

Mylor Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111818
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310693
Inspection date	23 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Cottle
Headteacher	Elizabeth Dunstan
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2003
School address	Comfort Road Mylor Bridge Falmouth TR11 5SE
Telephone number	01326 373724
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most other primary schools nationally. Children's attainment on entry is broadly similar to that expected for their age, but it can vary substantially. At times, several children start school with poor communication and language skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities broadly matches that found nationally, but it can be much higher than this in some year groups. An extensive re-building programme was completed earlier this year. The school is led by an acting headteacher whilst the substantive headteacher is seconded to another school. The school holds the Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Mylor is a good school. It has several strengths that include excellent links with parents and outside agencies and excellent relationships within the school community. These features combine to underpin an ethos that includes and values all pupils equally. Care, support and guidance are effective. As a result, academic achievement is good, including for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Standards are above average and pupils develop good personal skills. A parent reflected the views of the vast majority when writing, 'My child is receiving a good, balanced education and most importantly she can't wait to get to school every morning'.

The school has done well to sustain mostly effective teaching and learning through a period of considerable disruption caused by an extensive re-building programme completed earlier this year. Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher is promoting an effective team approach to management. This is making good use of staff skills and improved facilities and resources to enhance pupils' learning. Governors fulfil their duties diligently and give good support. Targets have been made more challenging this term and are now used satisfactorily to raise standards. However, they have not been in place long enough to have full effect.

Teaching and provision are good in Reception and Year 1. Even though a few children occasionally start school with weaker communication skills, they make good progress. Children do particularly well in their personal development. Good teaching and the pupils' enthusiasm to learn ensure that pupils make good progress through the school. Occasionally, though, teachers in Key Stage 2 don't always match tasks precisely enough to the needs of more-able pupils. Teaching is being strengthened by an increased emphasis on numeracy and literacy and by good use of information and communication technology (ICT), such as interactive whiteboards. Pupils are also encouraged to evaluate their work. These strategies are raising standards. Attainment is above average in English and mathematics by Year 6. Although pupils' attainment is broadly average in science, investigative skills are still not good enough. Across the school, many pupils demonstrate above-average speaking, listening and ICT skills.

The curriculum is well planned and includes a good range of practical learning activities. These help to promote the pupils' good personal development and well-being, especially their enjoyment and interest in learning. Improvements to the school's facilities, for example, a spacious hall and a specific outdoor area for children in Reception, have enriched learning opportunities. In particular, the pupils' physical education has been boosted, promoting good adoption of healthy, safe lifestyles.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good for children in the Reception and Year 1 class. There are several strengths, not least the excellent induction of new children and their parents that promotes a very welcoming ethos. The children make good progress from starting points that often include difficulties in understanding the letters and sounds of words. Most attain the early learning goals set for their age. Many exceed these in their personal, social and emotional development. The well-resourced learning areas, now both indoor and outdoor, represent significant improvements since the last inspection. These have extended the learning opportunities provided

for the children, enriched their enjoyment and promoted success through learning practically. Teaching is good and children receive high quality care, guidance and support. The teacher and her colleagues have much expertise and work well together to meet children's differing needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the pupils' investigative skills in science, particularly their ability to evaluate findings and drawing conclusions from them.
- Sharpen the use of target setting to lift standards and to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Ensure that teachers in Key Stage 2 always match tasks precisely to the needs of more-able pupils, including, for example, in science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry is broadly average but, typically for a school of this size, it varies a lot from year to year. Pupils' achievement is good. Standards are above average but have varied in recent years, reflecting differences in pupils' learning needs. Targets for attainment have recently been increased and offer satisfactory challenge. The school has worked determinedly to use improved resources and accommodation to best effect to help boost pupils' achievement. As a result, pupils' skills, especially in writing and ICT, have improved. Children achieve well in the Reception and Year 1 class because of exemplary planning and supportive teaching. Many children make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and reach above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2. This good progress continues through Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics and are broadly average in science. Although pupils' skills continue to improve in Key Stage 2, at times, planned work is not sufficiently demanding of more-able pupils, slowing progress. This occurs, for example in science, where pupils' investigative skills are not improving as quickly as their writing and numeracy skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are welcomed into a caring and supportive environment from the moment they enter school. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. A small number of pupils need and respond well to close support. Pupils enjoy school and share excellent relationships, and these are seen in their good attendance. One pupil said, 'I like school because everyone is my friend'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is underpinned by an inclusive ethos where everyone is treated with equal respect. Consequently, pupils feel safe. Pupils' independence as learners is a developing strength in most subjects, but it is less evident at times in science. Pupils accept responsibility and contribute well to the community. Members of the school council make perceptive suggestions to make their school an even better place. Pupils feel very confident that they can always get help if they need it. This was seen in the playground when an older, but not much bigger, girl immediately comforted a very young boy who was distressed at losing his ball. Pupils have a good understanding about how to eat properly, stay fit and adopt healthy, safe lifestyles. The pupils' self-confidence and good academic skills, including in ICT, prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good in Reception and Key Stage 1. Here teachers plan in detail, ensuring that pupils learn at appropriate levels, often during stimulating practical activity. Teaching and learning are mostly good in Years 3 to 6 and, as throughout the school, are typified by very warm relationships between staff and pupils. At times, though, work is not challenging enough for some more able pupils, slowing their progress. Strengths in teaching across the school include skilful questioning and good contributions from knowledgeable teaching assistants. Their supportive work is also evident in the good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Other good features typically found in all classes include using ICT effectively to help pupils learn to research and work under their own motivation. The good emphasis teachers place on developing literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects is effectively boosting the quality of pupils' writing and mathematical work. However, written evaluations of findings in science are not used as effectively to enrich pupils' investigative skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including children in their Reception Year. It is enriched by a good range of activities that includes clubs, visits to the local community and residential trips. There are excellent links with parents and outside agencies. These are particularly supportive of pupils' well-being and in meeting their differing learning needs. There is an improving emphasis on literacy and numeracy, but the planned work does not always challenge more-able pupils to best effect. This is helped by the good use of much-improved ICT resources, which is a developing strength of the school. Improvements to the school's accommodation, including the spacious new hall and a purpose-built outdoor area for children in Reception, have enriched the physical education and creative learning opportunities provided for the pupils. The daily 'Fit and Fun' club exercises also encourage the pupils' good adoption of healthy and safe living.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral support given to pupils is thorough and effective. Pupils' well-being is fully safeguarded. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. As a result, pupils feel valued and safe and learn well in the school community. This is appreciated by parents and pupils alike. One parent captured the views of most when writing, 'I think Mylor School has a wonderful inclusive atmosphere'. There are excellent links with parents, outside agencies and the local community. These support pupils across a wide spectrum of learning and emotional needs. These also help to promote the pupils' good attendance and underpin the pupils' enjoyment of school. Teachers give good academic guidance to the pupils. Occasionally, though, expectations of more-able pupils are not high enough. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work through 'writing ladders', for example, and to discuss each other's ideas and contributions. Such encouragement of pupils as independent learners gives them a clear idea about how to improve their work and is a developing feature improving progress through the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting headteacher has made a positive start and has set a clear agenda for improvement based on good evaluation of strengths and areas in need of improvement. She has adopted an effective team approach to leadership. This has empowered colleagues to join in the development of the school. There has been a thorough analysis of standards. Consequently, targets set for pupils currently in the school have been raised and are now satisfactory. However, they have not yet been in place long enough to lift standards and raise expectations to the full. Pupils' progress is being tracked more precisely now so that future targets present an even more effective but still realistic challenge. Governors give good support. Together with the acting headteacher, they play an encouraging role in promoting good use of significantly improved accommodation and resources to lift pupils' achievements. Good provision in the Foundation Stage, improving standards in writing and the pupils' much-improved ICT skills, for example, reflect good improvement since the last inspection. Managers, increasingly including staff at all levels of responsibility, show a good capacity to continue improvement into the future.

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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
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?	1
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	2
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	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?	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	3
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mylor Community Primary School, Mylor Bridge, Cornwall TR11 5SE

We enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for making us feel so welcomed. Particular thanks to the members of the school council who spoke with my colleague. You were all very polite and helpful. We consider your school to be a good school, with several strong and improving features. These are the other main things we found:

- You make good progress and achieve standards in English and mathematics that are above those found in most primary schools.
- You share excellent relationships with each other and with all adults in the school. These help you to enjoy school, attend well and feel safe.
- The school works extremely well with your parents and other adults to help you learn.
- You behave well and know how to live healthy and safe lives.
- Teaching is good, you are well cared for and you are given a good range of learning activities.
- Your acting headteacher and senior managers are working hard to help you learn.

We have asked the acting headteacher, staff and governors to do these things to help your school to become an even better school:

- Improve your investigations in science by encouraging you to write more about what you have found out.
- Help you to achieve even more by setting more challenging targets.
- Ensure that those of you who find some areas of work easy are given activities that always challenge you, including, for example, in science. You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. Thank you once again, and best wishes for the future.

Alex Baxter Lead inspector

24 October 2007

Dear Pupils

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TR11 5SE**

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Thank you once again, and best wishes for the future.

Alex Baxter
Lead inspector