



Pensans Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134726
Local Authority Cornwall
Inspection number 294160
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Sadler

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

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|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Madron Road |
| School category | Community | | Penzance |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 | | TR20 8UH |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01736 363627 |
| Number on roll (school) | 302 | Fax number | 01736 331759 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mike Cotton |
| | | Headteacher | Martin Higgs |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected | | |

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|--------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school was opened in September 2005 following the closure of separate infant and junior schools. Currently the school continues on the sites of both former schools although a building programme at the site of the former junior school is nearing completion. The infant site will then close and the pupils will transfer to the new, purpose-built accommodation. There is significant provision of day and after school care on the school sites. This was the school's first inspection.

The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. There are very few pupils of minority ethnic origin, or who speak a language other than English at home.

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. In the short time since it opened, much has been achieved. Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge that are below expected levels. They achieve well, and leave having attained average standards at the end of Year 6. Pupils make very good progress in English and good progress in mathematics, particularly in those classes where they have clear targets and know how to improve their work. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Social development is a particular strength. Pupils are well-behaved, articulate and confident with adults. They love school and say that teachers 'are fun, but they know when to make you work'. Pupils know how to lead healthy and safe lives, and enjoy sport and fitness activities. They, and their parents, are rightly concerned about road safety arrangements on the approaches to the school.

Pupils' good achievements result from good teaching. Teachers use a variety of methods to engage the pupils' interest. There is a fast pace to lessons although sometimes the work is too easy for the most able pupils. This is the case in mathematics and particularly in science where these pupils do not achieve well enough. Targets and helpful marking are beginning to give pupils a good understanding of how to improve their work but this approach is not yet used consistently in all classes. The curriculum is satisfactory. Required subjects are taught but the material sometimes does not fully meet pupils' individual needs. The extra activities offered are good, both in range and quality. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils receive good pastoral care and the older ones receive helpful academic guidance. Parents believe that the school takes particularly good care of vulnerable pupils. There is good provision for the care of pupils after school and a very good partnership with a provider of pre-school education on the site. Effective partnerships are also developing with the local community, secondary schools and other agencies.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership, a fact which is recognised by parents, pupils and staff. He has had to work on a very wide range of issues. The Foundation Stage is well led and its good provision means these children make good progress. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is also managed well. There are weaknesses in some areas of subject leadership as newly appointed leaders have not yet had sufficient training to be consistently effective. The school is beginning to know itself well, and tries hard to improve in all areas. School leaders are well placed to make the necessary improvements, especially when the whole school moves onto one site.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more challenging work for the most able pupils in order to raise their achievement and standards, especially in science and mathematics.
- Ensure targets for pupils are used effectively by all teachers, so that all pupils know how to improve their work.
- Raise the quality of subject leadership to ensure that it is consistently high throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with skills that are below expected levels, especially in communication, language and literacy, social development and knowledge and understanding of the world. At the end of the Foundation Stage their skills have improved, but remain below average. From Year 1 to Year 6 they continue to make good progress and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average in English and average in mathematics, but remain below average in science. Overall, this is good achievement. The school has recognised areas of weakness, for instance in boys' writing, and has dealt with these effectively. All pupils make similarly good progress, with the exception of some more able pupils who might achieve more in mathematics and science. The best English work is very good indeed, written with imagination, accuracy and clarity.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Attendance is satisfactory but, despite the school's efforts to promote good attendance, poor attendance adversely affects the progress of a small number of pupils. Pupils are well behaved and show respect and concern for others. They enjoy school and take part enthusiastically in activities. Many pupils develop a strong sense of community through the responsibilities that they are given on the school council, in organising events and looking after other children in the playground. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that bullying is not a problem. They make good progress in developing the skills needed for future learning and achievement. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is fostered through daily assemblies and opportunities for reflection. Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Their social development is enhanced through community links, visits and visitors. They are taught to recognise and appreciate the values and beliefs of others and are developing an understanding of their own and other cultures. The skills pupils will need in adult life, such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), are developing well and pupils understand their importance. The school's caring and inclusive ethos contributes significantly to pupils' personal development and well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good because teachers plan a variety of interesting activities that motivate pupils to learn. They choose relevant resources and make good use of the unusual and varied history and geography of west Cornwall. Other strengths of the teaching include teachers' good use of questioning, and their good relationships with pupils. In most

cases, work is planned to meet the individual needs of all pupils but in some classes it does not stretch the most able pupils sufficiently. Teachers mark work carefully with helpful comments and in some classes they set targets that help pupils to improve. This good practice is not used consistently enough across the school. In the Foundation Stage, although activities are limited, children are taught using appropriate methods that help prepare them to learn well. Teaching assistants are used effectively throughout the school, especially in helping pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage, children are given good quality activities in all the areas of learning but the variety is limited by a lack of facilities. The school plans to extend the range of activities when the Foundation Stage moves to new premises shortly. In Years 1 to 6 pupils cover all the subjects well, but there are limited opportunities for the most able pupils to learn at the highest levels in mathematics and science. Adjustments that cater for pupils' individual needs are satisfactory. There is a good range of other activities including visits and excursions. There is also a good range of clubs and opportunities for sport, music and drama. These are popular with the pupils, for instance inspectors saw about 50 pupils enthusiastically line dancing after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and contribute to pupils' progress, sense of well-being and enjoyment of learning. Pupils say that they are well cared for and know whom to approach if they experience difficulties. Child protection procedures are understood and followed by all staff. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place and the school site is secure. Good links with parents and external agencies support pupils' welfare, health and safety. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements. Induction and transfer procedures help pupils to settle quickly and happily into new routines. Improved assessment and monitoring procedures to track pupils' academic progress are now in place. The setting of targets, linked to National Curriculum levels, has also improved and most of the older pupils know how they are getting on and what they need to do to improve their work. However, some teachers of younger pupils use the targets inconsistently and these pupils are less clear about how to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school well and has developed a positive ethos in which pupils are valued and respected. They believe that 'everyone has a fair chance'. He has had to pursue a very wide range of activities including the leadership of the school and additional management in relation to the building work. A particular strength in

leadership and management is the effectiveness of the way in which partnerships with parents, local schools and external agencies have been harnessed.

Good teaching has been achieved through regular monitoring, professional development and judicious appointments by the effective governing body. The school has made a good start in identifying its strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation processes are satisfactory and are helping to focus efforts on central priorities. A strong leadership team is developing, although the school recognises that recently appointed subject leaders need support and training in order to release their potential and improve their effectiveness. The infant site is well led. Much has been achieved since the school opened in 2005 and there is good potential for further improvement, especially when the school moves onto one site.

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Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

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| 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 | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | No |

Achievement and standards

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 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? | 3 |
| 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

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| 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 | 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

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 attending your assembly and talking to pupils in Years 5 and 6.

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 English.
- You behave well, get on very well together and help each other, partly because the older pupils get lots of opportunities to be responsible.
- You keep healthy by eating sensibly and by using the opportunities to take part in sport and games. You also know how to keep safe and look after the environment.
- There is lots of interesting work for you, including activities outside the school day. Those of you at the line-dancing club were obviously enjoying yourselves!
- You are taught well. The teachers plan lots of exciting activities to help you learn. You are very well cared for by the staff and get good help on how to improve your work.
- The headteacher has made a very good job of starting the new school. The other staff and the governors also contribute well to leading the school.

We have asked the school to give more difficult work to those of you who find it easy, especially in mathematics and science. If you are finding the work too easy it is a good idea to tell your teacher. We have asked the teachers to find the best ways of using targets to help you with your work. Also, we have asked that the teachers in charge of subjects get more help and training to do these important jobs even better.