

St Agnes Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111869
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337765
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Les Donnithorne
Headteacher	Mrs Carol Wint
Date of previous school inspection	0 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Approximately half of the inspection time was spent looking at pupils' learning and 14 lessons were observed. Seven teachers were seen teaching and meetings were held with governors, teachers and pupils. Inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, work displayed around the school, school policies, assessment information and records. Inspectors received and read questionnaires from parents and carers (73), pupils in Key Stage 2 (102) and staff (12); all of which helped inform the inspection process.

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

- standards in Key Stage 2 and the progress made by pupils between Year 2 and Year 6
- standards in writing at Key Stage 2
- pupils' understanding of diversity within a multicultural United Kingdom
- the effectiveness of management, including governors, in monitoring and evaluating the school's provision.

Information about the school

St Agnes is a smaller-than-average primary school serving the ex-mining town of St Agnes near the north Cornish coast. The number of pupils attending the school has fallen since the last inspection in 2007. There is a recently opened private nursery on the school site. There are an average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attending the school, although the percentage of pupils with statements of special education needs is above average. Several pupils have physical as well as learning disabilities. Nearly all pupils are of a White British heritage. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2008 and there has been a substantial reorganisation of the school since she took over. The school has Investors in People status and Healthy Schools, Activemark, Eco Schools and Artsmark awards.

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 Agnes is a good school. It has continued to improve since the appointment of the present headteacher. Although standards in the unvalidated national tests in 2009 at the end of Year 6 were average and standards in writing were below average, focused and intensive support has raised attainment in reading, mathematics and science for the current Year 6 to above average and in writing to average. Although pupils' grammar and spelling have improved, their ability to write at length using varied vocabulary is limited. There have also been significant improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes, which are good throughout the school and outstanding in upper Key Stage 2 classes. In every class, pupils are enthusiastic learners and thoroughly enjoy what they are doing.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and this is maintained in Key Stage 1. Here the greatest progress is made in writing, where standards were significantly above average in 2009. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress and attainment in Year 6 is currently above age-related expectations, except in writing where progress is slower. Throughout the school, pupils attain high standards in the visual arts and this is an outstanding feature of their work. Other aspects of their learning are also good. Attendance is average overall and the school works hard to encourage pupils to attend, but it is adversely affected by families taking holidays during term time.

The quality of teaching is good. The requirements of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are met well by carefully designed activities that provide the right balance between increasing their understanding and consolidating previous learning. Teaching assistants are very effective, especially when supporting pupils with additional learning needs. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use effectively to increase pupils' understanding of the curriculum.

The school has shown that it has a good capacity to sustain improvement. Its self-evaluation is sharply focused on raising standards and addressing the issues that led to the decline in performance in writing in 2009. Its analysis showed that pupils with special educational needs at the level called 'School Action' underperformed significantly last year and, as this group was a third of the class, this brought down the school's overall performance considerably. The action taken to address this, through focused support and individual tuition, has led to the current group of pupils on 'School Action' making outstanding progress in all aspects of English, including writing.

Senior managers and the governing body are well informed about the school's performance and current targets are carefully matched to the school's aims. The

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school's overall promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory and its contribution to the local community is good. However, it has only recently given some consideration as to how it can improve pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of the United Kingdom and this aspect is therefore underdeveloped. Parents are effectively engaged in the work of the school and say they receive good quality information. Meetings and events are very well attended.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing in upper Key Stage 2 so that they are in line with attainment in other aspects of English by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length
 - developing their ability to use a varied and wider vocabulary.
- Improve the school's contribution to community cohesion by building on the newly established links with other schools and thereby increase pupils' understanding of diversity and the multicultural nature of the United Kingdom.
- Improve attendance by discouraging families from taking their holidays during term time.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The lessons observed by inspectors showed that pupils develop good learning habits and positive attitudes as they move through the school. Pupils say they enjoy school and practical lessons, such as art and sports, are popular. Pupils listen attentively in class and are keen to answer questions. Almost all are able to express their views clearly, drawing appropriately on the subject matter of the lesson to support their opinion. Pupils support each other well when working and show considerable sympathy when a classmate has difficulty understanding.

Taking past performance into account, attainment is average at the time pupils leave the school, but it is improving. Throughout the school, standards in the lessons seen were almost always above age-related expectations and progress was frequently rapid. Although standards are not yet as high as in reading at Key Stage 2, there are signs of improvement, especially in spelling and grammar. Pupils show considerable artistic skills, and their sculptures in the style of the artist Miro were of a high standard. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in lessons because they are supported well and included effectively in the activities. Because of well-focused support, all groups, including the most able, make similar good progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, and pupils are developing a good appreciation of the wider world through links with schools in other countries, such as Bolivia. The annual school camp for pupils in Year 6 is very popular and provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to develop their personal and social skills. The school council makes a positive contribution to the life of the school and pupils' views influence decisions affecting school improvement. Pupils are active in

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raising funds for various projects, such as the buying of cows for families in Africa, which they did on their own initiative. Pupils are enthusiastic about healthy living and the opportunities for physical education provided.

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	2
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 high expectations, good subject knowledge, and make good use of questioning to extend pupils' thinking. They are enthusiastic and effectively engage pupils in learning, using a wide range of different techniques including interactive whiteboards. The management of behaviour is good, resulting in high levels of concentration and an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Although some steps have been taken to improve pupils' writing by, for example, inviting a local author in to conduct workshops, teaching does not always focus sufficiently on building a wider and more varied vocabulary. Planning is detailed and in most respects builds well on previous learning. Opportunities are not always taken to get pupils to write long passages of prose and develop extended writing skills.

Good use is made of assessment information to analyse and track pupils' progress and

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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to review what is needed to further raise pupils' attainment. Almost all pupils know their targets well and the action needed to achieve them. Marking is used effectively to tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

The curriculum is monitored carefully by subject leaders through lesson observations, sampling work and reviewing teachers' plans. The curriculum is enhanced by valuable links with businesses and local organisations. After-school clubs provide a good range of activities and are popular with pupils.

All pupils spoken to said they feel well supported by the school and know who to go to if they have a problem. Close liaison between teachers, support staff and the special needs coordinator underpins the good provision for the learning and care of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Effective use is made of outside agencies to support learning. An outstanding feature of the school provision is the very good support of the most vulnerable pupils, including those with quite severe physical disabilities. The families involved are very appreciative of the school's efforts.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 headteacher has a driving ambition and a clear concept of what needs to be done to raise attainment. She has successfully promoted a determination amongst staff to deal with the shortcomings in pupils' performance. This is most evident in the improvements that have been made to standards in upper Key Stage 2 and to behaviour. The school has been successful in promoting equality of opportunity by eliminating variation in performance by different groups of pupils. There is a clear commitment to inclusion, which is demonstrated by the outstanding support for pupils with multiple disabilities.

Governors play a vital role in the school and regularly monitor provision through well-focused visits. Governing body minutes show that the professional management of the school is both supported and challenged where necessary. The governing body has been very diligent in ensuring the school meets statutory requirements and systems for safeguarding and protecting pupils are good.

The school's relationship with parents and carers is good and parents and carers play a vital role in the school. The school is also effective in working with the local authority, local businesses and support agencies to promote pupils' learning and well-being. It has taken a set of actions to promote community cohesion, but is more successful within the

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school and local area than with respect to the national community.

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	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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because children make good progress and enjoy school. Children enter Reception with skills that are broadly as expected and by the time they enter Year 1 they are above the national average. Children have good relationships with all the adults in the classroom, who support them well socially, emotionally and academically. Children are encouraged to become resourceful, independent learners by selecting activities for themselves and organising materials and resources. They are encouraged to keep safe and understand about not going with strangers. Children eat healthily and drink water throughout the day. They are very well behaved, play happily together, and enjoy their learning.

Adults have a good understanding of the needs of the children and work well together to plan for these. Observations and assessments are used to adjust planning, which is adapted well to meet the children's needs. Risk assessments, policies and procedures are in place to ensure children are safe and healthy. There are good transition arrangements in place to ensure that children make a good start at school.

The school promotes positive relationships with parents and carers, who are welcomed into school. There is an 'open door' policy, which encourages daily contact between parents and carers, and the staff. There are also good relationships with other partners, such as the private nursery on the school site.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good because

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policies and procedures are maintained well and for the benefit of the children. There is good monitoring of provision, teaching and learning which results in improved resources and teaching.

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

In their responses to the questionnaires, a very large majority of parents and carers were positive about the school. They were particularly positive about their children's enjoyment of school and about support, care and safety. They were also of the opinion that teaching is good. However, a very small minority of parents and carers would like more information about how their children are progressing and there were some concerns about how well the school dealt with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors investigated, but did not uphold, these concerns, judging that behaviour is good and that the information provided to parents and carers is also good. Overall, parents and carers' views agreed with the findings of the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Agnes 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	59	28	38	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	53	34	47	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	33	44	60	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	40	37	51	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	45	36	49	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	30	42	58	8	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	38	36	49	6	8	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)	29	40	29	40	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	32	42	58	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	21	41	56	10	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	33	38	52	6	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	29	40	36	49	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	47	35	48	0	0	1	1

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.



21 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Agnes Primary School, St Agnes TR5 0LZ

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our visit. You worked hard in the lessons we saw and behaved very well. We had a good time discussing your work with you and found your comments very helpful. Yours is a good school and your teachers are helping you to do well.

The things we like most about your school are:

- you enjoy learning and you work hard in lessons
- your art work is very good, especially the sculptures and drawings
- teaching is good and teachers plan interesting lessons, like the visit from the author
- you care about others less fortunate than yourselves and raise money to help them buy cows and goats
- most of you in Key Stage 2 are now making much better progress in your work
- your headteacher, the staff and the governors have worked hard to improve the school and make it an exciting place in which to learn.

To help the school become even better, we have said that the headteacher and staff should:

- help those in Years 5 and 6 to improve their writing even more ' you can help by trying to write plenty and using lots of interesting words
- give you more opportunities to find out about all the different cultures and faiths that are found in the United Kingdom
- make sure that your attendance is even higher, so that you won't miss out on the great things that are going on in school.

Thank you again for talking to us about your school and making us welcome.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Dennett

Lead Inspector

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