

Mevagissey Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111890
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337770
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marlene Behennah
Headteacher	Katherine Warren
Date of previous school inspection	5 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors spent over 70% of their time evaluating the quality of pupils' learning. They visited nine lessons, observed six teachers and all classes, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documents, including the school's records of pupils' progress and its monitoring activities, school policies and guidelines, teachers' plans and questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 39 parents and carers.

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

- evidence of acceleration in progress by pupils and inconsistencies between groups
- specific examples of strengths in personal development and the care, guidance and support provided
- evidence of improved provision this year and progress towards reducing inconsistencies in the quality of practice
- the rigour of checks conducted by the school on its performance.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than usual and numbers are declining. Almost all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. The pre-school on site is not managed by the school's governing body and so is not reported upon here. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/disabilities is smaller than average but there are more pupils with a statement of special educational needs than usual in a school of this size. Most of the special needs relate to specific learning and/or behavioural and emotional difficulties. The school has Investors in People status and Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. There have been several staff changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher, and long term staff absences and uncertainties in recent times.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Following a period of staffing uncertainties and changes, the school is more settled and improving. Attainment of pupils has fluctuated over time. This is not uncommon in small schools. A recent decline has been reversed and attainment is rising and is now average. The school provides good care, guidance and support and works effectively to promote pupils' personal development, almost all aspects of which are good. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their school and wider community in terms of the numbers involved in taking additional responsibilities and by the conscientious way they fulfil these roles.

Pupils make satisfactory progress. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from relatively low starting points, and attain broadly average standards by the end of their first year. Progress by older pupils is not consistent in all years but is satisfactory overall. The variation in progress in different years is related to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching which, while good and even outstanding at times, is satisfactory overall. Teachers are beginning to adopt improved practices, for example in planning, assessing and marking pupils' work, but at this stage the variation in quality remains greater than it should be. Lessons are not always sufficiently challenging and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to talk through their learning and consider next steps in their learning.

The relatively new headteacher provides clear direction and leadership. She has developed effective ways to track the progress of all pupils. This has helped the school gain an accurate view of overall academic performance. The school knows precisely which pupils and groups of pupils are performing better or less well than expected and this is a key factor in the school's satisfactory capacity to improve. The headteacher has recently introduced a number of effective ways to monitor practice. However, there is an over-reliance on her to carry these out, and there are too few direct observations in classrooms. Some of the broader judgements about the school's performance are over-generous as there is insufficient focus on how effective each aspect is in promoting learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not have enough opportunities to play outdoors independently in a range of situations. The school is aware of this and has plans to deal with it. Governors fulfil their legal duties well, but governance is satisfactory rather than good because governors have been slow to challenge the school and hold it to account.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress by ensuring good or better teaching in the majority of

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lessons in all classes by the end of 2010, making sure all teachers:

- make good use of assessment information when planning and setting work to match the full range of abilities
- have high expectations of and challenge all pupils, including those who are more able
- provide clear feedback to pupils when marking their work and opportunities for pupils to reflect and talk through their learning and next steps.
- Strengthen leadership by:
 - implementing a programme of rigorous checks on the school's work, including classroom observations, that involves a range of trained staff by April 2010
 - ensuring governors seek and receive regular detailed information about how well the school is doing so they can hold the school to account
 - securing accurate judgements on all aspects of the school's work by October 2010 by carefully considering the impact each aspect has on pupils' performance.
- Take reasonable steps, by April 2010, to enable children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to move freely in and out of doors in all weathers, thereby supporting their learning across the whole curriculum.

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

Attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average, as is attainment by the end of Year 6. Evidence from lessons and pupils' books shows that the large majority of boys and girls are working at levels expected for their ages. Most pupils in Year 6 are on track to attain average standards and to have made satisfactory progress during their time in school. A small minority through the school are working at levels below their potential as they catch up from previous periods of slower progress. Progress by the pupils with special educational needs is more varied, but overall is sound. Some make excellent progress, responding well to extra support, while others, despite help, make limited progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they are sufficiently prepared for their next stage of education.

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average. They very keenly take on many responsibilities within the school community, often applying formally for the privilege, such as being school councillors, house captains, friendship buddies and huff-and-puff monitors. A high proportion get involved in local events including the 'Feast Week'. The Healthy Schools and Activemark awards reflect pupils' keen awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles, particularly taking physical exercise such as cross-country running in the mud at lunchtime. Pupils report feeling very safe in school and confident about approaching an adult if they have a problem. Almost all behave well. A few with emotional and behavioural difficulties display challenging behaviour at times, but this is normally well managed and these pupils make good gains in self-esteem and relationships. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and their

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spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

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	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school provides good care and support for all pupils. This view is shared by almost all parents and carers and pupils responding to the questionnaires. There is carefully planned provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs, with staff and special areas set aside to help meet their needs. 'Children for discussion' is a regular agenda item at staff meetings, reflecting the high priority given to reviewing the needs of specific pupils. There are effective links with families and external professionals to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils.

Teachers and their assistants manage behaviour well. Inappropriate behaviour rarely disrupts learning. Teachers plan interesting activities from a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes increased use of computers in the new computer suite. Pupils respond well, especially when motivated by imaginative approaches, such as in Year 3 when writing following a scary story dramatically read by the class teacher. In the same excellent lesson, pupils' learning was strongly supported by clear guidance on how to

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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assess their work against agreed objectives. Such practice is developing across the school but is far from being consistently embedded. In a few lessons, there is no reflection at the end and no feedback. The more able pupils respond well when challenged, for example in Year 6 when investigating how to work out square roots in mathematics. In other lessons, introductions are sometimes too long, often with more able pupils not being challenged. Imaginative materials and techniques are used well to promote pupils' personal development, and many extra sporting and cultural activities enrich the curriculum well

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher identified several priorities for improvement on arrival, including the need for effective tracking of progress, more consistent approaches to teaching and improved access to computers. Despite staffing changes and uncertainties, her resolute approach has led to significant improvements, which in turn are helping to increase pupils' progress. Other members of staff have led initiatives related, for example, to Healthy Schools and developing a talk for writing project. However, some teachers are reluctant to take on leadership roles, particularly where they require regular monitoring. This over-reliance on the headteacher to drive forward improvements and monitor performance, along with a generous view about some aspects of the school's work, means that the capacity to improve, despite the headteacher's best intentions, is no better than satisfactory. Governors receive satisfactory reports about the school's work. They recognise they do not probe sufficiently to establish precisely what needs to improve and what actions are being taken. Safeguarding is a high priority. All policies are fully in place and implemented well with effective procedures for following up any incidents. Community cohesion is also promoted well, with careful reflection on how best to support the needs of parents and the local community. The school plays a leading role locally, and is forging national and international links. Despite a strong commitment to equal opportunities and zero tolerance of discrimination, the continuing variations in quality of provision in adjacent classes means equal opportunities remain satisfactory.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle well following sensitive induction, including regular visits from the pre-school. They make good progress, frequently from starting points below national expectations, especially in language skills and personal development. By the end of the year, most attain standards expected for their age. Much of the teaching and provision is good, with careful observations and assessments used to extend learning. Planning ensures an effective range of experiences in the classroom, including, for example, the chance to explore a Cornish tin mine. Here, it is compulsory to wear a hard hat, according to one four-year-old, 'in case a big rock comes down and bumps you'. The balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities is satisfactory. Outdoor opportunities are limited in the absence of a secure designated area and no shelter. This prevents independent free-flow in and out of doors and limits the range and quality of experiences available. There have been on-going changes in teachers, with a new and temporary job-share team in place this year, and leadership is satisfactory.

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	3

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Views of parents and carers

Relatively few parents and carers responded to the inspectors' questionnaire. There is strong support for most aspects of the school's work, including the way the school helps parents and carers to help their children, and steps taken to keep them safe, healthy, and meet their particular needs. A small minority do not agree about the management of inappropriate behaviour. Inspectors found that such behaviour is almost always managed well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mevagissey 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 inspection team received 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 115 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	59	14	36	1	3	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	23	59	14	36	1	3	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	44	15	38	6	15	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	46	17	44	2	5	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	21	54	14	36	4	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	44	20	51	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	49	18	46	1	3	1	3
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)	16	41	18	46	1	3	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	46	19	49	0	0	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	26	19	49	7	18	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	31	17	44	3	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	51	15	38	3	8	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	59	12	31	2	5	2	5

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.



11 February 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Mevagissey Community Primary School, St Austell PL26 6TD

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing some of your work. Yours is a satisfactory school with several good things and some that need to improve. Many of you told us you feel safe in school and that adults take good care of you, and we agree. We are particularly impressed by the very mature way so many of you take on important jobs, such as managing the huff and puff pavilion, being house captains, friendship buddies and school councillors. You all make a big difference to Mevagissey through things like the 'Feast Week'. We are pleased you know so much about keeping healthy, and were impressed by the cross-country runners and all the sports trophies.

You behave well, although there are times when a few of you struggle with your behaviour. In lessons, you listen carefully and get on with your work sensibly. You are making progress but we found that a few of you are behind where you should be. The headteacher has lots of ideas about how to improve the school and checks up carefully on what is going on. We have asked her, along with the staff and governors, to work together on three things:

- Make sure all teachers set you work that is not too hard or too easy, challenge you to do your very best and give you lots of help in thinking about how to improve.
- Involve more of the staff in carrying out checks on how well the school is doing.
- Push ahead with the plans to develop the area outside the Early Years Foundation Stage class so that children can move freely in and out of doors.

You can help by working hard, telling your teachers if work is too easy or too difficult and continuing to be helpful around the school.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly

Lead Inspector

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