

St Hilary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111799
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	325466
Inspection date	20 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	257
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Scrase
Headteacher	Bill Mann
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Lane St Hilary Penzance TR20 9DR
Telephone number	01736 763324
Fax number	01736 763115

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

- The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:
- standards and achievement, especially in mathematics
- the achievement of potentially higher attaining children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the impact of the shared leadership on leadership and management, especially upon evaluations of the effectiveness of school actions such as those to support community cohesion.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors, pupils and staff, visits to classes and a scrutiny of pupils' work, observation of other aspects of the school day, such as break-time, an analysis of parents' questionnaires, and school documentation, including data on pupils' progress, records of visits by other external assessors and minutes of meetings. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors 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 is an average size school serving the village of St Hilary. A number of parents bring their children here from surrounding villages and the school is heavily oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average and no pupils have English as an additional language. The school has a large number of awards, including Quality Mark in Basic Skills, Dyslexia friendly status, Investors in People, Healthy Schools Status and Active Mark. The headteacher also leads a federated school nearby. There is an independently managed pre-school provision on site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Hilary Primary School is an outstanding school. The success of the school is due to the relentless drive to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as possible. In this school, every child really does matter. One of the many parents who wrote in support of the school summed this up, saying, 'The ethos of the school is clearly one of a positive and inclusive nature where every child is given the opportunity to reach their full potential.' The school has built upon the great strengths noted at the last inspection and maintained the high standards seen. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher ensures that all those with responsibility in the school, including governors, work together as an extremely effective team. This results in a continual striving to provide the best possible learning experience for pupils. Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They start school with skills slightly below those expected at that age and make excellent progress to start Year 1 with above average skills. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is excellent and standards are well above average by Year 2. Pupils build upon this successfully in Years 3 to 6 and reach standards that are well above average in all subjects by Year 6. Standards in mathematics show a particular improvement this year. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make exceptionally good progress because of the outstanding support they receive. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are also above average.

Pupils respond extremely well to the outstanding teaching. They say that they enjoy school immensely. This can be seen in their very positive attitudes to learning and their exemplary behaviour. The wide range of activities provided in the excellent curriculum motivates and stimulates pupils very well. The rich experience that pupils enjoy can be seen in the high quality work in many subjects, especially art and music. This makes a wonderful contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being, especially their excellent spiritual, moral and social development. The wide range of sporting activities and after-school clubs are attended enthusiastically, demonstrating pupils' excellent understanding of the need to stay healthy and fit. Pupils from this school enjoy a very high degree of success in the many local community sports activities and competitions they enter. Pupils' enthusiasm for music contributes extremely well to community cohesion. Pupils not only take part in local music events but also take their music to share with schools in parts of London such as Tower Hamlets. Nevertheless, the school has recognised that more links like this are needed to develop and extend pupils' understanding of the rich diversity of cultures found in Britain. As a result, additional links have been developed with schools in London and Liverpool. The impact of these is just starting to be seen as the links are not yet fully embedded. Pupils' good understanding of the global community is ensured by links with schools in Uganda and Australia. Pupils take on responsibilities such as acting as school councillors, house captains and team captains, making an excellent contribution to the running of the school. Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding. Pupils take part in events such as the Golowan Festival, St Piran's Day, local flower shows and local festivals. These and many other activities ensure that the school is extremely well represented in the local community. The school choir has even made a compact disc (CD) with a local band and choir that has raised a large sum for charity. The skills that pupils develop through these activities, together with the high standards in so many subjects, make an excellent contribution to pupils' future economic well-being.

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are outstanding and the procedures for child protection and safeguarding meet requirements. This not only ensures that pupils stay safe

but also gives them an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils have a clear understanding of internet safety. The procedures for checking on the progress of pupils are of very high quality. The excellent teaching is exemplified by the very great care taken by teachers to check on how well pupils are doing and then to set each pupil suitable learning targets for improvement. The school recently identified some inconsistencies in marking and revised the marking policy and consequently, the quality of marking improved. Although the new policy is not completely embedded yet, marking in most classes is excellent and gives pupils a clear view on what they need to do next to improve their work. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress towards their targets due to the extremely good support given by teaching assistants and the strong links with outside agencies. Those pupils identified as gifted and talented are given learning targets that really challenge them. Additional support for these pupils is provided through the strong partnership with the receiving secondary school.

The very strong commitment of the excellent headteacher to teamwork ensures that responsibility is shared and all who work there feel they have responsibility for making the school even better. The outstanding leadership and management extend to all levels of the school. The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses through the extremely robust arrangements for checking on the work of the school. Governors and teachers all make a strong contribution to this process and ensure that action is taken to bring about improvement. This is best seen in a recent activity carried out by a group of staff who carried out a thorough check of pupils' work to confirm their own assessments. This confirmed the well above average standards in English, mathematics and science but the whole staff felt that standards in ICT could be further improved. This subject is being used very well by teachers to support learning but the school felt that pupils' skills could be improved with a review of equipment and all staff having further skills training in this area. As a result, all teachers and teaching assistants were provided with professional development in this subject and equipment purchased accordingly. A further check on pupils' work later in the term showed a significant improvement in standards in ICT. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in this subject are now above average. It is precisely this attention to detail and a relentless drive to improve and provide a high quality learning experience for pupils that ensures the success of this school. Budget management is excellent and governors work tirelessly to improve the site and buildings to provide the best learning environment that they can. The clear and continual improvement taking place demonstrates that this school has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children receive a very good start in this school. The transition is eased by the strong links with pre-school situated on the school site. The regular checks on children's progress show that they start school with skills slightly below those normally expected. Achievement is excellent because of the outstanding teaching, and children start Year 1 very well prepared for learning and with skills that are above average. The environment in the Reception classes and the high quality outdoor area is stimulating and exciting. Nevertheless, the school is aware that the divided area makes it difficult to ensure that all children get equal access to the outdoor learning environment. Plans have been approved to move the Early Years Foundation Stage classes together in one building with improved access to outdoor facilities. Until this is in place, the school is aware that the management of this aspect of learning needs to be more rigorous. Nevertheless, the excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that

the needs of the children are met consistently. Teachers are skilled at ensuring a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. The high quality systems for checking on the progress of children are used very effectively to ensure challenging activities are matched well to the needs of all children, including the most able. Those with learning difficulties are identified at an early stage, and high quality support is provided to ensure they make the same progress as other children. The learning experience of the children is enhanced by the excellent relationships that adults develop with the children. The gentle use of humour alongside praise makes children feel secure and valued. They are really motivated to learn and all engage in activities. They clearly enjoy learning because of the well-paced lessons and are eager to talk about what they are doing. Great care is taken to ensure children are safe and their welfare is very well provided for.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have equal access to a high quality outdoor learning environment.
- Ensure the systems to monitor the impact of the high quality actions in place to support community cohesion are also used effectively to monitor pupils' understanding of the wide range of cultures found in Britain.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	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
The extent to which 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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

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

20 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Hilary Primary School, Penzance TR20 9DR

Thank you for making us so welcome and talking with us when we visited your school. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and the polite and mature way that you spoke with us.

Yours is an outstanding school. We think that the real strength of your school is the way that it keeps improving and trying to help you learn even better. Here are some of the things we really liked.

- Your achievement is outstanding and you attain standards, especially in English, mathematics and science that are much better than those found in most schools.
- Your school makes learning interesting and fun because of the wonderful range of the activities provided for you. No wonder you enjoy school so much!
- The school looks after you very well, which is why you know how to stay safe and keep healthy.
- The teaching is excellent. The school has very talented teachers and teaching assistants who make learning enjoyable and interesting.
- You make a big contribution to the running of the school through the school council and other jobs that you do. Your contribution to the local community through music and sport is exceptional.
- The school is led and managed extremely well by your excellent headteacher and the outstanding governing body.

We have asked the school to do are just a few minor things to make it even better.

- Make sure that all of you in the Reception classes have the same opportunities to learn and develop through outdoor play.
- Make sure the systems to check on how well you benefit from the links with the local community and the schools overseas are also used effectively to check on your understanding of the wide range of cultures found in Britain.

Thank you again for your help, and congratulations on a wonderful school.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Lake

Lead inspector