

St Erth Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111850
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337755
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

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	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Wilkinson
Headteacher	Keith Dibley
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at records of pupils' progress, plans and questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 54 parents.

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

- the tracking of pupils' progress and its use by the school in identifying and rectifying slow progress pupils' feeling of safety and well-being in the school the quality and impact of the monitoring of teaching and learning the quality of the governors' planning to secure sustained improvement.

Information about the school

This small school serves a village and surrounding area in West Cornwall. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school is organised into three classes. It shares the site with a children's centre which is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Erth C.P.S. is a good school. Some aspects of pupils' achievement are outstanding. Their behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and at play, where the way they support and care for each other regardless of age, gender or ethnicity is a delight to behold, and arises from their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils correctly believe the school is a very safe place and they also have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, in and out of school. The governors and staff rightly give the safeguarding and welfare of the pupils a very high priority in their work and succeed in ensuring that all are outstandingly well cared for. The best features of the good teaching are the high quality of questioning and interaction between staff and pupils, and the effective use of data to plan and to meet the very wide range of needs represented in each class. For example, in Years 5 and 6, the higher attaining pupils prepared a presentation to teach the others how to round decimals up or down. Younger and less able pupils had the confidence to make good contributions; secure in the knowledge that these would be valued and respected by adults and other pupils. Pupils, including those with special educational needs or at an early stage of learning English, receive good support from teaching assistants, which contributes to their good progress. In the classes from Reception to Year 4, however, there are occasions when the intensity of the support limits pupils' opportunities to gain the skills needed to learn independently. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and are taught well, but facilities to enable them to learn and play outdoors are limited. Modest plans exist to make improvements to this aspect of the provision. The staff are well led and work together as a team to successfully improve teaching and other aspects of the provision. Rightly in a small school, the focus is on action rather than completing paperwork. However, this means that some of the monitoring lacks the necessary rigour to identify areas for improvement with sufficient precision, or to clearly identify staff training needs. Nevertheless the school has a good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. Although the present headteacher plans to retire at the end of the current term governors have good plans in place to support his successor. Consequently there is good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils in Reception to Year 4 are given sufficient opportunities to develop the full range of skills they need to learn without close adult supervision by: widening the range of strategies used by teaching assistants to support their learning ensuring that children in Reception have free access to high quality

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outdoor facilities. Make teaching and learning even better by ensuring that there is a programme of rigorous monitoring that enables staff to have a thorough understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and successfully identifies and meets their training needs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The small number of pupils in the school means that aggregated data about their attainment must be treated with caution. Children start school with a wide range of levels of skill that are broadly below those expected, and leave having attained average standards in English and mathematics, following good progress. Scrutiny of the progress of individual pupils shows that all make at least the expected progress in English and mathematics, and that the progress of many is better than expected. This applies to pupils of all ages and abilities, and to both boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make especially good progress. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy; they adopt a healthy diet and make full use of the many opportunities for exercise and energetic play. In the middle of a long lesson, Year 5 and 6 enthusiastically did a short series of exercises in order to reinvigorate themselves. Examples of the pupils' outstanding behaviour included the way they supported and tried different means of communication with newly arrived pupils at an early stage of learning English, and the fact that Reception children were happily included in play involving all years up to Year 6. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community and also develop a clear understanding of wider cultural and community issues. For example, discussion of photographs of streets in cities such as London and Bristol improves their understanding of the range of people in Britain, and of the way we live today. Attendance has been affected by a small number of pupils who, for various reasons, have erratic attendance. The school has worked very well with other agencies to support their families and to develop understanding of the importance of good attendance, which is now improving.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
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	1

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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Pupils' behaviour	1
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good throughout the school and there are examples of excellence. The outstandingly good relationships enable all pupils to participate fully in lessons with confidence and enthusiasm. Good assessment and tracking of pupils' progress means that teachers know their pupils very well and plan work that meets their individual needs, so that all make good progress. Staff make unusually great efforts to learn about rarer forms of learning difficulty and the educational strategies that enable children with such conditions to make the best possible progress. This is an example of the exceptional level of care that the adults provide. Teaching assistants are similarly well informed, but their enthusiasm for helping the pupils sometimes leads to intervention that is too quick, so that opportunities are missed for the pupils to discover things for themselves. Pupils' enjoyment of school is enhanced by the rich and varied curriculum, which includes many educational visits and links with countries such as Turkey and Romania. They enjoy the wide range of clubs such as sport and cookery which, in spite of the small number of pupils in the school are often over-subscribed, due to their popularity. There are excellent links with the children's centre on site and with local secondary schools. Staff ensure that pupils have a very good understanding of their targets and of how to improve their work, which contributes to their good progress and preparation for the next stages of their lives.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The effective leadership of the highly respected headteacher succeeds in ensuring that

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all adults strive to ensure the best possible education and care for the pupils. They succeed very well in ensuring that the school provides equality of opportunity and is free from discrimination. As a result, all pupils learn well and they and their parents feel fully involved in all activities. Governors, having agreed their current safeguarding policy in July 2009, have reviewed and updated it already, showing that this important issue is given an appropriately high priority. Senior staff have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, including in the quality of teaching, but there is limited formal monitoring, and that which occurs is not always documented. Consequently staff often identify their own individual training needs, rather than adopting a planned approach which considers the needs of the school as a whole. This approach is also reflected in issues such as the school's response to its promotion of community cohesion and safeguarding. Pupils have a good appreciation of all aspects of these issues and are completely safe, and the few weaknesses that exist are entirely in the quality of documentation. The school has excellent partnerships with parents and with a wide range of local schools and organisations, and these are used effectively to enhance the provision for pupils. A parent's comment that "our views are valued and we feel that it is a true partnership" are typical. The governors have responded well to the impending retirement of the headteacher. Having made an appointment, they have plans in place to provide appropriate support and guidance, and staff are also keen to enable the transition to be a smooth one.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
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Children start school with skills and knowledge generally below those expected, although staff report that since the recent opening of the children’s centre on the site, this is improving. They make good progress in most areas of the curriculum, especially in their social, emotional, creative and physical development. Progress in a few areas, such as their writing skills, is slower. The class, which also includes Years 1 and 2, is well organised to enable the Reception children to experience the range of activities to which they are entitled. However, the outdoor provision is very limited and plans to improve it are relatively modest. Teaching assistants provide good support, although as elsewhere in the school, they sometimes intervene a little too readily when there are disputes or when children are finding a task challenges them. Assessment is rigorous and accurate; enabling individual children’s needs to be readily identified and met. This provides a good platform for planning the curriculum in Year 1. Relationships with parents and with the children’s centre are excellent. These successes result from good leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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 and carers have an exceptionally high degree of confidence in the school. An unusually high proportion, over 80%, returned our questionnaire, in which they were almost universal in their praise for, and satisfaction with, the quality of education their children are receiving. Those aspects most commonly praised include the care and concern given to individual pupils and the staff’s knowledge of them as individuals; They consider staff, including the headteacher, to be approachable and appreciate the fact that their views and their children’s are listened to and acted upon. The good quality of the support for pupils with special educational needs, the good progress made by all pupils, including higher attaining pupils, and the good quality preparation for the next stages of pupils’ education were also commented on. Among the very few parents that expressed any dissatisfaction with the school, no more than one reference was made to any specific aspect of the provision.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Erth 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 12 statements about the school. The inspection team received 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 67 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	80	10	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	89	5	9	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	65	18	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	65	18	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	80	11	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	78	11	20	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	72	14	26	0	0	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)	43	80	7	13	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	70	13	24	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	52	21	39	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	63	15	28	0	0	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	45	83	7	13	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	83	8	15	0	0	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.



01 October 2009 Dear Pupils Inspection of St Erth Community Primary School, Hayle TR27 6HN We enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. We would like to thank those of you who gave up your time to talk to us. Yours is a good school. What we liked most about it was your excellent behaviour, and the way you look after each other. I was especially impressed by the way children of all ages play so well together and the way you involve children new to the school and make them welcome. You make good progress in your work and reach average standards in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6. You told us you feel very safe and we agree that the adults do everything they can to keep you safe. You are taught well. Everyone in class is respected, so you feel you can say what you think and know you won't be made fun of. Although you are proud of your links with Cornwall, as you should be, you also know lots about people from other places and how they live, which helps you to respect them. The headteacher, staff and governors run the school well. They have lots of good links, especially with the children's centre and other schools, so you will feel confident when you go to secondary school. Your parents think very highly of the school because the staff take excellent care of you and respect their views. We have asked the school to do three things. The staff are so keen to help you that sometimes they give some of you a bit too much help and you don't have the chance to discover things for yourselves, so we have asked them to look at this. Sometimes the staff do not write enough things down on paper. This means sometimes things are missed and we would like them to make sure this does not happen. The Reception children should be able to learn outdoors and we have asked the staff to make sure the plans to develop this area of the school will give the children everything they need. You are already giving the adults a great deal of help and I know that you will continue to do so as they work to make your school even better. Good luck in the future Yours faithfully Paul Sadler Lead Inspector

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