

North Petherwin Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111942
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310736
Inspection date	2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin James

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	51
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	13
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	4
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Harvey
Headteacher	Heather Langton
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	5 March 2008
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Brazzacott North Petherwin Launceston PL15 8NE
Telephone number	01566 785207
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than most primary schools. All pupils are from a White British background. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is just below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to the national average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is high. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of a Reception class and the Sunbeams Nursery, which is managed by the school governors. There is a breakfast club for pupils. In recognition of its work, the school has received the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

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, where pupils achieve well. It has some significant strengths. Pupils really enjoy school and their excellent behaviour and attitudes illustrate this well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Whilst care, guidance and support are good overall, pastoral care is outstanding, with the care and safety of its pupils being a priority of the school. Parents are exceptionally positive about the school, and, for example, one said, 'I feel extremely lucky that my son has had the opportunity of having his primary education at North Petherwin.'

Standards are above average, and pupils achieve well. When children start in Nursery, their knowledge and skills are below the levels expected, especially in relation to their language skills. During their time in the EYFS, the children achieve well, and most reach average standards by the end of Reception. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 to 6, with the result that standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. However, pupils perform slightly less well in writing than in other subjects.

In the classrooms, relationships are very good. Teaching assistants are particularly well deployed. Teachers make good use of a variety of resources and strategies to make the lessons interesting, such as in the use of interactive whiteboards. Lessons are thoroughly planned, to meet the needs of different pupils. Clear help and advice are provided during lessons, but marking and the targets provided for pupils do not always ensure that they are clearly aware of how to develop their work further.

The curriculum contributes well to both pupils' learning and their enjoyment of school. It is interesting and varied, and, for example, good use is made of the school grounds to enhance learning, for instance in science. The school routinely reviews and develops its curriculum, and it is currently extending the use of cross-curricular links, especially in relation to the development of writing skills. Pupils greatly enjoy the exceptional range of visits and after school activities that the school provides.

The headteacher and other members of staff are committed to improving the provision they make for their pupils. Self-evaluation is effective in identifying where improvement is needed, and, for instance, remedial action has been successful in improving standards throughout the school. Governors support the school well, and they are fully involved in budgeting and school development planning. The improvements that have been made both recently and since the previous inspection, and the good quality of the current provision, show that the school has a good capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the EYFS because they are taught well. The children are happy in school, they enjoy themselves and their behaviour is exemplary. The staff work hard to create a friendly and very caring learning environment, in common with the rest of the school, and the welfare of the children is promoted extremely well. The children also benefit from the good links that are established with parents. Adults provide the children with a good balance between teacher-led activities and chances for them to choose for themselves, and they take every opportunity to help them develop their various skills. A good range of resources is provided, with the outdoor areas being used routinely. The accommodation provided for the Nursery

does not make it easy for the children to carry out free-flow activities, although staff and children make the best of what is available. Leadership and management are good. The leader uses her specialist knowledge and enthusiasm well in making suitable provision for all the children, and other staff members support her well in providing for their various needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects of the curriculum other than English.
- Ensure that through target setting and marking, pupils have a clear understanding about how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Children make a good start in the EYFS, and by the end of Reception most attain broadly average standards. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well, and in 2008, although they performed slightly less well in writing, they attained above average standards overall. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average.

By the end of Year 6, although the standard of pupils' performance in writing remains a little lower than in other subjects, standards are above average. This represents good achievement from these pupils' particular starting points. In 2007, standards were broadly average. The school carefully identified weaknesses in the pupils' work, for example in understanding and undertaking problem solving activities in mathematics. As a result of actions taken to address these issues, standards in 2008 improved. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average and pupils make good progress. The school makes excellent provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this is helping them make exceptional progress towards the targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is excellent. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. This is illustrated by their good, and much improved, attendance. They are proud of their school. Pupils treat each other with respect, and they say that bullying is not a problem. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, and they have high expectations of each other. They act safely around the school, being considerate towards others and the environment. Pupils' understanding of the multicultural society in which we live is not quite as strong as the other excellent aspects of their personal development.

Pupils' knowledge and understanding of keeping healthy is excellent. In turn, they eat healthy meals and benefit greatly from the opportunities provided for physical exercise, such as the daily 'Wake and Shake' sessions. The school council gives pupils a most effective voice in the school. They take their role seriously and contribute well towards decisions affecting them. Pupils are actively involved in the wider community. For example, they participate in village activities and organize events for local residents. The school successfully develops in its pupils both confidence and independence. This, together with the good progress they make in literacy and numeracy, prepares them well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers display good subject knowledge and good teaching skills and this ensures that pupils achieve well. Classes are well managed, and the very good relationships are a particular strength. Lessons are lively and interesting, with a good mixture of whole class and group activities. Teachers use a good range of resources and strategies, including interactive whiteboards. As a result, pupils are very well behaved, keen to learn and ready to work hard. Above all, they enjoy themselves. Teaching assistants are especially well deployed to promote learning, especially that of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers make good use of paired discussions. However, on occasions, opportunities are missed for pupils to discuss their work at length in front of the whole class, to help them clarify their ideas and further develop their understanding of the work being undertaken.

Teachers plan thoroughly to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, and this ensures that pupils are presented with work that is suitably challenging. Summary sessions are appropriately provided at the end of lessons, although occasionally these are not focused adequately on what has been achieved during the lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum enables pupils to study a broad and interesting range of subjects, and this contributes to their good progress. 'Special learning days' provide pupils across the school with opportunities to learn through a range of topics and subjects. There is a good emphasis on the use of the school's very attractive grounds, as well as the wider area of North Petherwin. The provision of Spanish benefits pupils' learning. The school believes that the curriculum might be made even more interesting, and as a result, more links are being made between subjects, to produce topics that will further motivate pupils. A particular emphasis is being placed on the greater use of literacy, as the school recognises that some pupils have weaknesses in their writing skills. Learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very carefully identified, and pupils are provided with an exceptional range of tasks, activities and support.

There is a very good emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles. There is an outstanding range of outings, visitors and after school clubs, which pupils much appreciate and which they support with enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults ensure that there is outstanding and most effective pastoral care, and parents are highly appreciative of the support given to their children. Staff are highly committed to the safety of their pupils. Child protection procedures are good, and safeguarding procedures are robust. Outside agencies are used very effectively to support pupils when a need is identified. Staff ensure that pupils work in a safe, secure and clean environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are routinely carried out. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living, and they are reminded of the need to take care and stay safe, for instance when using computers.

The school's care for its pupils extends to the provision of a breakfast club, which those attending much appreciate.

Pupils have targets for improving their work in literacy and numeracy. However, discussions with pupils suggest that they are not always clear enough about what they need to do to make their work better. Similarly, whilst teachers regularly provide comments of praise and encouragement when marking pupils' books, they provide less advice on how to make work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school with dedication and skill, and she is supported well by other staff members. There is a strong sense of teamwork, and the sharing of roles and responsibilities, within the small number of teaching staff, is done well. Staff are keen to make the best possible provision for pupils, to help them achieve as well as they can and to develop the school further. Staff have been most successful in creating a safe and caring environment, where the well-being of the pupils is paramount, as well as in utilising the local community to enhance the pupils' learning experiences. The school's self-review has accurately identified strengths and areas for development. For example, actions to improve the standards in mathematics and science have been successful. The current focus on extending cross-curricular links, to benefit writing skills in particular, is a most suitable priority for the school.

Subject leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the strengths in their various subjects. They have actively initiated and supported strategies for making improvements. At present, they have limited opportunities to observe lessons in other classes. However, plans are in hand for this to happen more frequently as different subjects become priorities for review. Governance is good, with the governors being fully involved, for example, in producing the school development plan and contributing to school self-evaluation.

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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	2

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	1

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	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 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

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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

3 October 2008

Dear Pupils

North Petherwin Primary School, North Petherwin, Cornwall, PL25 8NE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit. We both enjoyed talking to you in lessons, and I especially liked talking to the school council and joining you all in assembly. I am writing to tell you what we found out about the school, what we think is good, and what we think could be made better. You are in a good school and you do well with your work. The headteacher and other staff know what they need to do to make the school even better.

These things are some of the strengths of the school.

- Teaching is good, and teachers provide you with interesting lessons.
- Your behaviour and your attitudes to your work are excellent.
- You really enjoy the outstanding range of activities that the school provides, such as visits and different clubs.
- You know about how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.
- The staff know you well and take very great care of you.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school.

These are things the school has been asked to improve.

- Ensure that you have more opportunities to develop your writing skills, through the work you are given in other subjects.
- Ensure that the targets you have and the comments teachers add when marking your books help you understand clearly how to make your work even better.

You can help too, by making sure you know how to improve your work further.

We wish you all good luck for the future.

Best wishes

Martin James Lead inspector