

Heamoor Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111794
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310684
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Colin Lee

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	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roy Curnow
Headteacher	Helen Giblett
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2003
School address	Bosvenna Way Heamoor Penzance TR18 3JZ
Telephone number	01736 364868
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is a larger than average sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with a very small number from minority ethnic groups. All pupils speak English fluently. The school is organised in single age classes for Reception and Years 2 to 6, with mixed age classes of Year R/1, 1/2, 3/4 and 5/6. Children's attainment on entry is well below national expectations. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the proportion with a statement of educational need. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. It has some good and some outstanding features. The new headteacher has quickly had considerable impact on the school, providing inspirational leadership and introducing a range of initiatives to speed up school improvement while retaining the strengths of the school developed by her predecessor. She has gained the respect and support of staff and governors in the drive to strengthen provision and improve pupils' achievement and standards.

Pupils' achievement and standards are satisfactory. The high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities causes the overall performance of pupils to be below the national averages in the assessments at the end of Year 2 and the tests at the end of Year 6. Due to a whole-school focus on writing and improvements in teaching and learning, standards in literacy and numeracy are starting to rise. Another sign of improvement is the percentage of pupils working at above the expected levels for their age. This is now higher than in the past, which is a good achievement as the school has very few children who are of above average ability when they start school.

Whilst standards are rising, pupils' progress is uneven. Highest rates of progress are in the Foundation Stage and Year 6. Too many of the pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not make enough progress. This is mainly due to variations in the quality of teaching and learning. Even though some pupils are benefiting from outstanding teaching, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Senior leaders monitor teaching closely and their guidance is helping many teachers to become more effective. There is still work to do. The good curriculum includes strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy from the moment children start in the Foundation Stage. As the basic skills improve, teachers in Years 1 and 2 make sure that pupils' learning builds on the stage they have reached. After this, there is not enough checking of the points pupils are at to ensure steady progression in learning and this limits the progress in Years 3 and 4. In other areas of the curriculum, there are good features, such as the very good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education. This results in pupils' good personal development and well-being, which is shown particularly by their good behaviour and relationships. They thrive on responsibility and the opportunities they have to make a difference to their community. Their contribution to both the school and the local community is outstanding.

Parents and carers say how pleased they are with the quality of care and support that the school provides, both for pupils and for families. Care, guidance and support are indeed good. Whilst pastoral care is excellent, academic guidance is variable in aspects such as the marking of pupils' work, which does not guide pupils well enough on how they can improve.

Leadership and management are satisfactory at present because it is too soon to see the impact of many of the changes introduced by the headteacher. Some things are having immediate effect, such as the involvement of staff and governors in self evaluation. The school knows itself well and its self-evaluation judgements are accurate. Monitoring of teaching is leading to improvement in many pupils' learning which, in turn, is raising expectations and improving achievement and standards in literacy and numeracy. Senior staff are aware that the extent of this improvement is held back by the lack of rigorous analysis of pupils' progress across the school as a whole. Nevertheless, the good impact of some of these recent initiatives is sufficient to show that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents and carers are pleased with the arrangements for the transfer of their children from pre-school into the Foundation Stage. These help the children to settle quickly. The good provision for the Foundation Stage helps the children make good progress in all areas of learning. They enjoy their time at school, and work and play well together. This has a very positive effect on their personal, social and emotional development. Teaching and learning are good, and assessment is used effectively to plan activities. The curriculum meets children's needs well, although there is not always a clear enough link between some structured play activities and the current focus in language or mathematical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Remove inconsistencies in pupils' achievement in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by making more consistent use of information from assessment of pupils' learning to ensure that pupils' learning builds on what they know and understand.
- Develop procedures for analysis of data on pupils' performance so that teachers can use this information to improve achievement and raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good gains in learning in the Foundation Stage, although many are still below the expected levels for their age when they enter Year 1. This good start is successfully built on in Years 1 and 2. Levels of language development are low when children start school. The good emphasis on basic speaking and reading skills in these first three years in school helps pupils to make good progress so that by the end of Year 2, although standards are below national averages, the gap is closing. The same is also true in numeracy and, as a result of the priority currently placed on writing throughout the school, improved achievement in writing is starting to show.

In Years 3 and 4, pupils' progress slows down and too many pupils in these years do not achieve as well as they should. There are marked differences in rates of progress between the classes covering Years 3 and 4. Achievement improves in Year 5 and then pupils make rapid progress in Year 6, due to some outstanding teaching. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain the challenging targets set for them by the end of the year. Their standards are higher than those of their predecessors in 2007, even though there is a higher proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities. There is a significant improvement in the percentage working at above average levels in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils arrive at school each day eager and ready to learn. Their attendance is satisfactory, and improving. The youngest children are happy and settle well because of the good links with pre-school. The children are starting to work together well, building good friendships. Older pupils continue to enjoy lessons and mostly find learning fun. Their behaviour is good and they say that there is little bullying so that they feel safe. They say that playground buddies offer

good support at playtimes. Pupils are tolerant and supportive of each other and have a strong sense of fairness.

Pupils greatly enjoy their many responsibilities, for example when Year 6 pupils help Reception children with reading and happily assist in the front office at lunchtimes. The pupils' contribution to school and wider community life is outstanding. The school council has a major impact on making school an even better place. Pupils enjoy going out and about in the local community, singing at Christmas concerts or being involved in Cornish cultural celebrations. They regularly raise funds for local, national and international charities and are proud of their community. They have adopted healthy lifestyles well, eating fruit and being keen to be involved in physical education and sporting activities. They have a good understanding of safe practices in school and in the home. Multicultural awareness is good, heightened by their learning about different faiths, world art and music and the opportunity to learn French. The recent improvement in basic literacy and numeracy skills, together with good social skills, means that pupils are prepared satisfactorily for future stages in their education and their eventual economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are variations in the quality of teaching and learning across the school, with lessons ranging from outstanding to inadequate. Weaknesses are generally specific to individual teachers, and effective monitoring and guidance by senior staff is gradually increasing teachers' effectiveness. Teachers generally provide different learning activities for groups of pupils of different abilities but the tasks are not always matched carefully enough to the stage of learning of the pupils. This is because there is inconsistency between teachers in their ongoing checking of pupils' progress during lessons to establish the levels of their knowledge and understanding. Where this is happening successfully and giving teachers an accurate picture of pupils' starting points, the teachers then set suitable short-term targets for pupils and this helps their learning, particularly of basic literacy skills.

The school's knowledgeable teaching assistants often have good impact on pupils' learning although there are too many occasions when teaching assistants are under-used. This happens particularly during lesson introductions, when they often sit passively without being given a role to play.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage experience a range of stimulating learning opportunities and this fosters a love of coming to school. For those pupils who need it, aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum are continued into Years 1 and 2, so that they only start work from the national literacy and numeracy strategies when they are ready. This is good practice.

In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is taught by linking subjects together, which makes learning more interesting for pupils. There is good provision for information and communication technology (ICT), with good emphasis on teaching the specific skills and then planning many opportunities for these skills to be applied in other subjects. Provision for the creative arts is a strength and pupils say how much they enjoy their music lessons in particular. The curriculum

is enriched by regular educational visits and there is a good range of clubs providing learning opportunities outside the school day. These activities are well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care and the way in which all adults put pupils' well-being first is excellent. Procedures to ensure pupils' protection and safety are exemplary. Pupils say they feel completely safe at school and that they know that they can talk to staff if they have any worries. Attendance is improving because the school monitors absences and lateness well, quickly involving parents if there are any 'dips'. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly effective and the guidance and support that teaching assistants give to the pupils is a significant factor in helping these pupils to make often good progress in relation to their starting points. Nurture group work for identified vulnerable pupils has a positive effect on their emotional well-being. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have appropriate targets linked to individual education plans. Others have targets, but the consistency and relevance to individual learning needs is variable.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has quickly gained a clear vision of where and how the school can improve. The senior leadership team has a good breadth of expertise and, by responding actively to the headteacher's leadership, the team is already having a positive impact on school effectiveness. This is chiefly through ensuring that there is secure evidence to show the impact on pupils' achievement and standards of initiatives to increase the effectiveness of teaching and to link staff's professional development to priorities in school development planning.

There has been a very strong focus on monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching, both of which are improving, and in turn starting to help pupils' achievement to improve, most noticeably in literacy. From their observation of learning and teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work, leaders have gained detailed knowledge of standards in literacy and, to a lesser extent, numeracy, across the school. Their analyses of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work are used effectively to guide staff on ways of raising standards. The checking of pupils' progress over time by analysis of data from regular tests and assessments is not rigorous enough at present.

Governors have gained a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are supportive and have a strong commitment to the ethos of the school. They fully endorse the headteacher's priorities for strengthening strategic planning but are not sufficiently involved in monitoring the progress in key areas of the school development plan.

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.

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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	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.

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heamoor Primary School, Penzance TR18 3JZ

Thank you for making us welcome in your school and for talking with us so willingly. We thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. We think your school gives you a satisfactory education overall and some things are good. This is what we particularly appreciated:

- Children in Reception make a good start to their education.
- Nearly all of you are making at least satisfactory progress and those of you in Year 6 make very good progress indeed.
- Your behaviour is good and this makes your school a friendly, pleasant place.
- You understand well the importance of healthy eating and exercise and about what are safe things to do at school and home.
- Many of you, including the school councillors and playground buddies, do an excellent job to help the school run smoothly and you also make an outstanding contribution to the lives of people in Penzance.
- Teachers plan interesting activities for you in many subjects and you say how much you enjoy lessons like art, music and physical education.
- All the adults do a good job in looking after you and making sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The school is led very well by the headteacher and all the adults, including the governors, are working hard to improve it.
- We have three recommendations to help your school to get even better:
- We want the school to make sure that you make enough progress each year and none of you slow down.
- Your work in lessons must be checked carefully so that the next work you do is just right for you.
- The teachers should see how well you do in tests and other work and use this information to plan how to raise your standards even higher.

We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Heamoor Primary School an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Colin Lee Lead Inspector

13 March 2008

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Inspection of Heamoor Primary School, Penzance TR18 3JZ

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