

Polperro Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111955
Local Authority	
Inspection number	337790
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Mike Burghart

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	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Craig Skeldon
Headteacher	Roger Carter
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2006
School address	Brentfields Looe Cornwall PL13 2JJ
Telephone number	01503 272249
Fax number	01503 272249
Email address	head@polperro.cornwall.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including policies, development planning, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed 29 parental questionnaires.

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

- the impact of the school's initiative to develop the use of assessment and its effect on pupils' attainment
- the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness of the roles played by staff in the school's leadership and management.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school serving a small seaside community. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, but the proportion with statements of such needs is well above average. Pupils' special needs include physical disabilities and moderate learning difficulties. Children begin school in Reception, where they follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum but are taught alongside pupils from Year 1. There is privately run nursery provision housed in a new extension to the school building which is inspected separately. The school holds the Healthy School Award, Activemark and Woodland Trust Green Tree gold award.

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

This is a good school, where pupils are happy and well adjusted. Outstanding behaviour and good personal development are complemented by good academic progress. As a result of continual improvements since the last inspection, particularly in provision for those who are potentially higher attainers, pupils achieve well. Consistently good teaching and an interesting curriculum ensure that the quality of learning is good. Pupils are well prepared for future study and life in general. They are keen to say that they feel safe and well cared for. Above-average attendance demonstrates that pupils like coming to school. One pupil summed up the view of the overwhelming majority in noting that 'Ofsted don't even need to come here because our school can't be any better!'

Children get off to a good start in Reception because provision is good. They make outstanding progress in personal, social and emotional development and all-round progress is good. This rate of progress continues throughout the school and ensures that, by the end of Year 6, attainment in English, mathematics and science is at least average. Inspectors' observations and school records of the work of the current Year 6 give strong indications of good achievement and show that standards are likely to be above average at the end of the school year.

Pupils are well cared for. The family atmosphere, where everyone is fully included and given every opportunity, is valued by parents, staff and pupils alike. The school plays a very strong part in bringing the local community together. However, pupils' multicultural awareness is less well developed. The school's contribution to community cohesion with reference to pupils' understanding of faith, ethnicity and socio-economic differences, while satisfactory overall, is also underdeveloped.

The headteacher gives the school strong leadership. He has successfully drawn staff and governors together to form a good team which is focused on exploring how improvements can be made. Governors, many of whom are new, are supportive but have only just begun to play a full part in holding the school to account in terms of pupils' learning. However, despite a tendency to be too modest, senior leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths. Monitoring is effective in identifying areas for improvement but is sometimes too infrequent with regard to the quality of teaching, and recording has been insufficiently documented to provide a formal reference point against which progress can be measured. Currently, staff do not have enough opportunity to be involved in observing and evaluating. Nevertheless, strengths in the way the school is run demonstrably outweigh weaknesses, and the overall quality of both leadership and management is good. The school's track record of improvement, not least in much more effective use of assessment and the quality of how new initiatives are managed, is a

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clear indicator of a good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of the monitoring of pupils' learning by:
 - ensuring that full records are kept of observations and evaluations of the quality of teaching, making clear how improvements can be made
 - increasing the frequency of such observations and giving staff responsible for subjects and phases the opportunity to be involved
 - involving governors more in first-hand observation of pupils' learning and data analysis so they are better informed when evaluating the impact of decisions made in order to hold the school to account.
- Improve pupils' multicultural awareness and the school's contribution to community cohesion by:
 - providing more opportunity for pupils to find out about different lifestyles, customs and faiths of people living in other areas of the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment varies from year to year, being heavily influenced by the level of special educational needs in small year groups. Over the last three years, attainment has been average, but improvements to the teaching of mathematics and writing are having positive effects. Work seen in lessons adds weight to predictions for 2010 that standards are likely to be above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn, and respond extremely well to praise and constructive support. For example, pupils made very good progress in a Year 4/5 lesson designed to encourage pupils to write using paragraphs. They were engrossed in their 'story-telling', setting the scene and tailoring the style to the audience. Such success is common, but staff do not rest on their laurels and the improvement of the quality of pupils' writing, especially of the more able pupils, remains a school priority. Much improved use of assessment by teachers to set targets for the school, as well as individuals, is having positive effects. This is enabling pupils of all abilities to achieve well from starting points which were below expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress against the targets of their education plans.

Pupils clearly enjoy learning. They respond well with positive attitudes and enthusiasm. The school is very successful in helping them to grow up as sensible, considerate young people who are ready to take on responsibility. Pupils have an outstanding sense of right and wrong. Good skills in working together and secure basic skills are good preparation for future study and life in general. In all classes observed, pupils were seen to do their best and to stay on task even when not in direct contact with the teacher. A good example was seen in a Year 6 lesson aimed at developing pupils' ability to explain their reading preferences. Groups eagerly discussed their favourite books and authors, making good progress in expressing themselves and in listening to others' points of

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view.

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

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching is common to all classes. Parents and pupils recognise the value of this and are forthright in their praise of all staff and the way improvements to the curriculum have made learning interesting and enjoyable. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and form the basis of mutual trust. Academic guidance is good. No one is afraid to make a mistake and then learn from it. Probing questioning in all lessons requires pupils to think before answering in full sentences. It underpins good progress, especially in literacy skills, as well as supporting pupils' self-confidence. Lessons usually move with good pace, but there are occasions when teachers move on too quickly for work to be consolidated. Teachers' planning is good, taking into account different abilities in mixed-age classes. Newly established target setting is paying dividends, with pupils playing a more active part in keeping track of their progress. There is a good four-year rolling programme of topic work which ensures pupils do not cover the same material unnecessarily. Evaluation of the success of this is in its early stages, but the

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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indications are that the curriculum is effective in supporting all subjects. It is well enhanced by visits and visitors and a good number and variety of extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils do well in sport and music. The bi-annual residential trip to the Scilly Isles is particularly popular, and visitors, for example those with first-hand experience of Polperro during the Second World War, bring learning to life. Aspects of provision which are less positive include access to information and communication technology equipment and the development of the outdoor learning environment. Good support for more vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is the main reason for these pupils' good progress. Equally, it is a fine example of the effectiveness of the mix of pastoral and academic care. The school's caring ethos and friendly atmosphere are notable strengths. It is no wonder pupils feel safe. Pupils make a good contribution to the school as a community and links with the local community are strong, a good example being the activities of the school band. The school very effectively fosters a sense of Cornish identity.

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?

Parents and carers confirm inspectors' judgement that the school is well led and managed. One parent encapsulated the views of many in commenting, 'The head is very visible and clearly knows what he wants for the school!' There is a determined, shared ambition to make improvements and lots of professional discussion about how to bring these about. Monitoring is effective and self-evaluation does support the school's accurate view of what it does well and where it can be better. However, there is insufficient recording of this process, especially with regard to the monitoring of teaching and learning, and not enough to show how governors and staff have been involved. Governors are planning ways to find out more for themselves in order to play a greater part in setting higher levels of challenge for the school. They are already successfully involved in ensuring safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and effective, and in balancing the budget.

Much-improved management of the use of data and its analysis has led to standards rising in mathematics and English. This has benefited more able pupils in particular, where higher expectations have driven up outcomes. There is good attention to ensuring all pupils have equal opportunities and no evidence of discrimination. As an almost entirely White community, pupils have little opportunity to learn about

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differences in lifestyles and customs in the United Kingdom as a multiracial society. This is an area for improvement for both cultural development and community cohesion. Nevertheless, the undoubted strengths in local community involvement and satisfactory international opportunities support a satisfactory community cohesion judgement overall.

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	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Staff take excellent care of children in Reception. Relationships are outstanding and good teaching shows a secure understanding of Early Years Foundation Stage education. Sending staff to observe good practice elsewhere has paid off. Good provision helps children to make good progress. There is a good balance of activities that children choose for themselves and those they are directed to by staff. Adults interact well with children, successfully encouraging them to talk about what they are doing. Learning through play is well managed. Staff keep good records of children's involvement and progress and use these to ensure that individuals get an appropriate diet of different activities. Children are helped to become readers and writers while enjoying communicating with other children and staff. Role play is great fun: making scary noises resulted in shouts of delight! By the time they are five, most children have reached what is expected of this age group. Children do very well in learning to work and play with others and in appreciating that listening is just as important as speaking. Despite good progress, writing lags behind other skills because of the children's low starting points. Good leadership and management are addressing this, and are already planning to overcome weaknesses in available space, resources and equipment and to provide shade for the outdoor learning area.

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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

The school maintains good links with parents and carers, as well as working well with other schools and outside agencies. Parents have very positive views, for example: 'We are very pleased with progress', 'We are made very welcome', and 'My child loves school'. The overwhelming response to the Ofsted questionnaire was in favour of the school, with appreciation for the quality of leadership, pastoral care and the friendly family atmosphere being prominent. There was no consensus of negative views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Polperro 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 89 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	55	13	45	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	72	8	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	59	12	41	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	69	8	28	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	66	10	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	69	8	28	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	72	8	16	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)	17	59	11	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	66	10	34	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	52	10	34	2	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	55	11	38	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	69	9	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	66	8	28	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.



22 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Polperro Community Primary School, Looe PL13 2JJ

It was a treat to visit your school. We can see why you like it so much. It is a good school, which means that it not only helps you to do your best, but it also makes sure you grow up as caring, sensible young people. A special thank you to the school council and all those who told us all about the school.

Here are some of the highlights we found.

- You get off to a good start in Reception and settle in well.
- You enjoy school for all the right reasons.
- Your behaviour is excellent (that doesn't mean perfect!) and your attendance is better than in most schools.
- Staff take good care of you and make sure you are safe.
- By the time you leave, you do as well as most other children in other schools.
- Staff are good at planning interesting work for you and you are well taught.
- The school is very good at helping those of you who need extra help.

The school is well run. The headteacher, staff and governors are a good team. They know what works well and what still needs doing to make the school even better. We have asked them to concentrate on the following things:

- improving the monitoring of how well you are taught, and how well you are learning, by keeping better records
- giving you more opportunities to find out about different lifestyles and customs of people from different faiths and cultures in other parts of our country.

We wish you all the best for the future. Keep up the good work and keep trying hard!

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart

Lead inspector

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