

South Petherwin Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111947
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310737
Inspection date	18 June 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	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Parsons
Headteacher	Trevor Caves
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2004
School address	South Petherwin Launceston PL15 7LE
Telephone number	01566 776363
Fax number	01566 776363

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	18 June 2008
Inspection number	310737

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: 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 quality of leadership and management and how effectively leaders and managers bring about improvement, especially in the Foundation Stage, teaching in Years 1 and 2, and in writing and mathematics throughout the school

the degree to which teachers and their assistants adapt their teaching styles and support to meet pupils' differing needs, especially pupils who find learning difficult and those with more ability. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, whole school assembly and pupils at lunch and 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 small primary school serves the needs of pupils in the local rural area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall. However, the movement of pupils in and out of school and their specific learning needs often affect some year groups considerably. The school has gained Healthy Schools, Services to Sport, Football Association and Activemark awards. In April this year, the school council achieved the 'School Council Silver Award'. In recent years, the school has been led by a series of temporary acting or associate headteachers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

South Petherwin is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly because staff have improved the way they work closely together to tackle weaknesses. In recent years, there has been a succession of temporary acting headteachers. For some time, uncertainty and a lack of continuity in leadership weakened the school's efforts to promote improvement. Several parents, in their completed questionnaires, also refer to this instability in leadership. Over the past year, however, initiated by diligent governors, additional support from the local authority has sharpened the school's view of its strengths and weaknesses and the way senior leaders and teachers have tackled underachievement. More recently, the very effective work of an experienced 'Associate' headteacher has secured sound leadership and management. He has improved the way staff work together and has sharpened self-evaluation and the setting of targets. These are now satisfactory, have accelerated the rate of improvement and have re-established at least satisfactory provision and pupils' achievement across the school. However, the way pupils' progress is tracked is still not implemented with sufficient consistency across the school, limiting the degree to which it can improve teaching and learning to the full. The long-awaited appointment of a permanent headteacher has now been secured for next term and this has brought renewed optimism to the whole school community. Earlier improvements since the last inspection, including in the Foundation Stage and provision for information and communication technology (ICT), have been joined more recently by improved writing in Years 3 to 6, and by pupils' improved behaviour and attitudes to learning. There is much good teaching, especially in English, where older pupils speak of their improved speaking, reading and writing skills. More able pupils also talk about better challenges in group work during some mathematics lessons. These show that the school has re-established a sound capacity to improve, with promising signs of much further potential. The care, guidance and support given to the pupils is good. This is because the pastoral care and the way pupils' efforts are valued are strong features. As a result, pupils' behaviour, adoption of healthy lifestyles and contributions to the community are good qualities. The academic guidance given to the pupils through marking and oral advice is satisfactory. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good overall. Pupils undertake responsibility for each other willingly. This is shown in their effective work on the school council, where their ideas for a 'Friendship Bench' at play times and 'Fruity Fridays', for example, have been acted upon by the school. Good features, such as the pupils' confidence and friendly relationships, show the consistency of the caring support provided by all staff. They also reflect the school's good links with parents and outside agencies, which help to ensure that pupils who find learning difficult are well supported. Pupils' full enjoyment of school is evident in their good attendance and the positive way they approach their work in lessons and play at break times. Parents welcome these and one typical written comment was, 'My child loves going to school every day. I cannot believe how much he has learnt, but as far as he is concerned he is just having a good time.' Teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are improving as teachers match work more closely to pupils' differing abilities, tackle gaps in pupils' previous learning and increase the challenge given to pupils with more ability. Currently, however, these are more effective in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. Senior managers, too, are promoting improvement by strengthening the way teachers and their assistants help pupils with emotional and behavioural needs, for example. Overall, achievement is satisfactory, standards are average and pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education by the time they leave the school. Children's skills on entry broadly match those expected for their age. However, within the small year groups, their

personal, social and emotional skills and communication, language and literacy skills can vary from year to year. Children are taught well and make good progress in the Reception Year. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, where additional teaching assistants have improved the way pupils with emotional and behavioural needs are supported. However, there is still an over-emphasis on whole-class teaching. At times, this fails to challenge and engage pupils to best effect and limits the time available for them to follow their interests, in writing for example, where pupils, especially the more able, do not achieve well enough. In response to good teaching, especially in all aspects of English, where there is a high level of challenge, pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Progress is even better for some pupils, especially when they are able to take more responsibility for their learning, as they do when using computers, for example. On occasions, wholeclass sessions continue for too long, especially in mathematics, which limits the time available for practical work. As a result, whilst progress is satisfactory, the pupils' ability to solve problems is a relative weakness. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Throughout the school, pupils are articulate speakers and by Year 6, many pupils have good ICT skills. The school provides a sound curriculum for its pupils. It is matched well to pupils' needs in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6, but not as effectively in Years 1 and 2. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn by using computers. There is good enrichment in sports, healthy living and gardening, for example through clubs and inter-school competitions. A good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' literacy skills, and topics such as 'Cornwall' and 'Mountains' link subjects together and interest pupils. Pupils say, 'Lessons are fun, especially when we make things.' Although there is a sound focus on numeracy, these skills are not developed sufficiently in other subjects.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and reflect good improvement since the last inspection. They are focused securely on implementing a well-planned curriculum, which includes a good balance of activities led by adults and those chosen by the children. The teacher and her assistant are very good at developing the children's speaking and listening skills, self-confidence and enjoyment of school. Children's skills on entry generally match those found nationally, but can vary significantly at times. Nevertheless, because work is matched well to the children's needs, children of all abilities make good progress. Currently, given a smaller and more able group of children than is usually the case, standards are on course to be above average on entry to Year 1. Children have good opportunities to learn out of doors. However, these can only be undertaken with close adult supervision and this limits the children's ability to make their own choices.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that recent changes in the way the school is led are applied well and consistently to sustain good teaching and learning.
- Raise expectations of what pupils should achieve to improve writing skills in Years 1 and 2 and, problem solving skills in mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- Rigorously track pupils' progress to identify and tackle their learning needs at the optimum time to keep pupils learning well. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the 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.

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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	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	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

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?	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

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

- 18 June 2008 Dear Pupils Inspection of South Petherwin Community Primary School, Launceston PL15 7LE I enjoyed my visit and appreciated the warm welcome that I received. I would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to me, particularly members of the school council. I was very interested to hear what you had to say about your school. These are the main things I found:
 - It is a satisfactory and improving school. Despite several changes in headteacher, senior managers are strengthening how they work together and are helping you to make better progress.
 - You attend well, enjoy a sound range of learning activities and adopt healthy, safe lifestyles.
 - Yours is a very caring school where staff work closely with your parents and other people and look after you well. As a result, you behave well and contribute fully to the community.
 - Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but are improving and are mostly good in Reception and in Years 3 to 6.
 - Generally, you make steady progress. Most of you do well in developing your speaking and listening skills. Many of you in Years 3 to 6 are doing well in writing and science. An increasing number of you are now doing as well as you should in mathematics, but some of you could do even better in this subject. To help the school to become better, I have asked senior managers, governors and teachers to do three things:
 - Make sure that recent changes in the way the school is led are applied well and consistently to ensure good teaching and learning throughout the school.
 - Help those of you in Years 1 and 2 to improve your writing and those of you in Years 3 to 6 to improve your ability to solve problems in mathematics.
 - Strengthen the way your progress is tracked so that you are given extra help when you need it the most to keep you learning well. You can help by always giving of your best. Thank you once again, and best wishes for the future. Yours sincerely Alex Baxter Lead Inspector

Annex B



18 June 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of South Petherwin Community Primary School, Launceston
PL15 7LE**

I enjoyed my visit and appreciated the warm welcome that I received. I would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to me, particularly members of the school council. I was very interested to hear what you had to say about your school. These are the main things I found:

- It is a satisfactory and improving school. Despite several changes in headteacher, senior managers are strengthening how they work together and are helping you to make better progress.
- You attend well, enjoy a sound range of learning activities and adopt healthy, safe lifestyles.
- Yours is a very caring school where staff work closely with your parents and other people and look after you well. As a result, you behave well and contribute fully to the community.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but are improving and are mostly good in Reception and in Years 3 to 6.
- Generally, you make steady progress. Most of you do well in developing your speaking and listening skills. Many of you in Years 3 to 6 are doing well in writing and science. An increasing number of you are now doing as well as you should in mathematics, but some of you could do even better in this subject.

To help the school to become better, I have asked senior managers, governors and teachers to do three things:

- Make sure that recent changes in the way the school is led are applied well and consistently to ensure good teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Help those of you in Years 1 and 2 to improve your writing and those of you in Years 3 to 6 to improve your ability to solve problems in mathematics.
- Strengthen the way your progress is tracked so that you are given extra help when you need it the most to keep you learning well.

You can help by always giving of your best.

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

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter
Lead Inspector