

St Mawes Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111873
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310709
Inspection date	14 May 2008
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	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Bowen
Headteacher	Ann Force
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Grove Hill St Mawes Truro TR2 5BP
Telephone number	01326 270575
Fax number	01326 270575

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues. •The degree to which the school meets the individual needs of pupils, especially by providing a suitable breadth of social and academic stimulation when they are members of particularly small year groups. •How effectively leaders and managers bring about improvement, especially in pupils' achievement in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 and 4. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils at play. Teachers' assessment records and pupils' work were scrutinised. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This very small rural primary school takes pupils from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Children's attainment on entry varies, often significantly, as the number of children in each year group is small and their levels of skills differ substantially from year to year; for example, currently there are only two pupils in Year 2. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. These pupils are not distributed equally across the school. The school holds Basic Skills, Activemark and Artsmark Gold awards and is accredited as a 'Dyslexia Friendly' and Green Flag ECO School.

The school was led by an acting headteacher during the autumn and spring terms of this school year, whilst the substantive headteacher was seconded to another school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding little school that lies at the heart of the community that it serves. As one parent wrote, 'I love the school and we are very lucky. It is a big part of our village community.' The school's success in ensuring that pupils receive and benefit from very close individual attention is exemplary. This is also recognised and appreciated by the vast majority of parents, as one wrote, 'Both my children at St Mawes are happy and enjoy attending each day.'

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. All members of staff make the very best use of willing and talented support from parents and other members of the community to meet the pupils' differing needs. Together, they provide excellent teaching and learning and care, guidance and support to all the pupils across the range of abilities and needs. As a result, from a variety of starting points, pupils make excellent progress overall, building very successfully on the good start that they make in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year). Pupils' progress quickens as they grow older and become more adept in taking responsibility for their own learning. In particular, pupils with complex learning difficulties make huge gains in their self-confidence and positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, standards are typically above average by the end of Year 6 although they are lower than this in the current year because there is a higher than usual number of pupils with learning difficulties. Even so this represents excellent achievement in relation to their differing capabilities with most pupils showing good speaking, listening and computer skills. However, writing and in particular spelling, remains a relative weakness across the school and progress in this area of learning has not kept pace with the pupils' rapidly improving speaking and reading skills.

In the school's supportive setting, pupils develop extremely well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Consequently, pupils' overall personal development and well-being are outstanding. All pupils are fully involved and included in the day-to-day life of the school. They have plenty of opportunities to undertake responsibility and to express their views, for example, as members of the School and Eco Council and they do so willingly and with conviction. All members of staff encourage and value the pupils' ideas and, because the pupils know and appreciate this, they work very hard and contribute wholeheartedly to school and community life. The pupils beamed with pride as they told the inspector of how their ideas for improving the toilets and playground facilities have been adopted by the school. Pupils' ideas are very perceptive, for example, they noted that the 'Hippo Waste Bin' was too tall for the youngest pupils. Their request for a smaller bin has been granted and now 'Hippo' is joined by a little 'Bear Bin'. Such positive empowerment of the pupils is another reason why they enjoy school so much, behave extremely well and adopt very healthy and safe lifestyles. The school has worked hard to improve rates of attendance and they are now satisfactory. However, a few parents do not support the school by ensuring that their children attend regularly enough.

Leadership and management are excellent. Led astutely by the headteacher, members of staff and governors work extremely well as a team. They monitor and evaluate the school very accurately, identify the right priorities for improvement and ensure that target setting is used very efficiently to bring the desired outcomes. Strengthened provision in the Foundation Stage, much improved facilities and resources, and higher standards since the last inspection show this clearly. A recent focus on improving boys' progress in Years 3 and 4 has been successful at improving learning in these year groups. The school is emerging from a period of change and a few parents understandably expressed some concern about the number of different

adults working with the pupils and the way the temporary change of headteacher may have influenced learning. However, inspection findings, which reflect the views of the vast majority of parents and indeed the pupils themselves, show that pupils continue to derive significant benefit, both academically and socially from the rich tapestry of guidance that the many adults provide. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The excellent teaching and learning evident across the school is typified by precise planning which identifies relevant challenging learning objectives for the pupils and excellent use of assistants and other helpers. Teachers deploy their assistants and voluntary helpers very effectively. Working together, they ensure that pupils' learn really well through an excellent curriculum, enriched by regular access to a very wide range of learning activities and resources. For example, pupils make good use of computers to undertake research and develop their ideas and writing through drama. Older pupils act out and record film scripts as 'Travel Agents' to bring life to their geographical studies and to extend their skills as independent learners. When questioned, one pupil readily exclaimed, 'Learning is just fun and we learn in an active way.' This was evident in the 'Wake and Shake' physical exercise, which, led by the pupils, starts the school day so enjoyably.

Teachers and their assistants assess pupils' learning very accurately. Consequently, they know the pupils extremely well and ensure that pupils benefit from suitably challenging targets and the right amount of support. Throughout the school, older pupils exchange ideas with younger pupils and a significant number of adults put their expertise to good use and provide questioning and supportive guidance. These elements more than compensate for the small number of pupils and peer interaction in some year groups. In particular, pupils with learning difficulties receive exemplary support.

With the support of the local community, the school continues to tackle pupils' individual needs innovatively to develop their full potential. For example, the school is currently examining how it can provide additional enrichment to the pupils' learning and confidence as they move from one class to another. Such a strong commitment to continued improvement, alongside a proven record of accomplishment, shows an excellent capacity to improve into the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Currently there are four reception children in this class, which includes Years 1 and 2 pupils. Excellent links with parents and the local pre-school help the children settle confidently into school life and provide a boost to their successful learning. Children make good progress from their different starting points and in the current year, most are on target to reach or exceed the early learning goals set for their age on entering Year 1. In addition, excellent care, guidance and support and good teaching are enriched significantly by valued contributions from teaching assistants and voluntary adult helpers. Together, adults ensure that children make very good gains in their personal and social development and in extending their speaking, listening and reading skills. The well-planned curriculum and very well resourced learning areas represent significant improvements since the last inspection and enable children to experience a good range of stimulating activities, both indoors and outdoors. These include, for example, role-play in the 'café'. At times, however, such activities chosen by the children themselves are not accompanied by sufficient adult intervention limiting the benefit to children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy of pupils' spelling to ensure that pupils do as well in writing as they do in speaking and reading.
- Work with parents to improve pupils' attendance.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
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	1
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?	1
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

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?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

15 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mawes Community Primary School, St Mawes, TR2 5BP

I have no hesitation in agreeing with you and with many of your parents, who feel that yours is an outstanding school. Thank you for welcoming me when I visited yesterday, and a particular thanks to those of you who are members of the School and Eco Councils who helped by sharing your views with me. You play a full part. I especially liked the way you all get on so well together and behave so exceptionally well. I can see why you love school so much.

These are some of the other the main things I found.

- You make excellent progress in your work because you feel secure and you know exactly what you have to do to improve.
- You receive excellent care from all the adults who work with you in the school; as a result, you give your very best in an excellent range of learning activities, and your attitudes to learning, healthy living, and contributions to the school and community are first class.
- Your teachers give you very good lessons and make sure you really enjoy your learning.
- Your headteacher is leading the school really well; she receives excellent support from staff and governors. They work very closely with your parents to help you to achieve your best.

Even an outstanding school can improve, and to do this I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to help you to improve your spelling so that you do even better at writing. You can help the school by making sure that you do not miss school unnecessarily.

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

Alex Baxter Lead inspector