



St Germans Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111982
Local Authority Cornwall
Inspection number 289129
Inspection date 21 September 2006
Reporting inspector Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lower Fairfield
School category	Community		St Germans
Age range of pupils	4-11		Saltash PL12 5NJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01503 230378
Number on roll (school)	87	Fax number	01503 230378
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Paul Smith
		Headteacher	Carol McGlinchey
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Germans is much smaller than most primary schools and situated in an idyllic setting in the Tamar Valley. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Children enter the Reception class with expected knowledge and skills. In recent years, a high proportion of pupils have joined the school after Year 2.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Germans is a good school where pupils achieve well and their personal development is outstanding. The inspection team agrees with the school's view that its overall effectiveness is good and finds that there are outstanding aspects to its work. An extremely positive and welcoming atmosphere where relationships are excellent pervades this school. Parents rightly hold the school in high regard and give it very good support. As one parent commented, 'The atmosphere that the headteacher and her team cultivate is delightful. There is a happy environment for learning'. Another remarked, 'I am very pleased my child attends this school'. Outstanding care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal progress. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and the interesting range of activities provided. Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. Pupils show a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and personal safety. They willingly take on responsibilities which contribute to the smooth running of the school. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Good teaching and a stimulating curriculum lead to pupils' good progress. Teachers' clear explanations and effective questioning skills promote learning well. Work is well matched to pupils' age and needs so they are suitably challenged. Good assessment and tracking procedures mean that the school knows how well each individual is progressing. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. A good range of visits, visitors and clubs enrich the curriculum. However, pupils' investigative skills are less well developed because they do not always have sufficient opportunities to use and apply these skills in mathematics and science. Children in Reception make good progress in all areas of learning as a result of the good provision. Outdoor play facilities have improved considerably since the last inspection and these are used well. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Standards are generally above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In recent years, standards in Year 6 have fluctuated because of high proportions of pupils joining the school after Year 2. Many of these have specific needs. Careful assessment and tracking show that pupils who have had most of their schooling at St Germans tend to reach higher standards than those who have been there for a shorter time. The current Year 6 has had fewer pupil changes to the year group and standards are above average. Good leadership and management underpin the effective provision and the favourable outcomes for pupils. An experienced headteacher provides strong leadership and direction. With a committed team of staff, she has created a positive climate where pupils thrive. School self-evaluation is effective and clear action is taken to bring about improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use and apply investigative and problem solving skills in mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well as they move through the school. This is because of good teaching, an interesting curriculum and effective assessment. Children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress and by Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in Year 6 fluctuate because of changes to year groups as new pupils join between Years 3 and 6. During the past three years or so a high proportion of pupils have joined the school after Year 2 and many of these have specific needs. In 2005, National Curriculum test results for Year 6 were average in English, mathematics and science. Unconfirmed results for 2006 indicate below average results in English and mathematics but average in science. Thorough assessment and tracking indicates that pupils who receive most of their schooling at St Germans tend to reach higher standards than pupils who are there for shorter periods. The current Year 6 has had fewer changes to the year group and there are fewer pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Standards are above average in this year group and these pupils have made good progress from their prior attainment in Year 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. Relationships and behaviour are outstanding and are key factors in this calm and happy school. Pupils feel they are safe and really appreciate the wide range of experiences on offer. Younger children have good personal and social skills and know how to take turns and to work together. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school works hard to promote good attendance, which is average and improving. Pupils have a clear understanding of the need to keep healthy. They spoke enthusiastically about the improved school meals and of the good range of physical activities they take part in. Pupils particularly enjoy the 'wake-up and shake-up' exercises at the start of each day. Older pupils take the extra responsibilities, such as peer mediators, library assistants, members of the playground squad and school council, very seriously. They enjoy looking after the younger pupils at lunchtime. The school council is confident its suggestions are listened to and acted upon. It has an annual budget, which is spent wisely for the benefit of all pupils, such as increasing playground facilities and developing recycling projects. Pupils regularly participate in local community events and are currently involved in raising money for a village in Africa. Good progress in basic skills and successful teamwork ensure that pupils are well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Effective teaching and learning give rise to pupils' good achievement. Teachers are enthusiastic and plan lessons well. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to explain and illustrate key teaching points. Pupils are attentive and respond well to teachers' challenging questions. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support teaching and learning in a range of subjects. Tasks are well matched to pupils' attainment so all are suitably challenged. Pupils' ability to work collaboratively or independently is good. However, there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to apply and develop investigation skills. Teaching assistants are well directed and provide effective support particularly for those with learning difficulties or disabilities. There are effective assessment and tracking procedures particularly in English, mathematics and science. Assessment data is used well by teachers to plan the next stages of pupils' learning and to set learning targets. The marking of pupils' work is effective. It provides praise and clear guidance on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A stimulating and interesting curriculum contributes to pupils' outstanding personal development and to their good achievement. Inspectors agree with governors that pupils are learning in a vibrant atmosphere. Displays of pupils' work are bright and of high quality. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and the outside area is used well to support all areas of learning. Outdoor facilities for the younger ones have improved considerably since the last inspection. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of different ages and abilities in each class. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use and apply investigative skills in mathematics and science. Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. One pupil commented, 'Visits out of school are really interesting and the children return feeling happy'. Another younger pupil described his visit to Mount Edgcumbe Park in detail. Good partnerships with local schools, particularly the local secondary school, contribute effectively to the ICT, mathematics and science curriculum. There are good links with sporting clubs who provide specialist teaching for pupils. The attractive and well maintained school grounds are put to good use for environmental work and sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

A parent summed up this area well, 'The staff are friendly and caring about all aspects of children's education and welfare'. Pupils are extremely well cared for and all staff know the pupils very well. This ensures that both academic and pastoral needs are sensitively dealt with. A number of very good systems are in place to support pupils'

personal and social development. Pupils are confident that they know what to do if they have a problem. Child protection procedures are robust and known by all staff. There are comprehensive systems to support pupils' academic progress. Individual pupils are carefully assessed and information is used successfully to identify those who need additional support. The school works extremely well with outside agencies to provide support for those pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils have clear targets in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Good marking by teachers ensures that they know what they need to do to improve. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the self-marking sheets they use, which tell them clearly how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Strong leadership and management are key factors contributing to pupils' outstanding personal development and to their good achievement. A calm and enthusiastic headteacher provides clear leadership and direction. This has resulted in a very positive ethos where all pupils and staff are highly valued. The headteacher is well supported by the assistant headteacher and staff in raising pupils' achievement and providing good quality provision. Through the Primary Leadership Programme, the role of subject leaders is being developed so they are more effective in monitoring their subjects. The school is highly regarded by the parents who give it very good support. Parents openly praise the school, 'I am more than happy with the standard of teaching and care'. Another said, 'My child is extremely happy at school and looks forward to going'. Evaluation of the school's work is thorough. As a result, the school has a clear understanding of what it does well and what could be improved. Improvement planning includes appropriate priorities such as improving provision for the more able in Years 3 to 6 and developing subject leaders. Effective monitoring and development of teaching have improved teaching and learning so that they are consistently good across the school. Successful assessment and tracking systems mean the school knows just how well individual pupils are doing. The administrator has been particularly effective in managing and presenting assessment data for staff. The governors are committed, supportive and well informed about the school's performance. Members of the governing body have made valuable contributions to healthy eating projects and in constructing a recent outdoor activities area to develop pupils' agility. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and there is good capacity for further growth.

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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	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	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	2
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	1
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?	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.

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	2
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	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

- Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our inspection visit and would like to tell you what we found out. We think that St Germans is a good school and in some areas it is outstanding. You can be proud of your school. These things were particularly pleasing:
- You thoroughly enjoy school and are enthusiastic about your learning.
- Teaching is good and your teachers give you interesting things to do.
- You are all making good progress.
- The school and grounds are very attractive. Your displays are bright and stimulating.
- You are polite, friendly, and your behaviour is outstanding.
- You get on very, very well with other pupils and adults.
- Your headteacher runs the school extremely well.
- Staff know you all well. They give you excellent support and help.
- There is a good range of clubs, visits and visitors which you clearly enjoy.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school and give it strong support. There is one thing that we think could be improved:
- You could have more chance to carry out practical investigations and to solve problems in mathematics and science. Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the best for the future.