

# Sithney Community Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111824
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	310695
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Shirley Billington

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	56
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Bramwell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 February 2003
<b>School address</b>	Crowntown Helston TR13 0AE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01326 572910
<b>Fax number</b>	01326 572910

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 March 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	310695

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues. •The impact of strategies to improve standards in writing and the performance of girls in mathematics. •The steps being taken to improve provision for children in the Foundation Stage. •How assessment information is being used to strengthen target-setting. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but were sampled in order to arrive at the judgements given in this report. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work and a range of documentation. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements.

## Description of the school

This is a small primary school with three classes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is higher than in most schools. A high proportion of pupils join or leave the school each year other than at the usual times. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and none speak English as an additional language. The headteacher took up post in January 2006. Over the past year, there has been a high level of staff absence.

## 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 sound education for its pupils. It has good features, particularly in the way that it promotes pupils' good personal development through good care and support. The majority of parents are particularly pleased about this aspect of its work. Several parents of older children who have joined the school in recent years made positive comments about the way that they have been supported. Typical comments include: 'We are very pleased with her renewed confidence' and 'She is now spot on (with her work) and is loving what is going on in her class'.

Since her arrival, the headteacher has accurately identified key areas for development and begun to initiate improvements such as extending opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to have access to a better range of practical experiences. This is leading to a more balanced curriculum but has not yet had a significant impact on pupils' progress, which is limited in language and literacy. Throughout the school, assessment and tracking systems have been improved so that staff have a much clearer picture of pupils' progress and are able to identify those who are not doing as well as they should and need additional support. The resulting data show that progress is erratic across the school, and although achievement is satisfactory overall, there are some specific areas of weakness. These include girls' achievement in mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and progress in reading, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Various initiatives have been put in place to tackle these areas and there are clear indications of success. However, progress in writing is still weak across the school. Work has started on this area but it is too early to see the impact. Small numbers in each year group, combined with high mobility, lead to considerable variations in standards, but overall these are broadly average and ensure that the pupils are adequately prepared for next stage in their education.

Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Adaptations are being made to ensure that provision better meets pupils' needs by, for example, making it clear what they are going to learn and what skills they can bring to new learning. Teachers are being encouraged to make use of assessment information to plan for a range of needs and to use a variety of strategies to take account of pupils' learning styles. Expectations of what pupils might achieve have risen. This has led to a revision of targets for the performance of Year 6 pupils this year. Many developments are in the early stages but initial signs are encouraging and pupils themselves feel that learning is being made more exciting. They enjoy, for instance, opportunities to work in pairs to share ideas. Those in Years 3 to 6 are clear about their targets and what they need to do to improve. The strong focus on improving the core curriculum for English and mathematics has been at the expense of developing links across the curriculum. As a result, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to write for a range of purposes in different subjects, or to make decisions about how to present their work.

The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of opportunities for pupils to participate in clubs and special events. The community is used well as a resource for learning with, for example, participation in an environmental day and opportunities to work with a local artist. Pupils take part in local events and competitions and get involved in fund raising for a range of causes. Family learning events bring pupils, parents, grandparents and members of the community together. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. This ensures pupils' good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They are aware, for instance, that fruit and vegetables make the best snacks and know that regular exercise 'keeps your heart fit'. They also have good awareness of safe practices, evident in a well argued travel plan that puts

forward sensible suggestions for slowing traffic and making the area around the school safer for pupils and their families.

Since the last inspection, attendance has improved and it is now close to average levels. Behaviour of most pupils is good. A small group, mostly boys, find it difficult to conform, but there are good strategies in place to ensure consistent expectations of behaviour and to provide additional support for individuals to help them reflect on their own emotions and the needs of others. Pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well integrated and make progress in line with that of their peers. Good use is made of external agencies to support those with very specific needs.

The headteacher has been instrumental in improving the learning environment. Displays celebrate pupils' work and are also used to support learning. This was evident in a literacy lesson with Years 5 and 6 pupils, where key 'prompts' helped them to understand how to structure complex sentences. Work has gone on to strengthen the role that other staff play in leading developments. This is proving effective in sharing expertise, for example, through demonstrating approaches to the teaching of writing. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff at various levels are beginning to get involved in analysis of data and monitoring activities, although much of this is in the early stages. Plans are in place to improve standards in key areas but progress is inhibited to some extent by staff absences. There is now a significant amount of information available about the effectiveness of the school's work, particularly through regular assessments of individual pupils' progress. However, this is not being summarised to give a clear view of how well different groups of pupils are doing or to check whether there is variation in progress in different year groups or different subjects.

Pupils enjoy school and most parents are positive about the experiences that their children have. A minority have concerns about staff absences and about some of the changes that are being implemented. In the main, however, they are supportive, complimenting, for example, the headteacher's 'enthusiasm and drive to improve'. Governors are appropriately involved in planning developments and are supportive of the headteacher's vision for the future.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

While children's attainment on entry is broadly in line with expectations, this varies from year to year because numbers are so small. They generally make satisfactory progress but last year their attainment at the end of the Reception Year was below average, with only a minority reaching expected levels. Their mathematical skills were stronger than those in language and literacy. Writing was a particularly weak area. Provision for learning has been improved to some extent this year through sharing on-site facilities with the pre-school group. This is enabling children to have access to a range of practical experiences to support, for example, the development of their creative skills. However, there are restrictions in terms of how frequently these facilities can be used. Overall, there are not enough opportunities for child-initiated activities to extend the focus on improving language and literacy skills. As in other year groups, assessment arrangements have been improved, with greater rigour in the way that children's skills and learning are assessed and tracked.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes in subjects across the curriculum in order to raise standards in writing.

- Boost the rate of progress for children in the Reception Year, particularly in language and literacy.
- Make better use of assessment information to get a clear view of progress across the school and to check whether pupils are doing equally well in all year groups and all subjects.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**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](http://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
---	----------------

### 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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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**

21 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sithney Community Primary School, Crowtown TR13 0AE

You may remember that I visited recently to see how you are getting on. Thanks to all of you who explained what you were doing in lessons and what you think about your school. I thought you would be interested in what I am saying in my report. Your school provides you with a sound education and does some things particularly well. Some of you told me that learning has become more exciting and I could see how much Class 2 pupils were enjoying their Victorian Day.

Staff take good care of you, especially if you need some extra help or you are new to the school. You know how important it is to stay healthy and safe. Most of you behave well and work well together. You make steady progress in your learning and the school is keeping careful track of how well you are doing. This is helping staff to see where you could do even better. You told me that your targets are also helping you to improve.

I have suggested three things that the school needs to do now.

- Give you more opportunities to write about what you have learned and to explain your ideas in subjects such as history, so that your written work gets better.
- Give children in the Reception Year lots of opportunities to learn through practical activities and make sure that their language and literacy skills improve.
- Use information about your progress to make sure that you do equally well in each subject and in every year group.

Thank you again for your help.

With best wishes

Shirley Billington Lead inspector

**Annex B**



21 March 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Sithney Community Primary School, Crowtown TR13 0AE**

You may remember that I visited recently to see how you are getting on. Thanks to all of you who explained what you were doing in lessons and what you think about your school. I thought you would be interested in what I am saying in my report. Your school provides you with a sound education and does some things particularly well. Some of you told me that learning has become more exciting and I could see how much Class 2 pupils were enjoying their Victorian Day.

Staff take good care of you, especially if you need some extra help or you are new to the school. You know how important it is to stay healthy and safe. Most of you behave well and work well together. You make steady progress in your learning and the school is keeping careful track of how well you are doing. This is helping staff to see where you could do even better. You told me that your targets are also helping you to improve.

I have suggested three things that the school needs to do now.

- Give you more opportunities to write about what you have learned and to explain your ideas in subjects such as history, so that your written work gets better.
- Give children in the Reception Year lots of opportunities to learn through practical activities and make sure that their language and literacy skills improve.
- Use information about your progress to make sure that you do equally well in each subject and in every year group.

Thank you again for your help.

With best wishes

Shirley Billington  
Lead inspector