

Pennoweth Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133406
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	316114
Inspection dates	17–18 January 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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	309
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Billham
Headteacher	Joy Crawford
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
School address	Drump Road Redruth TR15 1NA
Telephone number	01209 215671
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school was established in 2002 when former junior and infant schools were amalgamated. Since then, there have been continued changes in teaching staff. The school contains a high number of pupils with social and emotional needs. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is well above average and includes an above average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school has very close links with an adjacent Children's Centre and contains its own Nursery provision. The school also includes a 'Nurture Group', which caters for up to 10 pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are below average proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups or speaking English as an additional language. The high mobility of pupils occasionally combines with LDD issues and affects some year groups very significantly, for example, current Years 5 and 6 and the previous Year 6 group. Children's attainment on entry is very low in relation to the level expected of children for their age. The school holds the following quality marks: Investors in People, Quality Mark Assurance, Healthy School Status, Artsmark Silver Award and the British Educational Communication and Technology (BECTA) Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Pennoweth Primary School provides a satisfactory, but rapidly improving, quality of education for its pupils. Care, guidance and support are good. Specifically, pastoral care is outstanding. As a result, even though many pupils have social and emotional needs, the pupils' sensible behaviour, friendly relationships and willing contributions to the community are good features. Good links with parents and outside agencies ensure that all pupils, including many with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enjoy school and make good progress in their personal development. Parents appreciate this. One wrote, 'My child loves school' and another, 'The school as a whole seems to run well. The staff all seem to be to be friendly and helpful.'

Since the last inspection, continued staff changes have adversely affected the quality of teaching and leadership and weakened efforts to lift pupils' achievements. Under the thoughtful and determined leadership of a capable headteacher, the school is emerging well from this difficult period. Her vision of raising pupils' aspirations has not been diminished. It is now coming closer to fruition as new staff and governors work as a team to bring the improved learning first intended by the amalgamation.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is also satisfactory, and it is improving as senior managers, now with clear leadership roles, strengthen the tracking of pupils' progress. Gaps in pupils' previous understanding are being identified and suitably challenging targets are set and are promoting new learning to better effect. As a result, potentially higher attaining pupils are doing better, pupils' speaking and listening skills, and reading in Years 1 and 2, have been improved. These show that the school has a sound capacity to improve, although most initiatives have not been in place long enough to lift pupils' achievement fully. However, the high proportion of good teaching seen during the inspection is a promising sign of much further potential.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children are taught well and make good progress in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes). Good teaching and progress continues through Years 1 and 2. As a result, standards are close to average by the end of Year 2. Standards are below average overall in Year 6 and reflect satisfactory progress, including for potentially higher attainers. Whilst these standards show improving teaching and progress through Years 3 to 6, they also reflect varying numbers of pupils entering these year groups with learning needs. Even so, largely because of previous weaknesses in teaching, there is still some variation in how well pupils do in different subjects. In mathematics, for example, too many pupils lack the numeracy skills to solve problems, and in writing, some pupils are unable to use grammar accurately. Teachers mostly know their pupils well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially those with complex needs, are well supported and have sharp targets for improvement. At times, other pupils are not given precise enough guidance about how to improve, for example, there is some variation in the quality of teachers' marking, and this limits progress. The school provides a suitably planned curriculum that is enriched by a good range of clubs and activities.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Well implemented induction procedures, good links with parents and good leadership ensure that children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. From very low starting

points, particularly in personal, communication and mathematical development, children make good progress. However, skills remain well below expectations when they enter Year 1. This is the case in most areas of learning, except in personal, social and emotional development, where outstanding support helps children make exceptional progress. Teaching and learning are consistently good, with particular strengths in using praise and developing social skills. The curriculum is planned well and pays particularly close attention to children's personal needs. The outdoor area is used well for adult led activities, but the current class organisation limits opportunities for children to choose whether to be indoors or outdoors. Assessment procedures are good and children's individual needs are identified quickly. Following this, good and often very good programmes, for example, to develop speech and language, are put into place to support them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' basic numeracy skills so that they can solve problems in mathematics.
- Through Years 3 to 6, improve pupils' ability to use grammar accurately, enabling them to write more extensively.
- Make sure that pupils know what they have to do to reach their targets.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Most pupils achieve at least satisfactorily in relation to their capabilities. Standards are below average overall. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 classes, in response to consistently effective teaching. Standards are slightly below average in Year 2, except in writing, where an effective teaching focus has raised them to average. In recent years, pupils' progress through Years 3 to 6 has been constrained by inconsistencies in teaching. In combination with increased numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, often arriving from other schools, this led to a reduction in standards. In recent terms, a strengthened focus on pupils' basic skills has re-established satisfactory progress. An increasing number of pupils, including higher attainers, are on course to meet challenging targets and are now achieving well. This year, standards in Year 6 are below those normally expected for pupils of this age in English, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) and, although also improved, are lowest in mathematics. While many pupils are doing as well as they should, given their starting points, especially in speaking and listening, too many lack sufficient skills in using grammar and in applying basic number facts to solve mathematical problems.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. These are reflected in their improving attendance, which is now satisfactory. Pupils feel valued and consequently they develop confidence as learners and are keen to learn new things. Such encouragement of self-esteem is a particularly supportive feature in the "Nurture Group", where pupils also make good progress in their personal development. Pupils have a good understanding of safe, healthy lifestyles. They participate wholeheartedly in activities on 'Wonderful Wednesdays', for example, when pupils enjoy sports and make healthy foods such as pizzas, which they can take home to share

with their families. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good with particular strengths in moral and social development. Behaviour is good and has improved significantly in recent terms. Pupils say, 'We can do more learning now.' However, there are still minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils on the school council contribute well by organising discos, appointing fellow pupils as 'Yellow Hats' to help with lunchtime activities and by expressing views about the appointment of new members of staff. All pupils make good contributions to fund-raising activities and to community events. Despite some weaknesses in literacy and numeracy skills, pupils' improving ICT and social skills prepare them satisfactorily for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In all classes, teachers promote warm relationships and encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teaching is good for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities for they have much additional support. Teaching is also good in Foundation Stage classes and in Years 1 and 2 because of the consistent quality of support provided. In Years 3 to 6, continued changes in staff reduced the effectiveness of teaching. There is some variation in how well teachers show pupils how to improve through marking and some pupils still have gaps in their understanding. Over time, teaching and learning is satisfactory, but as the staffing has stabilised, teachers are able to share learning objectives more consistently with pupils. They are increasingly encouraging pupils to learn basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in real-life situations, for example, planning visits to the sights of London. These are stimulating pupils' interest and bridging gaps in previous learning. Teachers and their assistants involve pupils in evaluating their progress and promote new learning. Although many of these strategies typified the good teaching seen during the inspection, this consistent quality has not been in place long enough to lift pupils' achievement to the full. Nevertheless, pupils' progress is benefiting, which illustrates the school's sound ability to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is a good enrichment programme and links with other organisations. Well attended activities include, for example, a 'Breakfast Club' and several sports clubs, which make good contributions to pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles. Children in Nursery and Reception classes experience a well balanced curriculum that takes good account of their stages of development and individual needs. Support for the learning needs of pupils with complex needs is planned and implemented very effectively. The learning needs of other pupils are addressed satisfactorily. This academic year, the school has adapted class groupings and is challenging potentially higher attaining pupils to better effect. In addition, pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are being developed in a more progressive way across the range of subjects. These strategies are accelerating progress by enthusing pupils as learners and bridging gaps in pupils' earlier experiences, but have yet to be sustained over time to develop pupils' skills to the full.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care for the pupils is outstanding. Teachers really know how to deal with the complex needs of many of the pupils in their care. Comprehensive personal, social and health education programmes, including the work of the 'learning mentor', ensure that pupils are exceptionally well supported to develop good personal and social skills. 'The Breakfast Club' provides a calm start to the day for many pupils. There are rigorous systems in place to monitor attendance and lateness and these are raising attendance. Systems for promoting good behaviour are effective. Pupils appreciate the recently introduced rewards for good effort, behaviour and achievement. Their positive responses were clearly seen in the lovely atmosphere during the 'Celebration Assembly'. The quality of academic guidance given to pupils is satisfactory. 'Writing ladders' and involving pupils in evaluating their own work are bringing improvement. However, these have yet to be implemented with equal effect across the school and some pupils are not always given precise enough guidance about how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is a dedicated and effective leader who, despite continued changes in teaching staff, has nurtured a calm and orderly community where the care and personal development of pupils are good and in parts exemplary. Governors, too, are much changed. They give sound support and fulfil a valued role in promoting improvement. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. It is strengthening rapidly as new leadership teams help staff to refine and use their skills to better effect. For example, more precise tracking of pupils' progress is addressing gaps in prior learning and helping more pupils reach their suitably challenging targets. Leadership of the Foundation Stage and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well established strengths. The leadership of ICT is an effective feature. Well thought out initiatives to strengthen leadership and management through changed responsibilities and appointments are improving provision and pupils' learning, but have not been in place long enough to help pupils reach their full potential. Even so, a sharper focus on academic achievement and more effective teaching and learning show a sound capacity to improve into the future.

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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?	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	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 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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pennoweth Primary School, Redruth, TR15 1NA

Your friendliness towards each other and with visitors to the school clearly showed that you enjoy coming to school. We enjoyed our visit, too. We would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to us, particularly members of the school council and some of you in Year 6. We were very interested to hear what you had to say about your school. These are the main things we found:

- Yours is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. For some time, continued changes in staff weakened the school, but senior managers are now working together more effectively as a team to help you make better progress.
- Your behaviour is good. You play a full part in school life and show a good awareness of others during the sound, but improving, range of learning activities provided for you. You make good contributions to the community and know how to keep healthy.
- Staff work closely with your parents and other people and care for you extremely well, especially those of you who need extra support.
- Teaching and progress are satisfactory overall. Most of you make good progress in Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 2 classes. The quality of teaching and learning has varied too much in Years 3 to 6, largely because of continued changes in teachers, and this restricted your progress, but there is better teaching now and an increasing number of you are doing well in response to more consistently challenging work.

To help the school to become better, we have asked the headteacher, governors and teachers to do these things: improve your achievement and the standards you reach in English and mathematics. We would like them, particularly, to work on your use of grammar, to improve your writing, and your understanding of number facts to help you solve problems. We have also asked the teachers to strengthen the way they show you how to improve your work. You can help, too, by working hard and believing that you can do better. Thank you, once again, and best wishes for the future. Yours sincerely Alex Baxter Lead Inspector

Annex B



19 January 2008

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

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter
Lead Inspector