

Sennen School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111804
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337743
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Judith Goodchild

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Nicholas
Headteacher	Edwina Jeffrey
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. During the inspection, seven lessons, three teachers and an assembly were observed. Inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks and analysed assessment information on pupils' progress. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the governing body, and the headteacher. Inspectors held discussions with a representative from the local authority; they also scrutinised the school improvement plan, reports from the School Improvement Partner, the local authority's action plan and minutes from the governing body's meetings, as well as policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding. Evidence relating to the school's work on community cohesion was also taken into account. Inspection questionnaires were completed by 32 parents and carers. The inspectors also looked at questionnaires completed by staff and by pupils in Years 3 to 6.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the current attainment and progress of pupils in Year 6
- the reasons for the significant underachievement and progress of pupils in Year 6 over the last three years
- progress against the key issues identified at the last inspection.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school situated in the far west of Cornwall. All pupils are of White British background and speak English as their first language. A higher than average proportion of pupils join the school during the school year. In 2008, the school gained the Active Mark and the Bronze Award for School Councils. A pre-school group that is not managed by the governing body is based in a classroom.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has been significantly below the national average for several years and the quality of their learning and progress is inadequate. However, by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above that expected nationally and they make good progress from their starting points in the Reception class. The quality of teaching varies across the school and is directly linked to the progress pupils make; despite some good practice it is inadequate overall. Weaker practice is evident where teachers do not plan lessons that address the learning needs of the range of age groups within the class. Assessment data is not always accurate and information about pupils is not used sufficiently well to match work more closely to their learning needs. Lessons lack pace and challenge, particularly for older or more able pupils. The age-related requirements of the National Curriculum are not always addressed to ensure continuity and progression in learning. In Years 3 to 6, the lack of secure information about the level that pupils are working at, shortcomings in assessment systems to track their progress, and the inability of school leaders to monitor learning effectively have contributed significantly to the low attainment and inadequate progress of pupils for a considerable period. There is an absence of good quality marking, with little clear guidance on how well pupils are doing in their work or how they can improve. There are significant weaknesses in pupils' basic numeracy skills. Since Easter, the local authority's school improvement team has been working with the school.

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. They clearly enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. They benefit from a rich programme of extra activities that widens their horizons. Pupils say the school is 'like a big happy family' and in the mixed-age classes there are opportunities for older pupils to act as good role models for younger ones. The School Council takes its responsibilities seriously and is instrumental in improving the school environment by suggesting, for example, books for the library and play equipment. The school is fully involved with its local community and when a shoal of red mullet was recently being caught from the shore, the whole school went down to the beach to watch.

The governing body has correctly identified the issues facing the school and have been working in partnership with the School Improvement Partner and local authority to bring about change. However, governance is inadequate because it has had too little impact

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of the work of the school since the last inspection. There are weaknesses in the school's self-evaluation, and judgement of its performance against national norms is inaccurate. The monitoring of teaching and learning is inadequate. Leadership has failed to take effective action to address weaknesses in teaching over a significant period of time and the key issues from the previous inspection have not been fully addressed. The school's capacity for improvement is therefore inadequate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - ensuring pupils' work is assessed regularly and accurately
 - ensuring that ongoing assessment is used consistently to plan lessons at the appropriate level for pupils' age and ability
 - ensuring that age-appropriate National Curriculum levels are used in all subjects when planning work for mixed-age classes to ensure continuity and progression in learning
 - improving the quality of marking so that pupils are clear about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work
 - improving pupils' skills and understanding in mathematics.
- Improve the leadership and management of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring data is accurate and analysing it more rigorously to track the progress of all groups of pupils
 - driving improvements in the quality of teaching by rigorous monitoring of planning and classroom performance and taking effective action to address any weaknesses
 - ensuring that governors are rigorous in holding the school to account for tackling weaknesses in provision and improving outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils are keen and eager to learn and make the most of the range of activities the school provides. They have well-developed social skills and work well together in groups. Relationships between all age groups of pupils are good. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in their learning through well-planned activities. Analysis of recent national tests results, for example, has shown a weakness in identification of right angles and a lesson observed by inspectors was focused on reinforcing this aspect of numeracy. In Key Stage 2, unvalidated results for this year show that interventions have been successful in raising attainment in English and mathematics for pupils in Year 6. However, inspectors found that pupils still lack basic mathematical skills in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In some lessons, work set was either too easy for pupils or the task was beyond their capabilities. Consequently, the pace of learning slowed, and pupils resorted to off-task behaviour which distracted other pupils

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and affected the quality of everybody's learning. This was not always effectively dealt with. Pupils and parents who completed the questionnaire commented on this.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and really enjoy the after-school clubs and visits. Older pupils were able to talk with enthusiasm about their recent school camp. Pupils have a good understanding about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and how to keep themselves safe. They recently played a Tag-Rugby match during the half-time interval at Twickenham; the school has been successful in winning many local sports competitions. Pupils willingly and enthusiastically take on responsibilities and understand that these play an important part in the daily, smooth running of the school. Their suggestions and concerns are taken seriously and they set their own class rules each year. The school is an integral part of this small community and is involved with many local festivals and celebrations. Because of its proximity to the beach, pupils have taken part in a 'Beach Clean' organised by Surfers against Sewage, and are benefitting from a beach day organised by the local surf club which includes surfing lessons. Links with a school in Burnley have been developed to extend pupils' understanding of different cultures and societies within the United Kingdom. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their economic awareness are limited and, together with weak literacy and numeracy skills, this means that pupils are not well prepared for their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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How effective is the provision?

In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good. Lessons are fun and offer good consolidation of learning at the appropriate level through effective use of assessment. Good use is made of the outside area to bring relevance into pupils' learning, for example through finding where right angles were in fences and other features of the school site. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed; they are clear about learning objectives and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. This good practice is not evident in Years 3 to 6, where lesson planning is weak. Learning outcomes for pupils of different ages and abilities are not clear and are not based on secure knowledge of the levels at which pupils are working. In pupils' books little consolidation of key skills, such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), through topic work is evident.

The curriculum is suitable for some pupils and foundation subjects are taught through a range of topic-based activities. However, it is currently inadequate for more able pupils in Years 3 to 6 and also has limited impact on developing pupils' skills in ICT. Links with other local primary schools and organisations provide very good opportunities for pupils to mix with a wider range of pupils. Additional benefits also include further opportunities for physical education and the development of a healthy lifestyle. Gifted and talented pupils are supported well through links with secondary schools. A range of visits and visitors enrich and support pupils' learning.

Pupils benefit from a high standard of care and their welfare needs are well catered for. Frequent visits to the local secondary school ensure that pupils are well prepared for transition at the end of Year 6. There is good support for pupils who join the school throughout the school year. Parents and carers receive appropriate updates on their children's progress and are involved with the school if any difficulties occur. However, the lack of rigour in tracking pupils' progress on a regular basis affects the ability of the school to ensure that support is put in place for children who are not making the expected progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

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There are serious weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school in carrying out its monitoring of provision and analysing performance data to address weaknesses. Leaders lack sufficient understanding of the importance of measuring and evaluating the attainment and progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6. Consequently, the drive to secure improvement in outcomes has been inadequate. The governing body plays an active role within the school, is aware of the decline in its performance, and is involved with the local authority in bringing about school improvement. Recent initiatives have helped improve the progress and attainment of pupils in Year 6 but have not adequately tackled the underlying cause of weak teaching across Key Stage 2 to ensure that pupils in Years 3 to 5 make the expected gains in their learning. The school's ability to address discrimination and ensure equality of opportunities for all is inadequate because of the significant underachievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6. Safeguarding procedures are good and monitored well by the governing body. The promotion of community cohesion is good and the governing body plays an active role in its development. This is a small, remote community and there is a real commitment to extending pupils' knowledge of the wider community and different societies within the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and experiences broadly typical for their age. The pre-school shares the school accommodation and this helps to ensure that these young children are well prepared for their move into school. Reception children settle quickly in the secure environment and enjoy learning. An appropriate

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focus is given to developing social skills and children learn and play well together. Children make good progress towards achieving their early learning goals. When they start Year 1, the majority are either at or above age-related expectations. The Reception children share a classroom with pupils in Years 1 and 2 and space is very restricted. The completion of an outside play area has helped but neither this nor the small playground outside the classroom has a covered area. However, best use is made of the facilities although opportunities for child-initiated learning are limited. Planning of activities and use of space are well organised, ensuring appropriate learning opportunities for all.

The main teaching for children is by a teaching assistant, in conjunction with the Year 1 and Year 2 teacher. The quality of teaching is good. Children's understanding of shape was effectively promoted through their creative play in constructing a building. This opportunity was used well to promote their speaking and listening skills. Good collaborative work was observed with children 'negotiating' about the design and use of materials. Children listened attentively whilst others were talking about the reasons behind their designs. Behaviour was good overall and any instances of boisterous behaviour were effectively managed. Links with parents and health professionals are good and the welfare needs of children are promoted well. For example, the speech and language therapist worked with some children with the teaching assistant present so that this work could be integrated into daily practice. By end of their time in Reception children have gained in confidence and are well prepared for their move into Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers consider that their children enjoy school and overall they are happy with their children's experiences. They say their children are well prepared for their move to secondary school and account is taken of their suggestions and concerns. A small number of parents expressed concerns about arrangements to keep their children safe, particularly on school trips. Inspectors were satisfied that risk assessments are carried out and appropriate arrangements are in place to make sure children are kept safe. A significant number of parents expressed concerns about their children's progress, and the quality of learning and progress reports.

Parents and carers also expressed concern about the effectiveness of behaviour management. Inspectors found that children are not making the expected progress and that behaviour in lessons was not always effectively managed. Parents have two

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meetings a year to discuss progress with teaching staff and an annual report. However, the lack of accurate information on children's progress affects the quality of information given to parents and the targeting of support to meet children's needs. Concerns expressed by some parents about how well the school was led and managed were confirmed by the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sennen Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 53 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	53	15	47	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	59	8	25	5	16	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	47	10	31	3	9	3	9
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	41	13	41	6	19	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	41	14	44	4	13	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	41	12	38	5	16	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	56	11	34	3	9	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	41	16	50	2	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	41	16	50	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	44	12	38	6	19	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	47	15	47	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	53	10	31	3	9	2	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	44	15	47	2	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



8 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sennen School, Penzance TR19 7AW

I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and for talking to us about your school and your work.

Most of you who completed the questionnaire and spoke to inspectors said that you enjoy school and feel safe. You particularly like visits to places of interest and the Year 6 Summer Camp. The trip to Twickenham seems to have made a big impression. Those of you who completed the questionnaire said that behaviour in school was not good. Sometimes the work that you are given in Years 3 to 6 is too hard for your age or, in the case of older pupils, too easy. When this happens, your attention wanders and you do not work hard.

Although the younger pupils are doing well, those of you in Years 3 to 6 are not getting a good enough education so you are not making enough progress in your work. To help the school improve, we have decided that it requires 'special measures'. This means the school will receive additional support and will be monitored by inspectors to see how well things are improving. These are the main things we have asked the school to do:

- make sure that teaching in Years 3 to 6 is of a good standard and that the assessment of your progress is used to set work at the appropriate level, particularly in mathematics
- make sure that you are working within the appropriate age range in all subjects so that you gain the necessary skills and knowledge for your future studies
- improve the quality of marking, so you know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve your work
- make sure that school leaders and governors use assessment information to ensure you make good progress in your work and provide you with additional support if needed.

You can play your part by always working hard in your lessons. I wish you all the best in your future studies and thank you again for being so polite and courteous.

Yours sincerely

Judith Goodchild Lead inspector

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