the rate at which they should. The reason for this is that gaps in individuals' learning, for instance, in mathematics, are sometimes not identified and put right at an early stage. The school has made a good start on tracking the progress of individual pupils and setting targets. This works well for most pupils but occasionally the system is not sharp enough to pick up lack of progress for those of average ability. The curriculum is good and is enhanced by an excellent range of enrichment activities that includes sport, the arts and residential activities.

Leadership and management are good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, especially in the provision for the Reception Year and in the use of ICT by both pupils and teachers. The range of enrichment activities has expanded to include music and other arts. As a result of these improvements, standards have risen, especially from the Reception Year through to Year 2. Staff have a good range of skills but these are not always put to the best possible use to ensure that all pupils benefit. Significant variations in the size of classes mean that some teachers have a heavy workload, but support staff are not always deployed in the most effective way to compensate for this. Both parents and pupils have a high opinion of the education the school provides. The school has a satisfactory knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. Leaders and managers are well placed to make the necessary further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the identification of individual weaknesses in the progress made by pupils of average ability, particularly in mathematics, so that these may be rectified more quickly.

- Use the skills of staff more flexibly in order to equalise their workload and ensure that all pupils benefit from the available expertise.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 6 attain above-average standards in their work. On starting school their skills are generally below average. Many, for instance, do not know how to hold a book properly. They make good progress in the Reception Year and quickly develop the skills necessary to learn. By the end of Year 2 most can read, write and use numbers to the required standard. There has been a steady rise in standards at the end of Year 2 over the past four years. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils are attaining above-average standards in English and science, and average standards in mathematics. In 2006, the proportions attaining the higher Level 5 in national tests in all three subjects were above the national average, a significant improvement on previous years. Pupils throughout the school are acquiring new knowledge and skills at a good rate. At lunch with inspectors, two Year 5 pupils engaged in a mature discussion about the water cycle, showing good understanding of terms such as 'evaporation' and 'precipitation'. The most and least able pupils achieve well; however, a few pupils of average ability do not always attain the standards they might as their weaknesses are not picked up and dealt with quickly enough. This is apparent, for instance, in mathematics in Year 5. Over the past two years, the school has rightly and successfully focused on improving standards of mathematics and of boys' writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most attend regularly. They clearly enjoy learning and are eager to show and talk about their work and achievements. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They get on well with each other and respect what their teachers say. Their social development is outstandingly good and they have a good understanding of cultural diversity. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They appreciate the school meals and feel safe at school. As several pupils agreed, 'It's an honest school, nobody tells lies, there's no bullying and no-one hurts each other'. They are aware of the need to handle equipment safely and understand the value of exercise. The school promotes this successfully through the regular 'wake up' sessions each morning. All pupils and staff participate in joint exercises to music. This effectively increases pupils' sense of being part of a living community. Links with other countries, such as Uganda, help pupils understand the needs of others and of being part of a world community. They have maturity, confidence and good skills, particularly in literacy and ICT, for use when they are older.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Lessons are interesting and varied, and good use is made of interactive whiteboards to illustrate key points and to help pupils to learn. The youngest children are taught well through a range of guided activities, involving both play and more formal approaches. Teachers generally know their pupils well. They mark work carefully and frequently tell pupils what they need to do to improve. There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers have high expectations of what most can achieve. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well by both teachers and teaching assistants. However, the skills of teaching assistants are not always used as fully as they might be as most usually work with the same small groups of pupils and their skills are not always available to help others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. For the youngest children, the curriculum includes all the prescribed areas of learning and provides good opportunities to learn through practical experiences. Older pupils are taught the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT appropriately and study a good range of other subjects. A range of tasks is planned to meet the different needs of pupils. This is successful for those who need extra support and for more-able pupils but occasionally pupils of average ability mark time because activities are sometimes not well matched to their level of understanding. The excellent range of enrichment activities includes a number of sports, music, art, horticulture and other activities, and draws on expertise within the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because of the good care, support and guidance the school provides. They feel safe and secure and know that they can turn to an adult if they have any problems or worries. Child protection procedures and other checks to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare are firmly in place. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. This ensures that pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem as they move through the school. The school has good systems to track pupils' progress and these are used well to identify those pupils who need extra support or a greater degree of challenge. Occasionally, however, the potential for average pupils to make progress a little more quickly is overlooked.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Parents and pupils have a great deal of confidence in the school because they are regularly consulted and informed about developments, for instance, through an excellent monthly newsletter. Considerable improvements have taken place in recent years including the development of the pleasant, well-maintained site to meet the needs of disabled pupils. Teaching has improved because staff monitor each other's work and discuss how to improve it. The quality of leadership and management of the Reception Year, where there has been much improvement, is good.

The school has a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Leaders and managers have correctly identified and remedied weaknesses in mathematics and the standards achieved by boys in writing. However, while pupils' progress is carefully tracked, the analysis of the data is not always rigorous enough to ensure that all weaknesses are quickly identified. Class sizes range from 8 to 32 and the many and varied skills of teaching and support staff are not always being put to best use, as in the larger classes pupils have to wait longer for adult support.

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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	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?	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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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.

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	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	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

We very much enjoyed talking and listening to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. We want to thank you for spending time with us. I especially enjoyed having lunch with you, seeing Class 3 learning about adverbs and writing a play, and Class 4 working hard at their maths.

We agree with you and your parents that your school is a good one. These are some of the best things about it:

- You learn quickly and Year 6 pupils do well in the national tests (SATs).
- You behave well, get on very well together and help each other.
- You keep healthy by eating sensibly and by using all the opportunities to take part in sport and games. You also know how to keep safe and look after the environment.
- The Reception children get a good education, with lots of exciting activities that help them with their learning when they are older.
- There is lots of interesting work for you, including activities outside the school day. The sport and music are especially good.
- You are taught well. The teachers plan lots of interesting activities and use ICT very well to help you learn.
- You are very well cared for by the staff.
- The headteacher, the other staff and the governors lead the school well.

We have asked the school to improve two things. Firstly, to check even more carefully the progress all of you are making in your work, so that you can do even better. Secondly, to look at the ways the classes are arranged so that you can all benefit from everything all the staff know about and can teach you.