

Alverton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111806
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310687
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Des Hosken
Headteacher	Jan Kirman
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2004
School address	Toltuff Crescent Alverton Penzance TR18 4QD
Telephone number	01736 364087
Fax number	01736 364087

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than average. Some pupils are taught in single-age and some in mixed-age classes. Children's attainment on entry to the school is below what is normally expected at this age; their communication, language and literacy skills are well below the expected level. The school works in partnership with a private nursery on the same site.

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. There have been good improvement since the last inspection and the school is well placed for these improvements to continue. Parents are supportive of the school.

Children make good progress in Reception because provision is good. By the end of this year, most children attain the expected levels in most areas of development, although children's literacy and numeracy skills are still below average. Progress in Key Stage 1 is variable, but good overall. However, standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 because a high proportion of pupils (around 40%) have learning difficulties. Boys' writing, although improving, is still not as good as that of girls because of inconsistencies in expectations and challenge in Year 1. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in speaking, listening, reading, mathematics and science, but boys' writing is still below average. Girls' writing is average. Overall, pupils' achievement is good.

Pupils behave well and report that any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, although a few pupils say they feel at risk from rough play. Pupils enjoy their education very much and are enthusiastic learners. One pupil said, 'Lessons are really fun, especially the maths challenges.' Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, supported by effective and engaging assemblies. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community through such activities as their theatre productions. Although they have good reading, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills, pupils' writing skills are not yet sufficiently good enough to ensure they are well prepared for their future lives.

Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan work that matches pupils' capabilities. This results in pupils being set appropriate targets for improving their performance. Teaching assistants provide good support, enabling pupils of all abilities to make good progress. The curriculum provided by the school is good. 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. Pupils receive good academic guidance that has been improved as a result of more accurate tracking of their progress. Teachers use marking effectively to tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

The headteacher leads the school well and has developed an effective management team. The school has set challenging targets for improvement which are beginning to have a markedly positive effect on standards. Subject management and leadership are good. Staff are effectively involved in the overall management of provision, which is one of the reasons why pupils are now making good progress. Monitoring and evaluation by staff are good and have correctly identified weaknesses, for instance, in boys' writing and standards at Key Stage 1. Governance is good. Governors monitor the school's work effectively. The school's self-evaluation process is satisfactory and appropriately identifies areas for further development. Targets have been met and are sufficiently challenging to prompt all pupils to make good progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provision is good. The staff are a strong team. Most children enter the Foundation Stage with below the expected level of skills for their age in all areas of learning,

but especially in language and communication. By the time they enter Year 1, children have made good progress. The children are offered a wide range of activities, with a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led pursuits. The continuing development of the outside play area will provide children with a good choice of activities. The staff are good at developing the children's social skills, such as good manners and personal development skills, so they become more independent learners. There is great care taken to keep the children healthy and safe.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing across the school, particularly those of boys.
- Ensure greater consistency in levels of expectation and challenge in Key Stage 1.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are improving at both key stages and are above average in reading, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. However, standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, largely because of the significant number of pupils who find learning difficult. Standards in boys' writing are below average at the end of Year 6. Pupils are making good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing in both key stages, although girls generally make better progress in writing than boys. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school. All pupils, including the more able, are making good progress in mathematics and science. The considerable numbers of pupils who find learning more difficult make good progress because they are supported well in lessons by teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Strong relationships amongst the whole-school community help pupils to become happy and confident learners. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good and contribute to the happy atmosphere. However, occasionally, in Key Stage 1, pupils' over-boisterousness leads to increased noise levels and a lack of concentration. Pupils learn and play well together, although a few feel at risk from rough play. They know how to stay safe and what to do if they feel vulnerable. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils are reflective and caring. They know what makes a healthy and balanced diet. Pupils' contribution to their community is good and the school council and parliament ensure that pupils have a vital say in the running of the school. Provision for pupils' future economic well-being is satisfactory overall, although pupils' writings skills are not as good as they should be.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are enjoying their learning and good teaching is taking place, ensuring pupils learn well and make good progress. However, this is not yet consistent across Key Stage 1. Staff work hard to ensure lessons are interesting and fun and well matched to meet the learning needs of all pupils, including the more able. ICT is a strength. It is used effectively in lessons to enhance learning and pupils have good ICT skills as it is so well taught. Teachers and teaching assistants have good questioning skills and use praise well to move pupils on in their learning. There are

good daily intervention sessions taking place which are benefiting both the less able and the more able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The staff are working hard to make curriculum changes. The curriculum has been redesigned to be more exciting, cross-curricular and 'boy friendly'. Teachers in Key Stage 2 are careful to choose reading material that will appeal to boys. This is beginning to have a positive effect on progress, especially in Key Stage 2. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are changed termly. The pupils are positive about these and take-up is high, especially for the sports. Good use of the local environment encourages learning well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff are committed to raising pupils' self-esteem and promoting learners' health and safety. There are good supportive relationships with parents, who value their partnership with the school, and good support is given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Statutory arrangements for the safeguarding of children and child protection are in place. Pupils regularly receive good academic guidance from their teachers and most know their targets in English and mathematics. Teachers know pupils well and have a clear picture of their progress. Support for pupils' learning is not consistent in Key Stage 1 as work is not always sufficiently challenging in some classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well run and efficient use is made of resources. School leaders have been effective in creating a positive, caring ethos where pupils are motivated to succeed. Leaders have a reasonably accurate picture of how well the school is doing and have appropriately identified areas for further development. The use of data to identify weaknesses in performance is good, although the initiatives put in place as a result of data analysis have not had time to have a significant effect on further raising standards in writing. The governing body's monitoring of the school's provision is good and governors contribute substantially to the school's continuing improvement.

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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	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	3
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	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.

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	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

8 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alverton Community Primary School, Penzance TR18 4QD

Thank you for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school. We were especially impressed by how well you answered all our questions and how well you behaved. Yours is a good school. You do well in reading, mathematics and science. Your writing is getting better all the time. You are well taught and provided with lots of clubs and extra activities. The headteacher and governors do a good job in running and improving the school and your parents are happy with the way they know what is going on.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- The good standards you achieve in your reading and science.
- You enjoy your lessons and get really excited about learning.
- Your good behaviour and the happy atmosphere in the school.
- The hard work done by the school council and the parliament.
- The way in which you help your local community.

These are the things that we have asked the school to do to make things better:

- Help you to carry on improving your writing skills, especially boys.
- Make sure that children in Key Stage 1 are always challenged to do their best in all classes.

You can help too by asking your teachers how you can make your work even better.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours sincerely Stephen Dennett Lead inspector



8 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alverton Community Primary School, Penzance TR18 4QD

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Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Dennett', written in a cursive style.

Stephen Dennett
Lead inspector