

# Mithian School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111867
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	325481
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Denise Morris

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.

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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 (total)	111
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	18
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miranda Field
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda Garbett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Buckshead St Agnes TR5 0XW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01872 552711
<b>Fax number</b>	01872 554324

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Year groups vary in number from 5 to 15. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly specific learning difficulties, is about average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children from the age of three, who are taught in one Nursery and Reception class.

## 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. It has a number of outstanding features. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. This is because of rigorous monitoring and assessment that provides a clear picture of how well pupils are doing and what needs to be done to help them to improve further. This is a school where every child matters. The outstanding care, guidance and support that is provided for pupils ensures that they feel safe and secure at school. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future of the school. This has resulted in the use of challenging targets which are helping to improve all aspects of the school. She is ably supported by other leaders and by governors who regularly offer challenge to ensure that actions will have the best possible outcome. Parents are very pleased with the school and recognise its improvement. One parent wrote: 'Mithian offers a warm, friendly, caring environment. My children couldn't have had a better start to their education.' Another commented: 'I can only applaud Mithian for how it equips its pupils with a sense of confidence and purpose.'

Standards vary year by year because of the small numbers in each year group but they show a gradual rising trend. By Year 6, pupils attain standards that are above average in reading, mathematics and science, making good progress from their individual starting points. Standards in writing are average. Progress in writing is not as good as it is in other subjects. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. They benefit from excellent care and support so that they feel confident and achieve well. The outdoor learning area for children in the Nursery and Reception class is not as stimulating as that found in the classroom. It lacks a covered area to provide protection from the weather so there are times when children cannot choose to play and learn outside. A few parents expressed concern about the lack of play area equipment and a few pupils in Year 5 also said that they would like some shade in the playground.

Outstanding personal development and well-being is a key feature of the school's success. Pupils take part with enthusiasm in all the activities offered to them. They talk with excitement about the residential trip to London and the local visits that they make. For example, pupils in Year 5 told inspectors how much they value the annual visit to the local Minack Theatre. They have a good understanding of their local area and explained knowledgeably the reasons for the decline in mining locally. They were also able to explain why tin mining was once very important to the Cornish people.

The good curriculum is broad and balanced and has a good range of activities for all pupils. Teaching across the school is good, with outstanding teaching in some lessons in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 3 and 4. Relationships are strong in all classes, leading to excellent behaviour in and around the school.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There are many outstanding features. The classroom provides a warm and welcoming ethos for children and parents and, as a result, children thrive. They enjoy their time in the Nursery and Reception class where they get off to a good start to their education. Children enter the Early Years provision with variable skills for their age. Assessments show that during their time in the class, they make at least good progress from their individual starting points and many make excellent progress. All children achieve

well. By the time they enter Year 1, many attain above average standards. Children's attainment in personal, emotional and social development is consistently above average. Children behave exceptionally well. They are well known to staff and they are safe and secure at school. Welfare arrangements are excellent. Children quickly gain confidence and self-esteem in this caring and welcoming environment. This was evident during the inspection when they performed a play about 'The Three Little Pigs' for their parents and peers. They showed high levels of confidence as they played their parts and spoke their lines. Their mathematical skills were also enhanced as they sold vegetables from their school garden to their parents to raise funds for a piece of equipment.

Children benefit from good and often outstanding teaching. In the classroom, activities are rich and varied, creating a stimulating area in which children can investigate and find answers for themselves. The outdoor area is less successful because it is very open with no shade or covered area to protect children from the sun, wind and rain. Leaders recognise the way that this limits children's choices about where they want to work and play and are working rigorously to improve outdoor provision. Because of good leadership, children's achievements are effectively assessed and monitored so that there is a clear picture of their individual progress.

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

- Raise standards in writing so that they match those in reading, mathematics and science.
- Improve the outdoor area for all pupils but particularly for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well and make good progress from their starting points. From a broadly average start, pupils attain above average standards in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Standards in writing are average. The introduction of a good programme to help pupils develop their understanding of the link between letters and sounds is having a positive impact on reading skills but has not yet begun to improve achievement in writing. Overall good progress is maintained throughout Years 3 to 6 so that standards are above average when pupils leave the school in Year 6. Standards are higher in reading, mathematics and science than they are in writing. Some pupils do not do enough writing in lessons. Gifted and talented pupils and those of higher attainment achieve well in all aspects of learning. Pupils do well in music and languages such as German and also Cornish because of some specialist teaching in these subjects.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The vast majority of pupils enjoy school and, as a result, attendance is above average. Pupils' social and moral development is outstanding. The absence of any bullying or racist incidents shows that the school provides a secure environment in which pupils feel safe. Pupils are polite and helpful and older pupils regularly help younger ones. For example, they act as monitors at lunchtime helping to cut up food and pour drinks for the younger children. Pupils have a very good awareness of healthy eating and make informed choices about their snacks and their lunch. The school exceeds the recommended time allocated to physical education and all pupils join in with exercises at the beginning of each day. Pupils show outstanding respect for others and for their environment. The school council is effective and pupils have regular opportunities

to make decisions such as what equipment to buy from a given budget for the daily 'Huff and Puff'. Links with the local community are exceptionally good. Pupils regularly take part in local festivals such as the 'Flora Dance', and perform with their own samba band in local towns. They raise funds for a wide range of charities. Through productive links with schools in Spain and Uganda, pupils are extending their understanding of different lifestyles. Their spiritual and cultural development is good and they have a clear understanding of the diversity of cultures that make up modern Britain. Links with the local secondary school are productive and pupils are well prepared for their futures.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers make effective use of the interactive whiteboards in each classroom to keep pupils focused and engaged in learning. Teaching in mathematics is particularly strong. In these lessons, pupils are challenged to improve their skills by very effective questioning that makes them think carefully about their answers. For example, in Years 1 and 2, children improved their understanding of calculations as they made their own decisions about whether they should use addition, subtraction, division or multiplication to solve a particular problem. Effective explanations and questioning ensured that they were able to make the right choice. Teaching assistants play a vital role in the support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to achieve well. Evidence from past work shows that pupils do not always do enough writing in lessons. Day-to-day marking of pupils' writing is supportive but does not always tell pupils how they could improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school has a broad and balanced range of learning activities which meets the needs of all pupils effectively. Links across subjects are developing well. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils used their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well to display graphs showing data they collected as part of a mathematics lesson. Older pupils use their research skills to good effect as they investigate Cornwall's past mining industry during their history lessons. All pupils learn German, and those in Years 3 and 4 also learn Spanish and Cornish. The new literacy framework has recently been introduced and all staff have been trained.. The range of sports contributes well to healthy lifestyles. Provision for music and sports is particularly effective, leading to good achievement by pupils. Exciting enrichment through clubs, residential visits and visitors to the school help pupils to enjoy learning. The outdoor area is spacious. It provides well for many sports activities but is underdeveloped to support other areas of the curriculum such as understanding of nature.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

Safeguarding procedures are robust and the school takes a great deal of care in making sure pupils are safe. The tracking of pupils' achievements is rigorous. The excellent procedures highlight how well each pupil is doing. This ensures that their progress is regularly followed so that appropriate intervention can be put in place where needed. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported and their parents are pleased with the progress they

make. Challenging targets for all pupils are set and regularly monitored but some pupils are not fully involved in this process and a few are unclear about what they need to do to improve. The school works exceptionally well with parents and outside agencies to meet the various needs of all pupils. The outstanding care, guidance and support provided for pupils contribute strongly to their successful personal development.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

There have been many improvements to the provision and in the outcomes for pupils since the last inspection. Standards have risen in all areas and teaching has improved. This is because of a clear focus on monitoring all aspects of the school's work. As a result of effective self-evaluation, leaders and managers at all levels have a clear view of what needs to be done next. They recognise the issues for improvement identified in this report. Governors play an active role in the day-to-day management of the school. They value the strong direction given to them by the headteacher. Leaders recognise that there is more to do to improve standards in writing across the school. A good start has been made in developing an approach to community cohesion. Very effective local links enhance provision for pupils in many areas of learning. Links with a school in Spain are having a positive impact on pupils' awareness of other cultures. There are no productive links with other schools in Britain outside Cornwall although initial links have been made with a school in London. The school has not yet evaluated the success of its community cohesion strategy. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## 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 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	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

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

1 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mithian Primary School, St. Agnes TR5 0XW

Thank you for your help in our recent visit to your school. We really enjoyed meeting you. You told us lots of things about your school. You said it was a good school and we agree with you. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out about your school.

You do well in your lessons. By the time you leave the school in Year 6, nearly all of you do better than most other pupils in reading, mathematics and science. This is because you have good teaching and support in your lessons. Teachers plan lots of exciting things for you to do and you told us that you particularly enjoy all the visits to places of interest. The residential trip to London by older pupils is very popular. We were impressed by the way you learn different languages, and really enjoyed listening to some of you talking in Cornish. Well done for that!

All of you behave very well. You help each other and work together in a friendly way. We like the way that older pupils help the younger ones. Your school council is keen to make changes to improve your school. We know that some of you would like more to do and more shade in the playground, because you told us this.

Leaders keep you safe at school and look after you well.

We are asking your school to do two things to help you do even better:

- improve your writing skills
- make the outdoor area more exciting and provide some shelter and shade for all of you, especially for the youngest children in the Nursery and Reception class.

You could help with these by trying hard in your writing lessons and by giving your school council your own ideas for the outdoor play area.

Thank you again for your help, and good luck for your futures.

Yours faithfully

Denise Morris

Lead Inspector