



St John's Catholic Primary School, Camborne

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112008
Local Authority Cornwall
Inspection number 289143
Inspection dates 9–10 October 2006
Reporting inspector Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Trevu Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Camborne
Age range of pupils	4–11		TR14 7AE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01209 713944
Number on roll (school)	197	Fax number	01209 713944
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Nicholas Talbot
		Headteacher	Mark Whitwood
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 9–10 October 2006	Inspection number 289143
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The attainment of most pupils on entry is below average. There are five pupils at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils joining the school during the year is above average. The long-term absence of the headteacher has caused serious disruption to the school's recent performance. An acting headteacher has been leading the school since November 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St John's is a very friendly school in which all pupils are cherished and valued as individuals. It offers a satisfactory standard of education. The acting headteacher has provided strong leadership over the last year, forging a sense of teamwork between staff and bringing stability back to the school. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 were most affected by the disruption, including high pupil mobility, and there was significant underachievement in the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2005. Provision has been improved and pupils in Year 6 now achieve in a satisfactory manner and reach broadly average standards. Standards have been maintained in Year 2 and are above average, with pupils achieving well. Children are provided with a good start to their education in the Reception class, being able to take part in a wide range of stimulating and exciting activities. This is a very caring school in which all staff are committed to ensuring pupils' health and safety. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who need extra care are given the support needed to make sure they are fully involved in all activities. There are good relationships at all levels, with pupils responding positively to the way they are treated. They are well behaved and enjoy coming to school, which is shown in the way attendance has improved. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with pockets of good practice, particularly for younger pupils. There is some good teaching in Years 3 to 6 but it is not consistent and pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable in these classes.

The curriculum is enlivened by a variety of extra-curricular activities and visits to places of educational interest, such as the Eden Project. There is a strong commitment to pupils' personal development and because of this they are caring and respectful of others. Parents are very appreciative of this and believe the school looks after their children very well. There are very good links with the local community to extend pupils' learning, for example, the way the school works with the local secondary school to help improve their skills in sport. The senior management team and subject leaders have made a good contribution to the way the school has improved in the last year. They are aware of the need to now develop a longer-term view of where the school is going. Governors are very supportive and keen to develop their role further and the school now has a sound capacity to make any necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are consistently good.
- Create a school improvement plan that gives a longer-term view of how the school is to develop in the future.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Most pupils achieve in a satisfactory manner and reach broadly average standards by the time they leave Year 6. The results in national tests in 2006 confirm an upward

trend, particularly in English and science. Performance in mathematics was relatively weaker because of pupils' underdeveloped skills in calculation. Children achieve well in the Reception year. By the time they enter Year 1, most attain the expected level for their age, with a significant minority exceeding this. Good progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2, with pupils happily completing a variety of challenging and interesting activities. Improvements to provision for pupils in Years 3 to 6 mean they now make satisfactory progress overall, but not as much progress as they should do in mastering basic numeracy skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who need extra care and attention are supported well, and they also make satisfactory progress. Pupils at an early stage of acquiring English make good progress and achieve well because of the extra help given.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They are keen to learn and they show confidence in making contributions to group and class discussions. They move around the school with purpose and consideration. Pupils happily take on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council. The council is actively involved in the life of the school and has helped provide playground equipment and a friendship bench. Older pupils also enjoy taking good care of younger pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are kind to others and collaborate well when working or playing. Pupils understand the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles and the need for personal safety. They make good contributions to the community by taking part in a wide range of local events, such as the Trevithick dance day. Pupils manage simple budgets when running fundraising events; this and improving standards in basic skills help prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of education and their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers prepare their lessons well to build on pupils' previous learning. As a result, pupils are able to use their previous knowledge and understanding to reinforce what they are learning. A good example of the way pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English are fully involved was seen in a lesson in Year 3 on learning about different mathematical shapes. In this lesson, the teacher's and assistant's time was used to good effect as pupils very effectively improved their skills in finding and measuring right angles. The quality of the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. This means that in some classes pupils are not always clear about how they might improve their performance. Across the school, the good relationships between staff and pupils help to encourage pupils to make contributions

to group and whole-class discussions, as observed in Year 6 when pupils were exploring the features of biographical writing. Pupils know their contributions will be valued, which helps their personal development and self-esteem.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum is enriched well by a variety of educational visits and visitors to the school and through a variety of extra-curricular activities and clubs. This adds further interest to pupils' work. Provision in the Reception class is good and ensures that all children have access to a wide range of stimulating experiences. For pupils in Years 1 to 6, curriculum planning has been improved over the last year so that work given to them more effectively matches their individual needs; this was an important factor in the better progress made by Year 6 pupils in 2006. The school acknowledges the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to reinforce their basic skills in mathematics. There is a well-planned programme for pupils' personal development, including drugs education and how to keep healthy and safe. Links with the community, such as the local secondary school, extend pupils' learning effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are satisfactory. Pastoral support is very strong and influential in pupils' personal development. All staff work hard to make sure pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils say that if they have any worries or concerns they can go to a member of staff and they will be listened to. Provision for child protection is robust, with all staff knowing the procedures to follow. There are thorough risk assessments on internal and external accommodation and when planning an educational visit. The school has been successful in putting into place strategies to improve pupils' attendance and this is now above the national average.

There are comprehensive tracking procedures to check pupils' individual progress. However, these are not always used effectively to set challenging targets for them to improve their performance. Parents are strongly supportive of the school, especially in the way it has improved over the last year, and there is a good record of parents helping voluntarily in class.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Under the outstanding stewardship of the acting headteacher over the last year, leadership and management have improved and are now satisfactory. Senior managers are far more actively involved in monitoring the school's performance and so have a much better view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a consequence, the school has already identified weaknesses to address in mathematics. Subject leaders have created good action plans to improve provision in their subjects.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate, showing a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Performance management has been introduced and is linked well to school improvement and staff professional development. There are good systems to track how well pupils are making progress towards achieving their targets. The procedures to monitor teaching and learning that identify teachers' strengths and areas for development are now effective. Monitoring to ensure value for money from the contribution of teaching assistants has paid dividends, as shown by the progress made by pupils with any special needs. The quality of that support is a marked improvement since the last inspection. The governors' contribution to the work of the school is satisfactory and improving, and they, like others, are determined to ensure that the recent rise in standards continues.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

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

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	3

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	2
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.

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	3
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 for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing the things you do. We thought you would like to know what your school does well and how it might improve further.

Your school is a very friendly place in which to learn and play. You told us that you enjoy coming to school because your teachers make learning interesting and fun. However, some of you could be doing better in mathematics. The school knows this and has made a good plan to help teachers give you work that better meets your individual needs. You told us that you feel safe and secure in school and you are looked after well. You are good at taking on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council or older pupils looking after younger ones at playtimes. Your behaviour is good and you show respect for other pupils and adults. The school knows it needs to make a plan to show how it can improve in the future. Everyone in the school believes that each of you is special and helps you to do as well as you can.

How we think your school could make things better for you:

- Make sure that all of you are given work that makes you think hard, especially in mathematics.
- Make a written plan of how it can improve further over the next few years.