



Marazion School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111792
Local Authority Cornwall
Inspection number 298906
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Peter Way HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Lane
School category	Community		Marazion
Age range of pupils	4–11		TR17 0DG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01736 710618
Number on roll (school)	42	Fax number	01736 710618
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Delyth Jones
		Headteacher	Bill Mann
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2005		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

When this school was inspected in September 2005, it was judged to require special measures. Marazion is much smaller than most primary schools and suffered a decline after the inspection, but the current roll of 42 is growing again. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above the national average, including those with a statement of special educational need. Nearly all of the pupils are of White British origin. In September 2006 the school, whilst retaining its own governing body, was federated with a neighbouring primary school, St Hilary School. There have been several staff changes since the last inspection and this has now stabilised.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Since the inspection of 2005, significant improvements have been made and the school now provides a good quality of education. The pupils are making good progress although the standards which they reach are still too variable, and often too low, because of previous weaknesses in teaching and learning. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and this has been a key factor in recent school improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and performance is closely monitored. Pupils' progress and attainment are carefully tracked. This is leading to more appropriate work being given which provides a better challenge and requires more intellectual effort. Teaching is good. Expectations of what pupils should be achieving are now much higher in all subjects. Pupils enjoy their work and are enthusiastic about the better range of activities which have been introduced. The curriculum is well matched to their needs and provides many more enrichment activities. The Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 classroom is very well organised for early years' experiences and is more engaging for children. The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is good.

Throughout the school, the pupils are involved in the quality of their learning environment and contribute well finished work to the displays in the corridors. Through the school council they are involved in improving the school site and its facilities. Opportunities for personal development are good. All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well supported through the curriculum and the positive relationships which exist between staff and pupils. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. This is a considerable improvement and indicates the noticeable increase in their personal responsibility and in their improved attitudes towards school life. They work well together and there is much involvement of the older pupils in supporting the younger ones. Staff, including the teaching assistants, provide a good level of care and support for all pupils. The consultant headteacher, in post from November 2005, laid a secure foundation for further development. Through regular performance management, the quality of teaching and learning began to improve rapidly. Two terms later, a brave decision was taken by the governing body to federate with a very successful local primary school, judged to be outstanding in its recent inspection. This took place in September 2006 and was the first such federation in Cornwall. Each school retains its own governing body in what is termed a 'soft' federation capable of disengagement in the future. The cooperation between the two schools is transforming the educational experiences and opportunities for pupils at Marazion. The evidence of cooperation that has already taken place shows that the school's capacity for improvement is now outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Whilst implementing the many exciting developments, the priority to raise standards of attainment in English and mathematics throughout the school remains paramount.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The outcome of the 2006 national tests was lower than expected because the pupils had too much ground to make up. It remains the case that many pupils still have areas of weakness in basic skills. Despite this, the progress which pupils are now making is good, and for some it is outstanding. For example, school data shows that during the last academic year the pupils in Year 6 made nearly twice the amount of progress that is normally expected. The weaknesses in writing throughout the school are being successfully remedied and pupils' current work is of a much higher standard. Benefits are being seen in improved reading and spelling skills. The federation arrangements enable staff in both schools to share expertise in analysing pupils' performance. There is a clear target setting process for pupils and these are providing the right level of challenge. The school's overall performance predictions are both demanding and achievable.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Less than a year ago behaviour was still not good enough, attendance was well below the national average and pupils were showing too little responsibility for themselves or towards others. This contrasts sharply with the current climate in the school. During the last year staff have worked hard to improve the pupils' attitudes towards learning and school life in general. The benefits are now clear to see. Not only do pupils demonstrate good responsibility towards their own work, they show much more concern for each other. A good example of this is the lunchtime computer club run by older pupils for infants; one said, "It is to help them learn." The level of care and support shown by these older pupils is exemplary. Attendance is much improved and now above the national average. Provision for all aspects of personal development is good, although spiritual reflection is not promoted as strongly as other aspects. Pupils work with enjoyment and enthusiasm and readily give their best effort. They are more engaged with their own and their local community, for example through musical performances and beach clearing. Healthy eating and healthy lifestyles are high on the pupils' agenda and pupils take sensible amounts of exercise. The federation has also brought them social benefits in linking with a larger school, mixing and interacting with many more pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching has significantly improved and lessons are now judged to be good. The previous weakness in providing work which was not always well matched to pupils' learning needs has been significantly strengthened. Effective teaching now

motivates and challenges the pupils. More exciting learning opportunities are being presented, consequently pupils' responses have improved and the quality of learning is now also good. The regular monitoring of teaching and learning shows that improvements are becoming firmly embedded in classroom practice. Pupils share their ideas in discussion and explore their reasoning, thereby securing better understanding. Marking ladders and target boards provide pupils with clear guidance for improvement. The pupils say they know how well they are doing and work harder as a result. Assessment procedures provide useful information which teachers are using to plan lessons. Interactive whiteboards and information and communication technology are confidently used by teachers to improve pupils' concentration and to enliven lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum which is enriched with a variety of trips, visits, residential experiences and extra-curricular clubs and activities. A significant amount of curriculum revision is taking place to ensure that similar opportunities exist for pupils in both the federated schools. Exciting developments include an outdoor classroom being planned on St Michael's Mount (visible from the school) hopefully to be linked via a webcam, and a creative partnership project in film making. Grants are to be used to install video conferencing facilities for staff and pupils in both schools to give the federation real and virtual dimensions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The level of care, guidance and support is good. The pupils receive well considered feedback during lessons and are helped in their learning by appropriate target setting. Pupils who need extra support are given good attention by teachers and teaching assistants during lessons. Small groups are often seen receiving guided instruction to ensure that their basic skills are improved as rapidly as possible. The school has taken account of all recent guidance in welfare matters and gives due care and consideration to health and safety issues. The school works closely with parents and other agencies to ensure all pupils continue to make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The consultant headteacher, seconded soon after the school was judged to require special measures, very successfully prepared the school for rapid improvement. Through sensitive management, the staff improved the quality of teaching and learning, especially in preparing lessons which challenged all pupils in the mixed age groupings. The curriculum was broadened and school performance was closely monitored. Equality of opportunity was promoted and resources, including additional funding, were effectively deployed. Without this solid foundation progress towards removal of special measures would not have been so rapid. The school roll has been steadily growing as

parents' confidence increases. Feedback from a recent survey is very positive and parents are enthusiastic about the changes which are taking place.

The federation with St Hilary School has brought a new dynamic to school improvement. There is a clear understanding of the existing strengths and the areas in need of further development. The executive headteacher has begun to put in place an exciting development plan which has already brought many benefits to the pupils of Marazion. A successful bid to the Department for Education and Skills has secured a maximum grant for the development of the federation. Staff and management collaboration between the two schools have already provided successful joint training days; liaison at all levels, including with the pre-school, is regular and effective. The governing body's commitment to the school has been of paramount importance. It is very well led by a knowledgeable chair and continues to provide good direction and support, as well as fulfilling its role in holding the school to account.

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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	1
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	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	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?	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	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

How different your school is now, compared with when it was inspected in September 2005. Many of you were there at that time and you know how much it has changed. So many improvements have taken place that I am delighted to tell you that your school no longer needs 'special measures'.

I have enjoyed watching your school change and especially watching the way in which you have become more responsible for your own actions and your own learning. You are so much more keen to help each other, to look after the little ones, and to apply yourselves without having to be told so often to 'get on with your work' – I used to hear that too much. Your attendance at school is good and you are now making good progress with your work. The new link with St Hilary School is providing you with many more opportunities to develop your abilities and interests.

This was my fourth visit to your school. Thank you for the conversations we have had during the last year and for the good manners with which you have welcomed me into your school. I know my visits have sometimes made the teachers nervous but it has all been for a good cause – improving your education! – and, they say they have learnt a lot. Under the leadership of your excellent headteacher and the commitment of the hard working staff, the school will now improve steadily without the need for me to visit again.

Amongst the exciting developments which are planned for your school, like the classroom on the Mount and the film project, I have asked the teachers not to lose sight of improving your attainment in English and mathematics. Keep working as hard as you do now and that will soon be achieved.

My very best wishes to you all.