

St Petroc's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112036
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310770
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	David Edwards HMI

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	393
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	115
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	J Kidman
Headteacher	Stuart Renshaw
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Athelstan Park Bodmin PL31 1DS
Telephone number	01208 72526
Fax number	01208 75701

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Petroc's is a larger than average primary school with 393 pupils currently on role. As a Church of England school, it draws pupils from a relatively wide geographical area as parents have chosen this school as a preference. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a very small minority of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few in the early stages of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Petroc's provides pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. Some aspects, such as the personal development and well-being of pupils and their care, guidance and support, are good, and appreciated by the majority of parents. 'I feel my children are thriving at St Petroc's' and 'a happy and supportive environment is at the core of our child's successful learning' are typical of comments from many parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire.

The youngest children make satisfactory progress in their first year at school and this rate of progress continues throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 so that by the age of 11, pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with the national averages in English, mathematics and science. However, pupils' writing is not as strong as other aspects of English and standards in this area are below average. This is mainly because of past underachievement. In addition, the more able pupils receive insufficient challenge in lessons and do not make the progress they are capable of making. The school has recently recognised this. Determined leadership by the headteacher has ensured that teachers now have accurate assessment information, although it is not yet used effectively enough to secure the next steps in pupils' learning. However, it has served to raise the teachers' expectations that their pupils should achieve more consistently.

The school is successful at securing pupils' good personal development and well-being. This is because teachers work hard to ensure that in lessons, every opportunity is taken to develop pupils' spiritual and moral understanding. Pupils' social and cultural development is also good. Careful attention is given to encouraging high standards of behaviour, which ensures pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. The school is aware of its duty to promote and further develop community cohesion through the range of curriculum opportunities it offers. Pupils also have regular opportunities to participate in activities that broaden their understanding of Britain as a diverse society. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that pupils are safe.

The school is improving, largely due to the commitment and drive of the headteacher. Under his leadership, there is now a renewed sense of direction and purpose within the school. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. They have pinpointed strengths and have begun to set challenging targets to monitor the impact of actions taken in all areas of the school's performance. Staff are being challenged to develop their leadership roles. Improvements, including the key issues identified in the previous inspection, are being addressed systematically. Teachers have worked hard to provide a good curriculum for pupils. Good links have been made between subjects and pupils have many opportunities to express their creativity through drama, music and art. The governing body has made significant changes to how it undertakes its roles and responsibilities within the school. It is now better placed to offer support and challenge to senior leaders as well as developing its monitoring role within the school. The school has satisfactory capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

When the youngest children start school, they settle quickly because of very well established routines and induction procedures. Although the standards children reach in different areas of learning vary from year to year, children start Reception with expectations close to those usually found for their age. They make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and by the end of

the Reception year, most reach the expected levels, although some aspects of mathematical development are weaker.

Parents are very supportive and are true partners in their children's learning. The staff work very well together as a team and have a strong commitment to ensuring children feel safe and secure. For example, children realised the importance of washing their hands before preparing fruit for a fruit salad. Teaching assistants provided an appropriate explanation about the safe handling of knives before the children cut up the fruit. Children develop well as individuals and are enthusiastic about their learning. They form good relationships, and work and play well together. Children are becoming increasingly independent in their learning because of the well-organised indoor learning environment and they maximise their progress when they are given opportunities to select activities for themselves.

Leadership and management of the EYFS are satisfactory and rapidly improving. The strengths and weaknesses of the provision are well understood. Good plans for future improvements are beginning to have an impact, for example providing children with more practical learning opportunities to give them more opportunities to work either indoors or outside. The school recognises that the outdoor environment needs further development as an area of learning to enhance children's physical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in pupils' writing throughout the school.
- Ensure the challenge and pace of lessons, particularly for the more able pupils, are consistently good across the school.
- Use assessment data more effectively to monitor pupils' progress and plan for more challenging lessons.
- Rigorously monitor, at all levels, the impact of the actions taken to improve the school's performance.

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 their next section 5 inspection

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The youngest children start school with the skills expected for their age in all areas of learning. They make satisfactory progress during their time in the Reception classes and reach the expected goals by the beginning of Year 1. A focus on raising teachers' expectations and improving ways to monitor how well pupils are making progress in their learning is ensuring that standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Overall, progress is satisfactory. Recent changes to the curriculum in Years 3 to 6, coupled with more careful planning by teachers and the setting of more challenging targets, are helping to ensure that pupils build on this satisfactory progress. Consequently, by the age of 11, pupils achieve standards that are broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Appropriate strategies are now in place to raise standards in writing, which are below average. Pupils who find learning difficult are identified quickly and given appropriate support. They make good progress in relation to their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud to talk about their school and enjoy their lessons. 'We really like our school,' said one enthusiastic pupil, 'especially the space we have outside and the opportunity to learn brass instruments!' More effective monitoring has resulted in improved rates of attendance, which are now satisfactory. The popular 'wake and shake' sessions and the good range of healthy food available at lunchtimes ensure a positive attitude amongst the pupils towards healthy lifestyles. Pupils feel safe in school because all adults work hard to ensure that the learning environment is safe and stimulating. Pupils' behaviour is good, both in and around the school. Effective use of playground 'buddies' ensures that no pupil feels lonely or worried about falling out with a friend.

The 'voice' of the school council is heard loud and clear at St Petroc's. Council members are proud of their recent achievements in gaining nationally acclaimed democracy awards and in successful fund-raising towards the purchase of new football goals. Pupils' spiritual awareness and cultural development are particularly good. They have frequent opportunities in collective acts of worship to think and reflect and to demonstrate a growing awareness and understanding of their Christian and cultural heritage.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Positive, caring relationships characterise all teaching. The majority of learners show good attitudes to their work and work well together. The effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) within lessons motivates pupils to learn. Teaching is not yet consistently good, however, throughout the school. In the best lessons, pupils' enjoyment is evident and, through appropriately challenging tasks, they make good progress. For example, when creating 'revolting recipes' in a Key Stage 2 writing class, pupils worked effectively in small groups and could talk knowledgeably about parts of grammar. Some teachers' expectations are still not high enough. In these lessons, teachers' subject knowledge is often less secure and fewer opportunities are provided for pupils to investigate or complete tasks. In addition, the challenge and pace of lessons are not consistent across the school. As a result, the more able pupils in particular do not achieve the high standards they are capable of reaching because teachers' expectations are too low. Most teachers deploy the well-trained teaching assistants carefully to support individuals and small groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from a creative and stimulating curriculum. Teachers have created links between subjects to ensure mathematical and writing skills are taught within other subjects, such as lessons about the pupils' Cornish heritage. Participation in the wide range of activities on offer during and after school is strong. Educational visits to places of interest or special guests coming into school are a regular part of the drive to make learning more meaningful and fun for pupils. Additional resources, to improve library facilities but with a particular emphasis on 'boy-friendly' reading materials, have been used well in the drive to raise the achievement of boys. The teaching of ICT, an area identified for improvement at the previous inspection, is now a strength.

The pupils' ICT 'Surf Shack' is a popular feature in the school, and rightly so. Workshops for parents and regular newsletters home ensure parents are well informed and encouraged to become involved in their children's learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's motto: 'With God's love and lessons we care, share and grow together' is reflected well in the care, guidance and support offered to pupils. Supportive relationships exist between pupils and all adults. Each pupil is treated as an individual, with the needs of the most vulnerable clearly identified and supported. As one parent wrote, 'The school has a wonderful ethos, and any problems are dealt with using a professional, considerate and discreet manner.' The role of the family liaison worker is particularly appreciated by parents and has been effective in helping to improve attendance. Health and safety are carefully managed and appropriate arrangements are in place for safeguarding all pupils. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the carefully tailored support they receive. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a good understanding of their 'jump4it!' targets in English and mathematics and know how these can help them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders have a clear and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The headteacher has implemented an appropriate action plan to sustain improvements within the school. As a result, there have been significant changes to the structure of leadership and management in the school. Through more effective monitoring and analysis of data, teachers are now better informed to tackle the underachievement found in some groups of pupils. As yet, teachers are not using this assessment data effectively enough in planning lessons to meet the individual learning needs of all pupils. However, targets for school improvement are supporting staff and beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress, although they have not yet contributed to improved standards for all abilities. Senior leaders rightly acknowledge there is still more to do, especially in providing for the more able pupils. They have yet to monitor at all levels the impact of those actions taken to improve the school's overall performance.

The restructuring of the governing body to support the work of the school more effectively is beginning to pay dividends. Governors now have a better understanding of the school's provision and, as a result, are in a stronger position to provide appropriate support and challenge.

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
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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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 learners' needs?	3
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?	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

11 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Petroc's Church of England Primary School, Bodmin PL31 1DS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and valued the opportunities we had to talk with some of you and see you in your lessons. In return, I want to tell you what we thought of your school. We have decided yours is a satisfactory school. This means there are some good things to celebrate and some important areas we would like your teachers to improve.

Here are some of the things that we particularly liked about your school. When you begin school, you settle very well. Your behaviour is good. For example, you work well together in lessons and include one another at playtimes. You know how to keep safe and make sensible, healthy choices when eating. You have many opportunities to participate in additional school activities, which you say you enjoy, such as learning to play brass instruments. By the time you leave school in Year 6, you have made satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science and reach average standards. We have asked your school to think about ways it could make it even better for you. In particular, we have asked your teachers to do four things.

- Improve your achievement and standards in writing.
- Ensure they challenge you more in lessons, particularly those of you who find learning easy.
- Note carefully the progress you are making, so they can provide lessons that will help you to achieve higher standards in your work.
- Carefully check the impact of all the things they are doing to help make St Petroc's a really good school.

I am sure that if you continue to hold such positive attitudes to your work as those you showed us when we visited your school, you will succeed very well in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards Her Majesty's Inspector