

Pelynt School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111976
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	298544
Inspection date	26 September 2007
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 category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Mason
Headteacher	Lloyd Sluman
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
School address	Pelynt School Pelynt Looe PL13 2LG
Telephone number	01503 220262
Fax number	01503 220262

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school has three classes, one for pupils in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2, and two classes for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils come from local villages. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and few speak a language other than English at home. In September 2007 the school admitted some additional pupils following the closure of the school in a nearby village.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

As a result of the previous inspection in July 2006, the school was issued with a Notice to Improve the progress and teaching of pupils in the Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2, and, to improve the use of assessment and curriculum planning. These aspects of the school's provision have improved and the school now provides its pupils with education of a satisfactory quality. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Pupils enter the school with the usual skills and knowledge and now make satisfactory progress in the Reception Year, by the end of which most attain the expected levels in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. This sound progress continues in Years 1 and 2, by the end of which the proportions attaining the expected levels in reading and writing are broadly in line with national averages. In 2007 standards may well prove better than this once final data is available, for instance all pupils in Year 2 attained at least the expected level in mathematics. At the end of Year 6, most pupils attain the expected levels in English, mathematics and science and the staff have correctly identified weaknesses in writing, especially among boys. They are now working to correct this through the use of better marking and by introducing resources that motivate all pupils. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and is improving.

Pupils behave well and report that there is no bullying. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe and their attendance is above average. Mostly, they enjoy their lessons. 'That was fun!' said a Year 3 pupil on completing research on ancient Egyptian burial rites. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, aided by close links with the local church and with other schools in different environments and countries.

The satisfactory teaching now uses assessment better to plan work that matches pupils' capabilities better than it did, resulting in more appropriate improvement targets. Teaching assistants provide very good support, enabling pupils of all abilities to make satisfactory or better progress. When weaknesses occur, these are often linked to weak planning in the curriculum. Some lessons are excessively long and pupils become bored. At other times pupils are grouped in ways that make it difficult for the teacher to meet fully the needs of the range of ages and abilities present in the class. The organisation of resources for information and communication technology (ICT) creates some difficulties in the teaching of the subject, although there is evidence of recent improvements in this area. All the required subjects are taught and there is a good range of additional activities, especially in sports and educational visits. Pupils are cared for well and all the requirements for safeguarding children are in place and work well. Pupils receive satisfactory academic guidance that has improved due to more thorough and accurate tracking of their progress.

Improvements have taken place over the last year because leaders and managers have tackled, and successfully resolved, major weaknesses in the provision for pupils in the Reception Year and in Years 1 and 2. This has led to a significant improvement in the morale of staff. The school is in a satisfactory position for these improvements to continue. Parents recognise that improvement has taken place and many are rightly full of praise, but a few remain concerned about the quality of communication between school and home. Subject leadership is sound. Monitoring and evaluation by staff and governors are improving and have correctly identified, for instance, weaknesses in boys' writing. However, the school's view of its own performance

in a few areas, such as the quality of the curriculum, remains too generous. Targets have been met, but these are not yet sufficiently challenging to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children receive a sound start to their education and make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year). They have a good range of opportunities and resources and learn through an appropriate range of play based and more formal methods, which develop their social and communication skills, as when playing with water and talking together about how to make a milkshake. Teaching is satisfactory and good use is made of the able and hard-working teaching assistants. A few of the activities planned are inappropriate because they do not take into account that the children's concentration span is too short.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standard of pupils' writing, especially among boys, by the use of clearer marking comments and resources that maintain the interest of everyone.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum through improved use of time, better organisation of resources for ICT, and by ensuring that pupils are taught in the most appropriate groupings.
- Improve the accuracy and rigour of monitoring and evaluation in order to set more challenging yet achievable targets for all aspects of the school's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In 2007, pupils in the Reception Year made better progress in their language and mathematical development than in their creative development or in their knowledge and understanding of the world. There are promising signs that recent changes to the curriculum are beginning to correct this imbalance. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress in mathematics and science and, in most cases, in reading. This is an improvement on the recent past and in some areas progress is very good. Pupils' writing develops at a slower pace, especially among boys. There is evidence that recent improvements are beginning to have an impact, for instance in the better quality of handwriting and in the length of written work produced. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make equally satisfactory progress because they are supported well in lessons by able teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well in class and around the school, except when they become bored through spending too long on the same task. They have a good understanding of the need for a healthy diet and, especially, for taking exercise. They mostly enjoy their lessons except when they are too long. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, for instance older pupils enthusiastically take responsibility for younger ones, such as by leading daily exercise sessions. The school council, which includes pupils of all ages, gives opportunities to influence staff

decisions and is a good introduction to citizenship. The school has been successful in gaining a number of awards, for instance in sport, 'fair play' and in helping the environment. Pupils also have a good knowledge of how to keep safe. The skills they will need in later life, such as literacy, numeracy and ICT, are developing in a satisfactory manner.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In most lessons, teachers plan lessons that are matched well to pupils' abilities, as when a class of pupils in Years 3 and 4 researched Egyptian burial rites through a variety of approaches, with appropriate levels of support from adults. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and exciting, for instance through the use of ICT and stimulating resources. In a few lessons, teaching of the whole class does not always ensure that all pupils understand the work. Information from assessment is used increasingly well to track pupils' progress and to plan lessons, but marking is not always used effectively to show pupils how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum, including that for the Reception Year, teaches what is required and provides a good range of other activities. Improved planning is bringing more excitement to the curriculum. There are a few weaknesses such as in the planning of some lessons which are too long, for example a somewhat repetitive physical education lesson for the youngest pupils. In Years 3 to 6 pupils are grouped into three classes for mathematics teaching but the range of ages and abilities leads to some pupils finding the work too difficult.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff know the pupils well and provide a good level of care. All requirements for child protection are in place, although the training of some staff needs updating and the school plans to do this in the near future. Satisfactory guidance includes targets set for pupils, which they increasingly understand and use. This has led to pupils' improved progress, especially in English and mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Following the previous inspection, leaders and managers took decisive and successful action to remedy weaknesses in the progress, teaching and curriculum for pupils in the Reception Year and in Years 1 and 2. Leaders and managers have successfully dealt with a number of major challenges, such as the closure of a neighbouring school, and parents recognise that it is now stronger as a result. Leadership and management at all levels within the school are now satisfactory, although a few weaknesses remain. The success in making improvements since the last inspection shows that leaders and managers are in a satisfactory position to carry out further improvements.

The weaknesses concern the accuracy of monitoring and evaluation of the school's work and its use in identifying priorities and setting challenging targets. Weaknesses identified in writing have been tackled, but shortcomings in the curriculum are less well understood. Targets set for 2008 were originally below the minimum recommended for this type of school. These have been amended to levels that are more challenging, but data and other information, such as teachers' knowledge of their pupils, are not always used to ensure that all the targets set are as challenging as they might be.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

08 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Pelynt School, Looe, Cornwall PL13 2LG

We very much enjoyed talking and listening to you when we visited your school recently. We want to thank you for spending time with us. We especially enjoyed seeing some of your work.

Your school has improved over the last year and is now satisfactory. The most important things are:

- Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils now make satisfactory progress because of improved teaching.
- you make steady progress and results in the Year 6 tests are about average.
- you behave well, enjoy school and say there is no bullying.
- you understand the importance of a healthy diet and exercise, and you make good use of the many opportunities to play sport.
- you contribute well to the community through the school council, older pupils helping younger ones, through gaining awards and through your links with other schools.
- teaching is satisfactory and has a number of good points, such as the way teachers make the lessons interesting by using ICT.
- teaching assistants are very good at helping you to learn
- all the staff know you and look after you well
- the school is led and managed in a satisfactory way.

There are ways in which the school can improve further. Teachers already know that some of your writing needs to improve and are working on ways to make their marking comments clearer so they show you how to improve your work. Some lessons will be shorter so that you do not get bored. Better organisation of the ICT in the library will make it easier for your teacher to help you. The staff and governors will learn even more about how well the school is doing so that they can set the right targets. You can help with these things by making sensible suggestions, perhaps through the school council.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler Lead Inspector

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- you contribute well to the community through the school council, older pupils helping younger ones, through gaining awards and through your links with other schools.
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Paul Sadler
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