

# Pondhu Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111984
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	310751
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin James

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	234
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Leaity
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pam Clements
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	Penwinnick Road St Austell PL25 5DS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01726 74550
<b>Fax number</b>	01726 74550

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most primary schools. Nearly all pupils are from a White British background. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. In recognition of its work, the school has received the Quality Assurance, Healthy School and Sportsmark 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. Pupils really enjoy school, as shown by their exemplary attitudes and behaviour. They are polite, courteous and welcoming. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, which ensures they have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are very well cared for, with the result that they feel very safe in school. However, the guidance provided through marking and target setting does not always help them understand clearly how to improve their work. Parents are very positive about the school, and many commented on how much they valued the quality of the provision made for their children. One said typically, 'There is a wonderfully happy atmosphere in the school, and I have nothing but praise for the headteacher and her staff.'

When children start in Nursery their knowledge and skills are below the levels typically expected, especially in relation to language and literacy. During their time in the Foundation Stage the children achieve well, and most reach average levels. However, in language and literacy, although they also progress well, the children's skills remain below the levels expected. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 to 6, with the result that standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6.

Relationships are an outstanding feature of the good teaching. Teachers make good use of a variety of ways to make the lessons interesting, and this ensures pupils work together very well as they enjoy their activities. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils' learning. Lessons are thoroughly planned, with careful allowance made for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Activities that cater for more-able pupils are also listed in teachers' plans. However, on occasions this work is not challenging enough to suit their particular needs.

The curriculum contributes well to both pupils' enjoyment of school and their learning. It is interesting and varied, and in particular helps to make the pupils very aware of the need to follow a healthy lifestyle. The school routinely reviews its curriculum, with a current emphasis on increasing the links made between subjects. The use of literacy and numeracy in other subjects has not been sufficiently well developed, but the school has started to address this issue by, for example, giving pupils the opportunity to write in more detail in history. The curriculum is enhanced by an outstanding range of visits and musical and sporting activities that helps broaden pupils' interests.

The headteacher and other senior members of staff are committed to improving the provision they make for their pupils. Self-evaluation is effective in pin-pointing where the school should direct its efforts, and this has contributed well to the recent improvements, particularly the performance of boys. Governors support the school well, and they also routinely hold the school to account for its performance. Good use is made of outside bodies, such as sports coaches and other specialists, in supporting the work of the school. The improvements that have been made recently, the good quality of the current provision and the improvements since the previous inspection show that the school has a good capacity to improve even further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The children settle quickly into Nursery, thanks to the good links with parents. The children are happy in school, they enjoy themselves and they develop good social skills. The staff in

both Nursery and Reception work hard to create a friendly and caring learning environment. They also provide the children with a suitable balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for them to choose for themselves. A good range of resources is provided, with the outdoor area being used whenever appropriate. The children behave well, although a small number sometimes find it difficult to maintain concentration on the tasks they have chosen. As a result of good teaching, the children make good progress, and, apart from in language and literacy, most attain average standards by the end of their Reception year.

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

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through the work provided in other subjects.
- Ensure that marking and target setting help pupils understand clearly how to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards overall are broadly average, and pupils' achievement is good. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage, and, apart from in language and literacy, most reach average standards by the end of Reception. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well, and by the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in all subjects, as they were in 2007. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are broadly average. In 2007, standards were slightly above average, owing to pupils' good performance in mathematics. Current standards reached by pupils represent good achievement from their particular starting points. In 2007, boys in both Year 2 and Year 6 did not perform quite as well as the girls. The school recognised this, and the strategies introduced to remedy the issue, such as the introduction of themes and topics of particular interest to boys, have been successful, with boys and girls now performing equally well. The school makes good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this is helping them to make good progress towards their targets. However, the school recognises that the progress made by more-able pupils, although good overall, does not have the same consistency, and that on occasions it could be better.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are very polite and friendly, and they freely express their views about their work and school life. This shows their great enthusiasm for learning. They behave extremely well and show respect for each other, their teachers and the environment. They greatly enjoy their lessons and show this by their attentiveness and outstanding work ethic. The school has been proactive in promoting attendance, which is much improved and is now good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, with, for instance, the 'Friday Diaries' being successfully used to enable pupils to express their feelings and opinions. Pupils have a clear awareness of the diversity of cultures. Pupils have an exceptional awareness of how to stay healthy. They eat fruit and healthy meals and they participate willingly in opportunities for physical exercise, for example, in the after-school sports clubs. They readily adopt safe practices, such as when using computers.

Pupils contribute very well to both the school and the wider community, and they participate very actively in local and national charities. The school council enables pupils to successfully gain an insight into the responsibilities of adult life, as well as giving the pupils a voice in the

school. The council has contributed to the provision of extra playground equipment, and is currently investigating the possible introduction of a school tie. Good achievement in literacy and numeracy ensures pupils are being well prepared for the next stage of their education and their future life at work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good planning and close cooperation between teachers and teaching assistants means teaching is effective and pupils learn well. Classes are well managed, and relationships are an exceptional strength. Lessons are lively, and teachers use a good range of resources to make the lessons interesting. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Pupils respond well, they concentrate hard and they work with enthusiasm. Most of all they enjoy themselves. Consequently, the pupils successfully develop and reinforce both their knowledge and skills. Teachers make good use of paired discussions. On occasions, however, opportunities are missed for pupils to discuss their work at length in front of the whole class, to help them clarify their ideas and develop their understanding of the work being undertaken.

Planning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, enabling them all to take a full part in lessons. Work is also regularly set for more-able pupils. However, on occasions, the tasks provided do not stretch them adequately, and then the pace of learning for these pupils slows.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum enables pupils to study a broad and interesting range of subjects and themes. Good use is made of the school's outdoor environment, in science work, for example. Some cross-curricular links are already in place, but the school recognises that these links have not always been used adequately, especially in relation to further enhancing literacy and numeracy skills. The provision for information and communication technology has improved since the previous inspection, and is now good. The introduction of suitable resources and themes has contributed well to the recent improvement in the work produced by boys throughout the school. In the Foundation Stage, there is a good balance between independent learning and more- directed tasks. Learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully identified, and pupils are provided with an appropriate range of relevant work.

There is strong emphasis through the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills, which means, for example, that relationships are outstanding. The curriculum also makes an excellent contribution to pupils' high levels of awareness of staying safe and adopting healthy lifestyles. There is also an exceptional range of educational outings and extra-curricular activities, which the pupils support with enthusiasm.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Whilst the care, guidance and support given to pupils are good overall, the attention given to pupils' personal welfare is outstanding. Comprehensive safeguarding procedures are in place and child protection procedures are robust. Safety checks and assessments of risk are carried

out rigorously. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and, as a result, pupils feel safe and secure and know who to turn to if they have problems. Outside agencies are used very effectively to support pupils when a need is identified, and this means they receive help very quickly.

Guidance and support in class are often effective, such as through the careful use of learning objectives during lessons. However, the targets provided for pupils, in literacy and numeracy, are too broad and do not always make it clear enough to them what they need to do to improve their work. Similarly, whilst teachers regularly provide comments of praise and encouragement when marking pupils' books, they do not always give sufficient advice on how to make work better.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and other senior leaders direct the school with dedication and skill. There is a strong sense of teamwork, and there is a shared and clear sense of purpose to improve the overall provision for pupils, especially the progress they make. In particular, all staff have been outstandingly successful in creating a safe and caring environment where the well-being of the pupils is paramount. The school has good systems for finding out how well it is doing, and the self-review has clearly identified strengths and areas for development. For example, actions to improve the performance of boys have been successful, and the current focus on improving cross-curricular links is accurately chosen.

Subject leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the strengths in the subjects for which they are responsible, and they have contributed well towards recent improvement. However, they are currently working to extend their monitoring of those subjects, through improving their understanding of information about pupils' progress. Governance is good, with the governors being fully involved, for example, in producing the school improvement plan. They are also regular visitors to the school, when they thoughtfully carry out both subject and class responsibilities.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### 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	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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

<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>	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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 April 2008

Dear Pupils,

Pondhu Primary School, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 5DS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit and it was a pleasure talking to you. My colleague especially liked talking to the school council, and we both really enjoyed joining you in lessons. 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. Overall, you are in a good school, where you are doing 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 really 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. This helps you feel very safe in school.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school.

These are things the school has been asked to improve:

- Provide you with more opportunities to develop your literacy and numeracy skills, through the work you are given in other subjects.
- Make sure that, through the targets you have and the comments that teachers put in your books, you have a clear idea about how to improve your work.

You can help, too, by taking note of the advice teachers give you about how to make your work even better.

We wish you all good luck for the future.

Best wishes,

Martin James Lead Inspector

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