

St Ives Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111800
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310686
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Gillam
Headteacher	Susan Marie Smith
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2005
School address	TRENWITH BURROWS St Ives TR26 1DN
Telephone number	01736 796202
Fax number	01736 796668

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average junior school. Nearly all the pupils are of White British origin. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. Over 20% of pupils join after the usual entry point in Year 3 or leave before the end of year 6. When pupils enter the school their attainment varies with each year group but is generally below the standards expected for their age. Many families work in the holiday trade, which results in several pupils taking holidays outside the normal school breaks.

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 which all pupils thrive. It has some outstanding features. The excellent care, guidance and support provided for pupils contribute to their good personal development and well-being. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is excellent. They are polite, helpful and courteous and very much enjoy coming to school. They are very well aware of the need to keep safe because they have been involved in analysing 'safest play' areas within the school grounds. They are extremely well cared for by the whole-school community. 'My child enjoys the happy, safe learning environment,' commented a parent. Pupils understand the need to keep fit and healthy and act responsibly in the choices they make at lunchtimes. Pupils of all abilities are supported very well in their learning and personal achievements.

Standards vary significantly in different year groups. They are gradually improving and are now average. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in lessons because of good and sometimes outstanding teaching. Standards dipped in 2007 and were below average. Standards have shown a slight upward trend over the previous four years, however, and the school is vigilant in judging how well pupils are doing. Standards in writing are beginning to improve but they are not as good as standards in reading. The achievement of a few pupils is limited by their below-average attendance.

Teachers know pupils well and they take good care of them. The good team approach leads to consistent practice in all classrooms. A good range of learning activities is provided for pupils of all abilities from the good curriculum. Pupils particularly enjoy the good range of after-school clubs, visits and residential experiences. Their enjoyment of these activities is celebrated in their books and in the artistic displays around the school.

Leadership and management of the school are good and are effective in improving achievement. Outstanding vision by the headteacher and clear commitment by the strong senior management team have resulted in the development of a high quality learning environment in which all pupils thrive. They are kept safe and secure. The school is aware of the need to raise standards further and has put in place some excellent assessment and tracking procedures, which are helping to improve achievement by all groups of pupils. Monitoring is effective in improving all aspects of the provision and has enabled challenging but realistic targets to be set. Leaders are working extremely hard to improve attendance and to raise standards, particularly in writing. There are several new governors. They undertake their strategic roles well and are just beginning to hold the school to account for its decisions and outcomes. Good achievement and provision have been maintained since the last inspection. The effective procedures now in place and the clear understanding that senior leaders have of what still needs to be done mean that there is a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' standards and achievements particularly through improving their writing.
- Ensure that all pupils and parents understand that full attendance is essential for successful achievement at school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils across the school achieve well and standards are gradually rising so that they are now average. The dip in standards in 2007 was mainly due to the particularly high number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the year group and to the very high number of pupils that moved into the Year 6 class at a late stage. It was also because pupils did not progress at fast enough rates, particularly in writing. Good new procedures to improve writing skills are beginning to work. Pupils are given daily opportunities to write and some excellent examples of pupils' poetry linked to their history study of World War 1 show that writing standards are indeed improving. In some classes, however, there is too little good quality writing in pupils' books. Achievement overall is good across the school because of good provision, particularly the quality of teaching, which ensures that pupils of all abilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are polite and welcoming to visitors and most love coming to school. They have very positive attitudes towards their work and relationships are excellent at all levels. The pupils themselves told inspectors that behaviour has improved over the years and they are sure that it is now 'better than in most schools'. The pupils enjoy taking responsibility and feel that their views are taken seriously by the adults at the school. The active pupil council, for example, has been instrumental in improving playground facilities and apparatus. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles and enjoy taking part in the wide range of physical activities that is available to them. They feel safe at school and told inspectors how much they appreciate the systems that are in place to protect them, including some such as the 'space protector' scheme, which came from their own ideas. Contribution to the community is good. For example, pupils are involved in supporting several local events and enjoy aiding a number of charities such as 'Save our Soles'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a strong ethos of inward reflection and tolerance at the school, which is reflected well in good social interaction. Pupils are prepared well for later stages of education and adult life. Despite the stringent efforts of the school, attendance is still only just satisfactory and this impacts negatively on the achievements of a few pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Consistently good and occasionally outstanding teaching ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well. Teachers support each other well, ensuring that there is a consistent approach to learning and to the management of behaviour, which enables pupils to enjoy lessons and feel confident to try new things. Good use is made of information and communication technology to illustrate tasks and inform pupils about new learning. Good links across subjects and good use of resources mean that teachers make learning relevant to pupils' day-to-day lives. Teaching assistants are used well in lessons and are skilled at supporting all pupils and particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they make good gains in learning. Day-to-day assessment is rigorous, ensuring that pupils are aware of the next steps to learning. Occasionally

pupils are not engaged well enough in discussions because teachers take too long to explain tasks. This limits opportunities for some pupils to develop their own ideas and improve their communication skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good, broad and balanced curriculum that positively supports pupils' learning and levels of participation. Literacy and numeracy lessons are well planned in line with the national strategy and the teachers are very successful in ensuring that pupils have a clear understanding of what is required of them. The school has recently adopted a new curriculum structure that ensures comprehensive coverage of the national curriculum. Good partnership with another local school is helping to extend and develop this provision. However, the scheme has yet to impact significantly on standards in subjects other than English and mathematics. The school is very well equipped with computers and benefits from a full-time teaching assistant for technology. The use of technology in the classrooms by teachers has a positive impact on the way the curriculum is planned and taught.

A good range of special event days in subjects such as science and the arts is organised throughout the year. These are enjoyed by the pupils and provide high-quality experiences, resulting in a greater depth of study and engagement. The school provides a good range of out-of-school clubs that are well attended by the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The pastoral care of the pupils at this school is outstanding and contributes very well to their personal development. Staff know pupils very well and provide them with excellent personal guidance. For example, where appropriate, the pupils are provided with individualised 'help cards' which support the management of their own behaviour and self-esteem. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported by staff at all levels. Excellent use is also made of outside agencies such as the speech therapy and autistic support services to provide extra help for those with specific needs. The school has implemented some very effective systems for tracking individual pupils' progress and is using the information well to provide relevant targets for academic improvement and put in place extra support where it is needed. Robust procedures are in place for child protection, health and safety and safe staff recruitment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has a clear view of its own performance and leaders know what needs to be done to improve further. The headteacher has an excellent awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is ably supported by the deputy head and by senior managers. The school has developed effective procedures to improve standards and raise achievement. These are beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards. Careful monitoring of attendance is just beginning to improve how regularly pupils come to school. Together leaders have developed whole-school approaches to monitoring and improving achievement that have resulted in a very positive ethos in which pupils thrive. There is a clear work ethic and a drive to improve standards in all

areas of the school. Good formal procedures for self-evaluation have resulted in challenging but realistic targets being set for all pupils. Despite the dip in standards in 2007, the majority of pupils achieved their targets, reflecting the school's good knowledge of its pupils.

Governors are helpful and supportive but several are new to their roles and are just beginning to hold the school to account for its decisions and achievements. Links with other schools are productive and help to extend provision. The school is rightly beginning to work closely with the on-site infants school to ensure smooth transition. Parents are extremely supportive of the school, as illustrated by one parent who wrote, 'It is well managed, has high standards of behaviour and the majority of pupils are happy and eager to learn.'

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	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

23 January 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Ives Primary School, St Ives, Cornwall TR26 1DJ

Thank you very much for your help on our recent inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed talking to you and hearing about all the things you do at school. You told us that yours is a good school and we agree with you.

Your school is providing you with a good education. You make good progress in your lessons, although your writing is not always as good as it could be. The standards that you reach are just similar to the standards in most other schools. You enjoy school very much and your behaviour is excellent. You get on really well with each other and with your teachers. You learn lots of interesting things at school but a few of you could do better if you came to school more regularly. You told us that you particularly enjoy your after-school clubs and all the visits that you undertake. You are learning to lead healthy lives and we were pleased to see that many of you chose a piece of fruit for your lunch.

All of your teachers make sure that you have work to do that suits your abilities. Teachers mark your work well and give you plenty of homework. The way in which they take care of you and make sure you do well in your learning is excellent. You achieve well and your parents are very pleased with the school.

Leaders manage your school well. They take good care of you and keep you safe and secure. They make sure that the school is a welcoming place and that you all enjoy being there. They are working extremely hard to make sure that you come to school as regularly as possible. You could help with this.

We are asking the school to do two things to make sure your school is even better.

- Help you to achieve better by improving your writing
- Work closely with your parents to make sure you all come to school as often as possible.

Thank you again for your help and good luck for your futures.

Best wishes

Denise Morris Lead Inspector