

St Ives Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111807
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310688
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Hancock

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	184
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joan Griffin
Headteacher	Joanne Dean
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Trenwith Burrows St Ives TR26 1DH
Telephone number	01736 796628
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized infant and nursery school. There is a significant degree of social disadvantage in the area. Almost all children are from White British backgrounds. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the Nursery, which is managed by the governing body. There is a Children's Centre adjoining the school and an Adult Learning Centre on site. The school has achieved the national Healthy Schools Award.

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. 'St Ives Infants is the best kept secret in St Ives. There is always a positive environment for all the children, helping them to make good progress' is a comment endorsed by many parents. The school is very happy and lively and has a number of outstanding features. An outstanding curriculum and high quality care, guidance and support contribute strongly to pupils' excellent personal development and well-being. Parents greatly appreciate the level of care and attention shown to their children by the staff. One typically commented, 'The level of care and support for children is superb.'

At the heart of the school's success is the excellent leadership of the headteacher. She has a very clear vision for the school and receives good support from the deputy headteacher, senior management team and all the staff. As a result, the school enjoys a good reputation locally and staff have established a harmonious and inclusive school, where there is excellent community cohesion. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and where to focus its energy for further improvement. Leadership and management are good and are becoming increasingly effective by involving subject leaders more in monitoring their own subjects to improve standards and achievement further. The school has well-established procedures for monitoring its work and has made good improvements since the last inspection. Positive links with parents, the Children's Centre, Adult Learning Centre and external agencies support the work of the school very well and the school is working hard to improve liaison with the junior school. Wider links overseas and curricular topics contribute well to children's growing awareness of their place in the global community and they are knowledgeable about their Cornish culture and proud to talk of it.

Children really enjoy school, which is reflected in significantly improved attendance and their very positive attitudes. The outstanding range of curricular and other activities is a great source of motivation. The programme of personal, social and health education is also a very strong feature of the curriculum, providing excellent support for children with personal and emotional needs. Excellent relationships between staff and children contribute to children's sense of safety and well-being, where they develop in confidence and self-esteem. Children make an excellent contribution to the local community and develop important life skills to support them for the future.

Good provision in the EYFS helps children make good progress and prepares them well for Year 1. However, the outdoor facilities are not used well enough to support children's learning. Consistently good teaching, which is particularly strong in Year 2, helps children achieve well, and reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave school. However, marking does not always help children understand what they need to do to improve their work. Although standards are above the national average, the school's leaders are not complacent. They aspire for all children to reach higher levels and recognise that more ambitious targets will help them achieve this. The school is very well placed to build on its many successes and move forward positively.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills when they start school are below those expected for their age. In particular, many children have weak language and personal and social skills, and lack confidence. Very

good induction arrangements, with excellent links with the Children's Centre, help children to settle well, learn routines quickly and grow in confidence. High priority is given to the development of children's personal, social and emotional needs by the patient approach of the staff, so that children feel safe and well looked after in this caring environment. Good leadership and teaching, with an interesting range of well-planned activities, ensure that children make good progress both in the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff plan a good balance of activities between those that are led by adults and those the children choose. However, the outside area is not used to its full potential. This restricts opportunities for children to play and learn independently by exploring and extending their skills. Groups of younger children are supported well by teaching assistants, who take an active part in children's learning and help teachers to carefully monitor their progress. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved with children's learning through family learning activities. This is greatly appreciated, as demonstrated by the following parent's comment, 'Family Learning is a great way to be with your child and work together, I love it.' By the end of the EYFS, many children reach the expected levels when they start Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make full use of outdoor facilities in the EYFS to support children's learning.
- Improve the quality and consistency of marking so that all children have clear guidance on how they can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's achievement is good overall, and sometimes outstanding for older children in Year 2. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average by the time children leave the school in Year 2. This is because teaching is consistently good throughout the school and particularly strong for children in Year 2. Children's progress is regularly checked and the school has successfully challenged higher attaining children to ensure they reach their full potential, particularly in reading and writing. Last year the school appropriately identified that lower attaining children did not always do as well as they might and has successfully introduced new intervention programmes and small-group support. This is beginning to have a positive impact to ensure these children make similar progress to their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. One child said, 'Challenges make learning fun.' Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school has worked hard and continues to work very hard to bring this about. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There is a very strong emphasis on cultural awareness through the International Primary Curriculum. Many visits and visitors, such as hearing Pete Goss talk about his forthcoming sea voyage at the Maritime Museum, help children understand their cultural heritage well. Children are extremely enthusiastic to take on responsibility through the school council. They take every opportunity possible to be actively involved in the local community, such as artwork in the Tate Gallery and taking part in speech and drama festivals. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools award and children demonstrate a very clear understanding of the importance of eating healthily and undertaking regular exercise such as 'wake and shake' and walking to school. Children behave well and feel

safe. They are confident that adults will take prompt action should any issues occur. Children's excellent personal development and good progress in their academic skills prepares them extremely well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and, as a result, children learn well. All teachers quickly develop excellent relationships with the children. Lessons are usually interesting and well planned, with clear learning objectives that are shared with the children. Consequently, children concentrate well, work productively and take a pride in their work. Some lessons, particularly in Year 2, really inspire children and result in excellent progress. This happens when skilful dynamic teaching extends learning through stimulating activities that provide sufficient challenge and ensure children's full involvement and understanding. Older pupils are beginning to be involved in assessing their own work and in judging their progress, which is having a positive impact on standards. However, the lack of clear guidance to help children know how to improve their work prevents them from doing even better. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support, often by well-trained teaching assistants, and so make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent curriculum is designed to promote great enjoyment of learning, so children want to learn. Every opportunity is taken to gain broad experiences through the International Primary Curriculum. Full use is made of the town and surrounding area to bring the curriculum alive. Children talk very positively about recent trips such as to the beach, the woods, the Tate Gallery and the Maritime Museum. However, there is still a strong focus on developing the basic skills of numeracy, information and communication technology and literacy, where a recent whole school approach to linking sounds and letters work, is having a positive impact on children's reading skills. There is an excellent programme to promote children's personal and social education to develop their self-esteem and social skills. Care is taken to ensure that all ability groups are fully provided for through challenging activities and small-group support.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Teachers have a very strong commitment to the care and support of every child. They have detailed knowledge of children's social and emotional needs from the time they start school and provide them with excellent pastoral support and guidance. Staff work closely with parents through family learning and the Children's Centre to ensure that all children, particularly the vulnerable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are well cared for. Parents are very appreciative of the way the school looks after their children. A constructive approach to promoting good attendance continues to secure improvement. Rigorous arrangements for risk assessments and secure procedures for safeguarding children ensure their safety in and around the school. The monitoring of children's progress has significantly improved since the appointment of the new deputy headteacher. Excellent use is now made of assessment information to ensure all children achieve well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The excellent leadership of the headteacher drives the work of the school. She has very high expectations to ensure all children receive a very stimulating experience in school, achieve their best and feel happy and safe. She continually explores new ways to improve the quality of education and receives very good support from her senior colleagues. They work effectively together, creating a good team spirit and strong ethos among the staff. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is good. Plans to develop the role of subject leaders, so that they take more responsibility and have a clearer understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in their subjects, are well focused to raise standards and achievement further. The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school and greatly appreciate the efforts made by staff. One comment, that 'staff are always available to answer questions and discuss ideas. They are approachable, friendly and extremely professional', was typical of many. Governors are supportive and knowledgeable about the school and new governors are willing to undertake training to improve their expertise. The governors know the school's strengths and areas for development because they visit regularly and are becoming involved more proactively in the strategic monitoring of the school and acting as a 'critical friend'. Through its outstanding commitment to community cohesion, the school plays an integral part in the life of St Ives.

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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	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Ives Infant School, St Ives TR26 1DH.

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our time with you. We were impressed with how polite and friendly you all were. You are right to be proud of your school, as it is a good school.

These are the things we liked best:

- You behave well and you are keen and enthusiastic about what you learn.
- You are doing well in reading, writing and mathematics and in many other subjects.
- You take very seriously the importance of eating healthily at school and taking regular exercise.
- Teachers make learning interesting for you and you do well in your work.
- You have an outstanding and varied curriculum and enjoy all your visits and visitors, including taking part in numerous activities in St. Ives.
- The teachers and staff take excellent care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher and governors lead the school well.

These are the things we asked the school to do, to make it even better:

- Make full use of the outside area for children in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Ensure all teachers mark your work carefully so that you know how to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to behave well, working hard and listening carefully to your teachers.

Best wishes for the future

Ian Hancock

Lead Inspector