

# St. Stephen Churchtown Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111897
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	337771
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alex Baxter

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	296
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Phillip Carpenter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Welch
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Creakavose St. Stephen St. Austell PL26 7NZ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and an assembly, observed break-time and lunchtime activities and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of children's progress, and the provision and planning for pupils who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In addition, 85 parental questionnaires, 102 pupils' questionnaires and 20 staff questionnaires were scrutinised.

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

- pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, and whether this is equally good for all groups as they move through the school, especially in Years 3 and 4
- the consistency and effectiveness of teaching, including learning across the school and the use of assessment
- the degree to which leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the school's work to bring improvement and develop consistently good provision.

## Information about the school

This primary school is larger-than-average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, although there are considerable variations across the year groups and, on occasions, this proportion is higher than average. There has been considerable instability in staffing in recent years, including among senior staff.

**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 school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Currently, attainment in Year 6 is broadly average and reflects satisfactory achievement from pupils' starting points. Most pupils make satisfactory progress, but pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in relation to their individual needs because of the additional support they receive. Pupils make good progress in science and in speaking and listening, which reflect strengths in teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes towards learning. The school liaises well with parents, outside agencies and the local community and ensures that pupils are well cared for, safe and secure. As a result, pupils are polite, behave well and enjoy their learning. They know how to keep themselves safe and, through their enthusiasm for sport, adopt extremely healthy lifestyles.

Over the past year, instability in staffing and uncertainty regarding senior leadership positions reduced the school's ability to rectify inconsistencies in provision. This resulted in gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in Years 3 and 4, because of inconsistent teaching. School and national assessments also show that this instability in staffing constrained the ability of other staff to help all pupils catch up to where they should be by the time they leave school. This term, under the fresh direction of a new headteacher, improvement is gaining momentum and reflects sound self-evaluation. This improvement is also supported by earlier decisions to move staff and re-focus leadership responsibilities, and by greater stability in staffing. Senior leaders have also introduced a new format for planning lessons, which identifies key learning intentions more clearly. This is having a positive effect and, as a result, teaching is satisfactory overall. There is more good teaching, and teaching in Years 3 and 4 has now been strengthened. However, these developments are relatively new and the good teaching evident in some classes is not yet a consistent feature across the school. For example, inconsistency remains across Years 3 to 6, especially in mathematics. In particular, too many pupils, especially the more able who are not always challenged sufficiently, still have difficulty using number and forming their own strategies to solve mathematical problems.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular events and clubs, many of which are sporting activities which promote the pupils' health. However, the curriculum is currently under review. This is because there is inconsistency in the way pupils' interests are stimulated and the degree to which their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are used and extended. In addition, pupils have too few opportunities to develop their cultural understanding. Attendance remains a weakness, but is improving rapidly this term.

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Standards are now rising again as pupils' progress is more soundly promoted. Other improvements, in Early Years Foundation Stage classes and in the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills, also show the school's sound capacity for further and sustained improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve pupils' mathematical skills, especially of the more able pupils, so that they develop greater proficiency in using and applying basic number facts and in devising their own strategies to solve problems.
- Develop the curriculum so that it consistently:
  - provides greater relevance for pupils and engages their interests
  - enhances pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills
  - enriches pupils' understanding of different communities in Britain and in other countries.
- Improve pupils' attendance by:
  - monitoring absences rigorously
  - taking firm action to reduce the level of persistent and other incidental absences.

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

From pupils' broadly average skills on entry, teachers are now ensuring that pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Observations of teaching and of pupils' work show strengthened progress in Years 3 and 4, and improved planning meeting pupils' needs more precisely throughout the school. Observations of lessons, especially where pupils undertake practical work, for example using computers to learn number facts or exploring letter sounds by playing 'Phonic Bingo', also reflect the pupils' enjoyment and improving progress. As teachers identify and share clear learning intentions with pupils more effectively, the number of pupils who previously underachieved is reducing and more are making good progress, including in writing. As a result, pupils' attainment in Year 6 is broadly average in English and mathematics. A considerable proportion of pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and in science to reach above average levels of attainment. Across the school, many pupils also show good skills in sports and, as their opportunities to use computers increases, so do their skills in ICT. These levels of attainment reflect satisfactory achievement for most pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities often make good progress in relation to their specific needs as a result of additional, well-focused adult support. Although attainment is improving again, too many pupils, especially the more able, still have difficulty using and applying number facts and formulating their own strategies to solve mathematical problems.

Pupils behave well, say that they feel safe and clearly enjoy school. These are noticeably reflected in their eager participation in clubs and by their positive responses in lessons,

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especially when it involves practical work, such as using computers. Attendance is low, because too many pupils are still taken on holidays in term time or are persistent absentees. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities as school councillors or as 'playtime buddies' to help other pupils at break-times. The pupils' excellent adoption of healthy lifestyles is strongly supported by their enthusiasm for sports. It is also evident in the knowledgeable way they talk about balanced diets and healthy eating. Pupils show good spiritual, moral and social development, but their cultural understanding, while satisfactory, is weakened by their limited awareness of multicultural Britain. By the time pupils leave the school, their good attitudes to learning and satisfactory academic achievement have prepared them satisfactorily for the future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

New appointments, more precise deployment of staff, and the careful identification of key learning intentions in planning, are improving the quality of teaching and learning. For example, teaching in Years 3 and 4 classes engages pupils more consistently through practical learning activities to quicken their progress. Teachers in other classes

<sup>1</sup> 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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are also encouraging pupils to discuss and develop their ideas with each other and this is extending their speaking and listening skills successfully. Typical strengths in all classes include warm relationships, good use of interactive whiteboards, increased sharing of learning intentions with pupils and good use of teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although the way teachers use assessment information is improving, there is still inconsistency, especially in the way it is used to question pupils at the right level and when setting targets and marking pupils' work. This is especially the case in mathematics, where pupils, particularly the more able, are not always challenged sufficiently or given enough written guidance on how to improve.

The curriculum is enriched by a good range of clubs and links with other schools. In particular, pupils' speaking and listening skills and, through sports, healthy lifestyles are developed successfully, and there is an improving focus on ICT. The school is seeking to improve the way activities progressively develop pupils' skills across the mixed-age classes. Currently, for example, topics which link subjects together are not always developed in ways that provide sufficient relevance or interest to the pupils. Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to and to learn about their school and local communities, but the focus on developing their wider cultural awareness is not as effective.

Good care, guidance and support promote the pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Staff with specific responsibilities implement excellent child protection procedures to support vulnerable pupils. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. This term, under the direction of the new headteacher, a more rigorous approach to authorising absence has substantially reduced holidays taken in term time. However, the school's overall care, guidance and support are judged good rather than outstanding, because strategies to tackle persistent and incidental absences are not yet as successful.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher is giving a good lead in building on the strategic actions to redeploy staff and tackle underachievement made by the previous acting headteacher. So far this term, during a more stable period of staffing, senior staff, including governors, are developing more effective leadership structures. They have a clearer

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view of where improvements are needed and are better placed to monitor and bring about improvement. As a result, self-evaluation and development planning are satisfactory.

Leaders and managers continue to promote good links with parents, the community and outside agencies to safeguard pupils' welfare effectively. Staff are committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils and ensuring that none are disadvantaged. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. The school and local communities are developing strongly through events, visits and links with local organisations. The school promotes international and national aspects of community cohesion through cross-curricular topics and charitable fund-raising, but accepts that these are not fully developed. Senior managers and teachers are now strengthening the way lessons are planned and implemented to secure continuity in pupils' learning. Improved forms of communication also show a purposeful effort to work even more closely with parents, for example, to improve attendance. However, as with other initiatives, strengthened management structures have not been in place long enough to raise attainment and achievement to the full.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The children's skills and experiences on entry mostly match those normally expected for children of this age, but vary on occasion. Good leadership, supported by continued oversight from the school's senior leaders and good links with parents, help the children to settle confidently into school life. Good teaching and learning, now continuing



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through the mixed Nursery and Reception class into the discrete Reception class, are promoting the children's good progress. Teachers and their assistants in both classes safeguard the children's welfare well. They use assessments of the children's developing skills effectively to set up a well-balanced programme of learning activities led by adults and those chosen by the children themselves. As a result, children make good progress, particularly in developing their speaking and listening and independent learning skills. Attainment on entry into Year 1 has varied considerably in recent years. Currently, an increasing number of children are developing above-average levels of skill in most areas of learning in response to the good provision. The direct access to outdoor learning provided last term is now being used with increasing success to stimulate children's interest and widen their freely chosen activities. At this time, though, the outdoor area for the Reception class is not as well resourced as the Nursery outdoor areas.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

The vast majority of the parents are happy and have full confidence in the way the school safeguards their children's welfare and promotes their enjoyment. A typical comment, reflecting the positive agreements indicated by most parents across the range of aspects in the questionnaire is, 'My children love being at the school. I have found the teachers and the headteacher most cooperative, attentive to my concerns and always approachable.' There were a few parental criticisms, mainly about how the school manages unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors examined these concerns during the inspection, but concluded from their observations and discussions with pupils that the school manages pupils' behaviour effectively.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Stephen Churchtown 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 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 296 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	61	32	38	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	46	54	37	44	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	38	45	53	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	36	45	53	6	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	46	42	49	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	42	43	51	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	45	44	52	2	2	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)	33	39	47	55	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	44	44	52	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	25	46	54	11	13	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	31	51	60	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	39	48	56	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	47	43	51	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St. Stephen Churchtown Community Primary School, St. Austell, PL26 7NZ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed our visit and would like to thank you for talking to us, particularly those on the school council and the group from Years 5 and 6. We were very interested to hear what you had to say and were impressed by your excellent efforts to live healthily, your good contributions to school life and your good behaviour. We agree with your headteacher that St. Stephen Churchtown Community Primary is a satisfactory and improving school.

These are the other main things we found.

- The standards that you reach by Year 6 are broadly average. They show that your progress and achievement are satisfactory. Many of you make good progress in science and in developing your speaking and listening skills.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there is an increasing amount of good teaching which helps you to make faster progress.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors are strengthening how they work together and are helping you to make better progress than you have made previously.
- Staff provide good care for you and work well with your parents and other people to give you extra support when you need it.

To help the school to improve further, we have asked the headteacher, senior staff, governors and teachers to do three things:

- improve the way you use basic number facts and develop your own strategies to solve problems, especially those of you who find learning easy
- make sure that the activities that you undertake at school stimulate your interest, help your writing, number and computer skills and help you to understand the multicultural nature of different communities
- improve your attendance.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection. You can help the school get better by making sure that you know what you have to do to improve your work.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter

Lead inspector

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