

Menheniot Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111975
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310748
Inspection date	25 September 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	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Delbridge
Headteacher	Amanda J Raynham
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	East Road Menheniot Liskeard PL14 3QY
Telephone number	01579 342580
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement in writing, achievement in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, pupils' attitudes and behaviour, the breadth of the curriculum, and how effectively leaders and managers bring about improvement by using target setting. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and school assembly and observations of pupils at lunch and play. Evidence was also gathered from teachers' assessments, pupils' work and discussions with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in equal 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 assessments have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Children's attainment on entry varies from year to year, but mostly it broadly matches that expected for their age. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils have English as an additional language. Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that found nationally, the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above average. In recent years, the school has been subject to a significantly falling roll. The school holds the following quality marks: Healthy School Status, Activemark Award and Primary Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Menheniot is an outstanding school. It has a strongly welcoming sense of community. All pupils are valued equally. This is illustrated by the way the school assesses pupils' individual needs and ensures that pupils, who have a wide range of learning needs, reach their full potential. Parents appreciate their children's achievement and are particularly supportive; one typical written comment was, 'We are very pleased with the education our children are receiving'. The school's excellence is evident in the pupils' outstanding academic, as well as personal, achievement. In particular, the exceptionally high quality of teaching and learning and of leadership and management is a significant strength that underpins the success of the school.

The outstanding quality of teaching and learning accounts for the high standards attained by pupils by the time they leave the school. Teachers have established consistent and appropriately high expectations of work and behaviour across the school. Pupils know what is expected and, because they respect all adults, they apply themselves enthusiastically and diligently to their work. The school's success in promoting the pupils' personal qualities as effectively as their academic skills bears fruit in the way in which pupils sustain their concentration and strive to improve their work. This has undoubtedly been a key factor in lifting standards in writing so significantly this year.

Children make a good start in the Reception Year where they make generally good progress. However, their independent learning is constrained on occasion by the limited equipment and opportunities provided in the outdoor play area. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. It is noticeably improving as pupils sense their developing skills and gain confidence from supportively challenging teaching to become independent learners. Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Many pupils are beginning to show high levels of commitment to their learning for their age. By Year 6, standards are very high in English, mathematics and science. Pupils show very well developed skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Many pupils are very mature independent learners, for example when undertaking research, investigations and solving problems. Even though a falling roll is accentuating the proportion of pupils with complex learning needs in some year groups, current standards across the curriculum represent outstanding achievement for pupils of all abilities and needs.

The headteacher promotes a strong team ethic and provides excellent leadership. She receives highly effective support from governors, senior managers and colleagues. The school has very secure procedures for monitoring and evaluating its performance. Pupils know their individual targets, teachers set realistic yet challenging group and class targets, and senior managers set and monitor whole-school targets. At all these levels, target setting is used very effectively. As a result, the school has an excellent understanding of what it needs to do to promote and sustain excellent achievement of pupils. The school improvement plan identifies appropriate priorities and sets high expectations for improvement. Staff and governors share a unified commitment to continued improvement and share their substantial expertise willingly. As a result, there has been excellent improvement since the last inspection in most aspects of the school. This includes, for example, the pupils' excellent achievement, and also standards in writing and science which were relative weaknesses previously. These accomplishments are all the more creditable given a period of a falling roll, which brought financial constraints. They demonstrate that the school is extremely well placed to continue to improve.

The school provides an excellent curriculum for its pupils. The school's Healthy School and Activemark awards reflect significant strengths within the broad provision. There is an extremely successful focus throughout the curriculum on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy, ICT and enquiry skills. These underpin the pupils' success in learning across a number of subjects, including French in Years 3 and 4. Several parents have requested more sporting clubs. The school has responded by introducing additional football coaching this term. The pupils interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the opportunities currently provided. For its size, the school provides a good range of clubs.

In response to excellent care, support and guidance, the pupils' personal development and well-being are of the highest quality. Pupils enjoy school, show consideration for the needs of others and behave very well. Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to live healthily and safely and are extremely well prepared for the future. Pupils express their views confidently. Members of the school council take their responsibilities very seriously. In keeping with the school's community ethos, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also strong. Attendance is good. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent and is supported by excellent links with parents and outside agencies.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The youngest children are warmly welcomed and settle quickly into Reception. Close links with parents and playgroups help children make a good start in school life. Children make good progress across all areas of learning from starting points that typically show some weaknesses. For example, several children enter with limited social skills but soon learn to cooperate with others because of warm, effective adult support. Most children reach the early learning goals set for their age. Good teaching and learning, with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, helps children to make particularly good progress in acquiring these skills. Teachers and their assistants provide an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning, with a good range of stimulating activities. However, the relatively underdeveloped facilities in the outdoor play area do not always encourage independent learning sufficiently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the equipment and independent learning opportunities provided in the outdoor play area for children in Reception.

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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	1
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	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	1

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

26 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Menheniot Primary School, Liskeard, PL14 3QY

- I really enjoyed visiting your school and appreciated the warmth of the welcome I received. I noticed, too, how you and many of your parents felt the same welcome on entering the school in the morning. I would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to me, particularly the school council. I was very interested to hear what you had to say about your school. I found your school to be outstanding and could sense that you and your parents quite rightly feel the same. These are the main things I found:
- You make excellent progress and the standards you reach in Year 6 are much higher than in most schools.
- Your outstanding achievements, relationships and behaviour reflect your hard work and the excellent teaching and care provided by all the adults.
- The effort you put into your learning is superb. This is because you are encouraged to think for yourselves about how well you are doing and how you could do even better.
- You are given excellent learning activities. You clearly know how to live healthy, safe lives and you show that you are learning to do this very well. It was uplifting to see how much you enjoy being at school.
- Your headteacher and senior managers lead and manage the school very successfully indeed.

To help the school to become even better, I have asked the headteacher and governors to make the outdoor play area for children in Reception a more interesting and exciting place in which to learn.

Please keep your enthusiasm for learning and for your school.

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

Alex Baxter Lead Inspector

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