

Mullion Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111817
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337748
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Ronald Hall

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	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Meyer
Headteacher	Carleen Dryburgh
Date of previous school inspection	6 September 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the development plan, pupils' books, local authority reports and parental, pupil and staff questionnaires. Eighty parental, 11 staff and 36 pupil questionnaires were scrutinised.

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

- the quality of teaching and learning
- the role and impact of the new management structure in driving the school forward
- the performance, attainment and progress of all pupils across the school and especially boys.

Information about the school

The school serves the village of Mullion on the Lizard Peninsula and the surrounding area. The school is a modern, purpose-built provision currently having five classes each educating pupils from two year groups. Class sizes throughout the school are quite large. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin. The school has fairly recently gone through major turmoil, in that it has had both a new headteacher and full governing body. This was accompanied by a period of instability and upheaval in staffing. The upper age range class also tends to have relatively high mobility, with over a third of its number entering the school other than at the beginning of the school year.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Mullion Community Primary School is a rapidly improving school. Pupils and staff feel secure, take pride in their school and are proud of their achievements, especially their sporting accomplishments. Pupils enjoy attending. Typical comments include, 'This school is a very nice school and so are the teachers', and 'Mullion C.P. school is the best around for sports and I am proud to wear the school logo'. Although attendance is currently average the school has worked hard to improve this and is reversing the trend of parents taking their children out of school during term time. The curriculum is broad, well balanced and organised, presenting pupils with a wide range of interesting learning opportunities. The physical curriculum is particularly strong. The school is developing a more creative curriculum but this is in its infancy. The school utilises a wide range of visits and visitors to support learning.

While the quality of teaching and learning is good overall, it is not fully consistent throughout the school. Some lessons do not provide sufficient challenge for all pupils. Although some excellent examples were seen, marking to help pupils understand how they can improve their work is not embedded throughout the school. Children enter Reception generally at age-expected levels and make good progress, with attainment at the end of the stage being above average. Progress in Key Stage 1 is also good. Progress in Key Stage 2 slows due to the legacy of underachievement, especially in science, resulting in pupils leaving the school broadly in line with national expectations. However, the downward trend in English and mathematics has started to be reversed. While progress is currently good the outcomes in terms of pupils' achievement are satisfactory because they are still affected by a legacy of underachievement.

Following a period of instability for the school, the new headteacher has already had a positive impact. Supported by the senior leaders, she has begun to reverse the decline in standards that set in following the previous inspection. The gap between boys and girls and other groups is closing and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities now make progress at least in line with their peers. The school development plan is well focused and informed by accurate self-evaluation. However, while subject leaders are generally effective, not all are fully clear about their strategic roles. This means that the rigour of their monitoring varies. Overall, however, the drive, determination and clarity of vision of the school's new leadership, with well-focused strategies already having an impact, are providing a good capacity for sustaining improvement.

Mullion Community Primary School has good links with several local schools and a range of sporting organisations. The school uses these effectively to provide a range of sporting and curriculum opportunities for the pupils. There are also good links with a

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wide range of external agencies. The work carried out with local Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is an example of this.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in Key Stage 2, especially in science, by making teaching more consistent in providing pace and challenge for all pupils in all lessons.
- Improve the quality of learning by ensuring the consistent use of marking and assessment in the classroom so that it informs pupils on how to improve their work, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the quality of middle management by developing the consistency, frequency and rigour of subject leaders' monitoring.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Progress in English and mathematics is much quicker than in science and pupils' attainment in these two key subjects is securely at average levels. In some cases, attainment is actually higher than national expectations. In most lessons, all pupils make good progress. In a good mathematics lesson, for example, pupils used computer programmes very effectively to enhance and extend their learning. They were clearly focused on the learning objectives, supported each other and found it lively and challenging. There was clear enjoyment and relationships were excellent. Good use was made of the programme 'HELP' facility so that pupils' independence skills were well developed. The result was that all pupils made good progress and learned valuable skills for their future development.

The focus by leadership and management on improving the education for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities has clearly improved outcomes. These pupils now make progress in line with their peers. The pupil pastoral files provide staff with valuable data and information that ensure quick and fully targeted intervention. Pupils who enter the school later than is usual are very well supported and settle in quickly and effectively. The gap between boys' and girls' attainment has narrowed. The more creative approach to the curriculum is beginning to give pupils opportunities to develop a greater range of skills and knowledge. The musical and sporting opportunities they have are good examples of this.

The pupils enjoy their learning, which is reflected in their improving attendance. They demonstrate excellent social skills and are helpful both to each other and to adults alike. The pupils' spiritual, social and moral understanding is good. Pupils have an inquisitive approach to other cultures and faiths but the school does not do enough to develop a good understanding of other cultures. Pupils have a good understanding of staying healthy and safe and are confident in raising concerns to the school leaders should the need arise. They feel the school is highly supportive and staff do all they can to make them feel happy, safe and secure. Pupils make a positive contribution to both the school and local community. They play a vital role in the life of the school and community, as lunchtime monitors and members of a very active school council, and organising a range

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of charity fund-raising events. They are polite, well mannered and positive about their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and the skills to use different approaches to enhance lessons. Good use is made of resources and equipment, such as interactive whiteboards. In the best lessons, pupils know their targets and lesson objectives and are enthused by the levels of challenge and pace. In satisfactory lessons, the pace is slower and activities are less exciting. Generally, teaching and progress are now good but the impact of this better teaching has yet to fully eradicate the legacy of previous underachievement. This is especially so in Key Stage 2 and particularly at the upper end of the school. Staff have worked hard to develop an approach which mixes skills and subject knowledge in a way that allows pupils to think and learn in a broader way. However, in Key Stage 2, some teachers lead their pupils too much. Marking often encourages pupils well and informs them on how to improve their work, but not always, especially in Key Stage 2. Here, teachers do not always use it effectively to inform

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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planning to meet all pupils' needs. This sometimes results in the progress of the most able pupils temporarily slowing.

There is a wide range of sporting and other extra-curricular clubs that enrich the pupils' learning opportunities. For those for whom learning does not come so easily, the school provides effective support and targeted resources to aid their learning. This is further supported by excellent inter-agency links, which ensure the needs of these pupils are fully met, for example the education welfare officer has supported the school to improve attendance.

The school is a very happy, caring and supportive environment. Pupils feel very safe and free from difficulties such as bullying. Parents have a very high opinion of the care that the school provides for their children. Incidents are logged and both parents and pupils discuss the causes and possible results. Safeguarding checks are robustly carried out to ensure all who come into contact with the pupils are safe.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher has a clear and precise vision for improvement, which is effectively communicated and being increasingly shared by the staff. Senior leaders know the school well, accurately identify its strengths and weaknesses and plan for improvement. The new governing body has begun to scrutinise the work of the school but does not as yet monitor every aspect as a matter of course. It effectively carries out its statutory duties. Middle managers are not yet sufficiently involved in making checks on lesson quality, target setting or the marking processes. This has resulted in inconsistent monitoring throughout the school, with restricting effects on pupils' progress. Therefore, while the quality of teaching is good, these inconsistencies result in the leadership and management of teaching and sharing of ambition being only satisfactory. The school has good parental links, resulting in an effective partnership. Parents appreciate the work of the school and actively engage in promoting its improvement.

The school makes good use of a range of partnerships to provide learning and sporting opportunities for the pupils. Links with the local high school enhance learning and provide older pupils with the opportunity to prepare for their future learning. Local sports clubs and facilities are utilised to widen the opportunities available. The natural environment is fully utilised and this is supported through close links with a member of

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the governing body.

The school successfully promotes equal opportunities and is an inclusive school, with its development plan for this area permeating all other school policies. This in turn is reflected within lesson planning, to ensure all pupils are presented with equal opportunities to achieve well. The school is developing community cohesion, with excellent school and local community cohesion. National links are being developed, with the pupils participating in a number of national charities; the governors are developing links with London schools. International aspects involve links with various charities abroad and the school is in the process of developing links with French and Kenyan schools.

Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements well, with all staff and anyone who has contact with the pupils being suitably checked. All staff are trained in safeguarding and this is renewed regularly.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and improving. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. This is due to consistently good teaching and a knowledgeable, dedicated staff. The children are confident and very happy in the provision. During a lesson based around environments children enthusiastically explained, 'We are making a home and a bed for rabbit, he was cold outside in the snow.' Others explained, 'Leaves are better for his bed 'cos they are warmer, the sticks are better to build his house.' There is very good use of

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observations to record assessments which are, in turn, used to effectively plan future learning. However, the strategic planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage is still in its infancy and is not fully embedded.

Children acquire the qualities they need to enable them to make good progress in developing the skills they require in the future. This is developed through the consistent use of routines, giving children responsibility for small tasks and allowing them to initiate their own activities so that they can be confident enough to make appropriate decisions and choices. Children behave well and demonstrate that they know how to stay safe and healthy by taking regular exercise and making appropriate food choices. They behave well and relationships between peers, children and adults are very good. Excellent, positive adult role models reinforce and develop this further.

Assessment information is used very effectively by staff, who effectively monitor and record children's progress. Leaders and managers give clear direction, with a strong focus on achievement. Transition arrangements are good and these are closely linked to the strong relationships with parents. There are good links with external agencies for staff development and to ensure the needs of all children are met. The monitoring role of the leadership and management is well embedded and they take every opportunity to refine and enhance practice further. All policies and safeguarding procedures are in place and meet requirements.

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

Parents who returned questionnaires are overwhelmingly positive and happy with the school. Parents feel the school is warm and supportive, with a positive learning atmosphere. Generally, they feel pupils make good progress. A few felt this was not the case for all pupils but this view was not supported by inspection findings. Inspection evidence found communication to be good but a small number of parents felt this was not the case. The views of the parents were summed up by the following comment, 'My child has never had a day where he hasn't wanted to go to school. He is often disappointed at the weekend when it is not a school day. I can confidently put this down to the happy, caring children, a team of hardworking, welcoming staff and a wealth of learning opportunities offered both inside and outside of the classroom. A GREAT SCHOOL!'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mullion Community 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 inspector received 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 145 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	64	27	34	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	63	25	31	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	59	27	34	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	58	26	33	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	63	29	36	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	59	29	36	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	54	35	44	1	1	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)	40	50	30	38	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	53	33	41	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	48	36	45	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	51	34	43	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	58	31	39	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	68	22	28	1	1	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



30 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mullion Community Primary School, Mullion, TR12 7DF

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors. You are very polite and helpful. Your attitude towards the inspection helped to make the visit so much more enjoyable. I was especially impressed by your positive approach, how warmly you talk about your teachers and the pride you take in your school. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. You contribute well to your school and local community and take pleasure in the good reputation of the school. Many of you highlighted how secure you felt in school because the teachers and staff take good care of you all. You also stated you felt yours was a good school and while the inspection found the school to be satisfactory, it is improving rapidly.

The good relationships you have built up with the teachers and other staff encourage you to generally try hard and do your best in lessons. The links you have with schools and other organisations locally give you a wide range of opportunities to widen your understanding and knowledge of the world. The headteacher, governors and staff have all worked hard to make your school better. In order to improve your school even more, we have asked them to work on the following things:

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all lessons are more challenging and the pace is quicker, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that the managers in the school check on teaching regularly to make sure it is the best it can possibly be.

I wish you all the best in the future and I am sure you will all continue to help make your school an even better place for you to learn.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall

Lead Inspector

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