

St Neot Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111964
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	325504
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Grahame Sherfield 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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	71
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	Brian Williams
Headteacher	David Collins
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Loveny Road St Neot Liskeard PL14 6NL
Telephone number	01579 320580
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

St Neot is a small primary school on the edge of Bodmin Moor. Most pupils live outside the village within the school's designated area. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is made within a class that also includes pupils from Year 1. Some children are admitted earlier than others on a part-time basis under a Cornwall County Council scheme. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with a statement of special educational needs are broadly average. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. In the past, the number of pupils joining at points other than in Reception has been above average. Plans are well advanced to build an outreach children's centre on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Neot has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now a good school. The headteacher and his staff work together as a close-knit team and have created a safe and caring community that includes and values all pupils. One parent praised the 'very friendly atmosphere', while another reported that children 'are listened to, feel safe, secure and happy going to school'. The inspection evidence fully supports these views, which are representative of most parents and carers.

Skills vary considerably from year to year when children start in Reception, from below to above expected levels. Because of the good provision, pupils achieve well. The school's assessments indicate children currently in the EYFS are on course to reach the levels expected by the end of the Reception Year from starting points below those generally found. Because of good teaching, pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school and reach standards that are above national averages. Progress has been slower in Years 1 to 5, in part the legacy of a past staffing difficulty, but is now accelerating. The school rightly intends that this should continue. Standards improved by the end of Year 2 in 2008. Teachers' assessments and pupils' progress in lessons indicate that this improvement is set to continue for 2009, with standards on course to be above average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils are rightly proud of their school and thoroughly enjoy their learning. They are pleased that the teachers 'make the lessons fun'. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils' concentration in lessons is very good. Their attendance has improved and is now good. Staff in this small school know pupils very well and monitor progress very effectively through a detailed tracking system. Pupils understand the challenging targets set for them and work very hard to achieve them. The curriculum is carefully planned and based on an appropriate cycle to ensure that pupils in the mixed-age classes develop the knowledge and skills they need. Pupils particularly enjoy the larger pieces of work when teachers make good use of the potential links between subjects, such as the work on Charles Dickens, and benefit from the opportunities to develop their literacy skills in other subjects. Pupils undertake independent enquiries but these opportunities are not organised systematically to help them to take more responsibility for their own learning as they move through the school.

Teaching and learning are good and activities are organised carefully so that pupils build effectively on what they have done before. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and well trained, and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own work and consider how they might improve. This is having a positive impact on their progress.

The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear direction for the future development of the school. He and his staff are supported well by a governing body that fulfils its role effectively, providing good challenge and support. A strong emphasis on monitoring pupils' progress carefully and on raising standards has borne fruit in better progress in writing by the end of Year 6 and improving standards in Years 1 and 2. The capacity to improve further is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The EYFS is led and managed well and children make good progress. Their skills are assessed at an early stage after joining Reception and this information is used well to plan the next steps

in their learning. Curriculum planning is detailed and ensures that children's varied needs are met appropriately. Teaching is good, with a carefully designed mix of activities directed by the teacher and those chosen by the children, which meets their differing needs well. Sometimes, the questions asked of children do not stimulate their interest effectively enough.

The teacher and the support staff are a good team and care well for the children. Staff use good approaches in assessing the progress children make and children are encouraged to add items to their profile to help to chart their wider development. Staff have built effective links with pre-school groups to smooth children's entry into school. There is a good range of information for parents and carers, and staff have successfully engaged them in supporting their children's learning, although there is scope to increase this further. The current range of outdoor equipment, and arrangements for its storage, have been correctly identified as in need of improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the progress made by pupils in Years 1 to 5.
- Provide systematic opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of undertaking independent enquiries and take more responsibility for their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Careful monitoring means that additional support is provided where there is any risk of falling behind. The school correctly identified the need to improve the progress of higher attaining pupils and those who joined the school at points other than in Reception and has worked successfully to do so. Improving standards in writing has also been a priority. Through well-targeted actions to help pupils generate ideas and plan their work, all Year 6 pupils reached the expected level in writing in 2008.

Progress in Years 1 to 5 has been slower than in Year 6. Some staffing difficulties in the class for the youngest pupils meant that they did not get off to the good start from which current children benefit. This had a negative impact on progress as pupils moved into Years 1 and 2. Staff have worked effectively to counter this. The careful setting of targets and checking of standards have resulted in improved progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to that of their peers. Their needs are clearly identified and targets are appropriate to their particular difficulties.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Relationships are excellent and pupils say they feel very safe. They are confident that there is little bullying and that any incidents that do occur are quickly resolved by the teachers and other adults. Pupils are very well aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise, both during and after school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. They have a very good understanding of the local cultural heritage and of other faiths, but they are less secure in their understanding of the multicultural nature of life in many parts of Britain. They benefit from participating in various local competitions, events and sporting tournaments, as well as from the wide range of visits and visitors to school. The school council ensures that pupils' views are heard and

almost all have an opportunity to serve on the council during their time in the school. Older pupils take on responsibilities very willingly and enjoy reading with the youngest children, as well as helping them to play at lunchtimes. Pupils raise funds for a wide variety of local, national and overseas charities. Their good basic skills and positive attitudes prepare them well for their future economic well-being. Older pupils benefit from the annual residential visits which foster independence and the ability to get on with other people.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Very good relationships in the classrooms mean that pupils work well together, are enthusiastic and participate with interest. Where appropriate, pupils enjoy the productive opportunities to work with a 'buddy'. Classroom displays are of high quality, providing real support to pupils in their learning, especially in English and mathematics.

Teaching is sharply focused, so that learning intentions are made clear and revisited during lessons to check progress. Teachers are energetic and enthusiastic, and lessons generally proceed at a good pace, which helps pupils to sustain their concentration and interest. Where appropriate, questions and small whiteboards are used effectively to check pupils' understanding. Teachers make good use of computers and projectors to access materials on the internet. Occasionally, teachers allow a little more time than an activity needs or miss an opportunity to press pupils to think further. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils and routinely make valuable notes about the progress of groups or individuals. They meet teachers each week to discuss what is planned and to share their observations of pupils at work. They often make useful contributions to help teachers in whole-class teaching sessions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Provision for personal, social and health education is a strength of the school which pupils value. The rich heritage of Cornwall is used well to promote pupils' cultural development and attitudes to their environment. The good range of visits and visitors makes an important contribution to pupils' enjoyment of their learning. Extra-curricular activities are good and include various sports as well as music, wildlife and computer clubs. The provision includes activities for those in Years 1 and 2 as well as older pupils. The annual residential visit for Years 4 to 6 supports pupils' learning well, including developing their understanding of other localities. Current opportunities for pupils to undertake enquiries are not organised systematically to develop their skills in taking increasing responsibility for their own learning.

Provision for ICT has improved and pupils use their skills to support their learning in different subjects. Links with the local secondary school effectively support the teaching and learning of design and technology, physical education and French.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Rigorous and effective procedures are in place to ensure the safety, security and health of pupils. The school has an exceptional caring, supportive and inclusive atmosphere in which happy, well-motivated pupils thrive and develop extremely well. Pupils appreciate the high

quality guidance given in teachers' marking and respond well to the excellent opportunities to reflect on their own progress and on how to improve.

Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties is good. Pupils contribute significantly to their individual education plans, which are focused and structured well to give them the support they need. Links with the educational psychology service are very good. Parents are strongly supportive of the school. They receive excellent written reports on their children's progress, termly opportunities to meet staff and weekly newsletters. Links with local schools are very well established and help pupils make a smooth transition to the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior staff and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, based on effective systems for monitoring and evaluating its work. Teachers take their multiple responsibilities seriously and make a major contribution to school self-evaluation and leading teaching and learning. The school is rightly seeking to improve its systems for tracking pupils' progress to enable easier handling of the data and improved access. The school's strategic plan sets out an appropriate agenda for improvement in 2008–09 and includes an outline of activities for the next two years. Targets are realistic yet challenging. Details of coordinators' actions in monitoring and developing their subjects are not readily available to support appropriate discussion and the checking of progress.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. The sense of community in the school is strong and there are good links with the local community. The school works well with external organisations to extend the opportunities for pupils. Good examples of these are the effective partnerships with the local secondary school, the Wivelshire cluster of schools and the recent 'Big Project' on media arts.

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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 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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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	2
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	2
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 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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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

15 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Neot Community Primary School, St Neot PL14 6NL

I should like to thank you for your involvement in the recent inspection of your school, particularly for the friendly and open way in which you talked to me in discussions, in lessons and around the school. I particularly enjoyed joining some of you for a tasty school dinner.

You are rightly proud of your school. It has improved significantly and it is now a good school. It has some important strengths.

- Your behaviour and your enjoyment of learning are outstanding.
- The care, guidance and support that the school provides for you are excellent.
- You make good progress in your work, supported by good teaching and a good curriculum.
- The provision for the children in Reception is good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher, the governors and other staff are good.

I have asked the school to improve two aspects.

- The pace of the progress made by pupils in Years 1 to 5 has increased but I have asked the school to improve this further.
- You have various opportunities to carry out enquiries but these are not planned systematically to help you develop your skills in working independently and taking more responsibility for your learning as you move from year to year. I have asked the school to address this. You can help by making the most of these opportunities when they occur.

Thank you again for your involvement in the inspection and I wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Grahame Sherfield

Her Majesty's Inspector