

# Pensilva Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 111963            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Cornwall          |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 337794            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 4–5 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>                 | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 158   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                              |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Keith Richards                                  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Becky Crispin                                   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 7 October 2006                                  |
| <b>School address</b>                      | School Road<br>Pensilva<br>Liskeard<br>PL14 5PG |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01579362546                                     |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01579363424                                     |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | head@pensilva.cornwall.sch.uk                   |

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and an assembly. The inspectors also visited morning play and lunchtime activities and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and parents. The inspection team 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, 58 parental questionnaires, 83 pupils' questionnaires and 16 staff questionnaires were scrutinised.

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

- Pupils' progress and whether this is equally good for all groups as they move through the school.
- How well teachers use assessment and target setting to provide the right level of challenge and to secure improvement for individuals and groups of pupils.
- The degree to which leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, monitor and evaluate to develop consistently good provision.

## Information about the school

This rural school is smaller than the average primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, but there is significant variation across the year groups. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a designated Reception class. An independent pre-school operates on the school site; this is inspected separately.

**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

Pensilva is a satisfactory school. Under the good leadership of a relatively new headteacher, the school is improving again after a difficult period when instability in staffing reduced confidence and led to gaps in pupils' learning. Having secured a more stable teaching force over the past year, leaders and managers through closer teamwork are tackling what needs to be done with increasing effect. Currently, pupils' attainment is broadly average. This shows that pupils, across the range of abilities, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their differing starting points. Behaviour is satisfactory; pupils say they feel more secure now. They talk about good improvements under the leadership of the new headteacher, saying that these have reduced incidents of misbehaviour. They include the 'Good to be Green' sanction and reward system and the 'Worry Box' for pupils' concerns.

Teaching is sound, but still has some way to go before the quality seen in some classes is consistent across the school. For example, the use of assessments of pupils' work to match targets for improvement to their differing needs is not yet consistently strong. These variations in provision slow progress on occasions and lead to some pupils, especially boys, not always developing their spelling, sentence writing and quick recall of number facts as well as they should. As improvement continues, however, so a greater amount of good teaching is now evident, as shown in the school's monitoring records and supported by inspectors' observations. Standards are now rising steadily as gaps in pupils' skills are filled and their progress is accelerated. Other improvements, including success in raising pupils' attendance levels, also show a sound capacity for improvement and represent promising signs of further potential.

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support to safeguard the pupils' welfare. Staff give effective pastoral care and link well with other schools and outside agencies. They work hard to develop sound links with parents, especially in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to secure regular attendance. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that includes good enrichment from clubs and visits, which underpins the pupils' enjoyment of school. Staff are currently reviewing and improving the curriculum to more closely meet pupils' differing needs. Practical activities, in particular, such as dance sessions, encourage the pupils' good adoption of healthy living and their positive contributions. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers to enhance their learning across the curriculum and lack a good understanding of Britain's multicultural community.

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

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- Improve pupils' writing and numeracy skills, particularly boys', so that they spell words with more accuracy, write more consistently in well-constructed sentences and develop greater proficiency in using and applying basic number skills.
- Strengthen the use of assessment and target setting to inform teaching and to involve pupils more effectively in evaluating and promoting their own learning.
- Develop the curriculum in all parts of the school so that it further extends pupils' skills and in particular:
  - provides more opportunities for pupils to learn by using computers, including for example, when undertaking independent research
  - enhances the pupils' understanding of multicultural Britain.

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

From generally expected skills on entry, pupils make satisfactory progress across the range of abilities. Across the school, many pupils are developing good skills in music and the expressive arts. By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly average. However, not all pupils are spelling with sufficient accuracy. In addition, a significant minority, especially some boys, are capable of writing better sentences and of recalling and using number facts more effectively when calculating.

Following a significant decline in standards in national assessments in 2009, the inspectors' observations of lessons now show improving learning. The school's records of pupils' progress, supported by inspectors observations of their learning in lessons and sampling of their work in books, show that gaps in previous learning are being steadily filled. This was evident, for example, as pupils used laptop computers to extend their understanding of coordinates in a mathematics lesson. Observations also show that an increasing number of pupils, particularly those with more ability, are now reaching the levels of attainment of which they are capable.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. Most behave well and say that they feel safe. However, a significant minority of pupils, in discussion and in their questionnaire responses, indicated that they have concerns about the behaviour of a few older pupils. Nevertheless, pupils readily acknowledge that behaviour is improving. They say that the teachers' new ways of managing behaviour are having a positive effect. Pupils say that they enjoy school. This is reflected in their improved attendance and their enthusiastic participation in clubs and other learning activities. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, for example on the school council and say that their views are acted upon. The pupils' positive attitudes and good adoption of healthy lifestyles are particularly apparent during practical work, for example, when they use laptop computers and take part in dance sessions or play guitars. By the time pupils leave the school, their good attitudes to learning and satisfactory academic achievement prepare them soundly for the future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>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                      | 3        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>2</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:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>3</b> |

### How effective is the provision?

With an increasingly stable teaching staff, teachers and their assistants are making better use of assessments of pupils' progress and this is giving them a more accurate picture of what pupils need to learn next. In addition, teachers are strengthening the way they develop pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills and are questioning and engaging more effectively with pupils. These approaches are helping to bridge gaps in pupils' previous learning and are bringing more consistency to the quality of teaching and learning. They are relatively new developments, however, and have not yet been implemented with equal success across the school. For example, on occasions, whole-class introductions continue for too long and do not always challenge all pupils to equally good effect. Not all teachers identify targets for improvement precisely enough or make sufficient reference to them when marking the pupils' work.

The school's satisfactory curriculum is enriched by a good range of clubs, visits and visitors. These reflect the strong emphasis on sports and the expressive arts, music in particular, which promote the pupils' enjoyment and healthy lifestyles well. The curriculum contains effective opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of their local Cornish culture and by, for example, studying rain forests, the global community. The curriculum lacks a sufficient emphasis on extending the pupils' understanding of multicultural Britain. While learning is supported by linking subjects together in topics, such as 'Coasts', teachers are aware that the curriculum is not fully effective in helping

<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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pupils to develop their skills in each subject. Over the past year the school has invested significant funds to provide laptop computers, which the pupils enjoy using. However, not all pupils have sufficient opportunity to use computers to support and develop their independent research skills to the full.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory rather than good because updated policies and procedures are not yet well established across the school. Even so, strengthened procedures to promote attendance are having a beneficial effect. Teachers and their assistants have a good knowledge of the pupils' personal needs, especially those pupils who are vulnerable or have special educational and/or learning disabilities. Staff present good role models and encourage caring relationships. They are particularly sensitive in the way they include a few pupils who have complex learning difficulties. The staff work closely with outside agencies to enhance the quality of the support available. This is supported by sound safeguarding of pupils and links with parents. Good checks are made on adults who work in the school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>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>3</b> |

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The relatively new headteacher is giving a good lead in promoting a shared approach to improvement, and is receiving sound support from colleagues. This commitment to improvement is evident in the school's good use of newsletters, surveys, replies to parents' and pupils' views and the invitations to 'Meet the Head', which represent good communication and a positive effort to strengthen the partnership with parents. As team leadership strategies develop, so the momentum of improvement is quickening. The headteacher has played a key role in embedding good procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of the school and has identified the right priorities for development. Senior managers and teachers are now strengthening the way assessments and targets are used to bring about improvement. However, these new management structures and updated policies and procedures have not yet been in place long enough to secure consistently good provision across the school in order to raise pupils' attainment and achievement to the full. Even so, the increasing amount of good teaching and evidence of more pupils making good progress shows that this is a satisfactorily improving school. The governing body is undergoing a period of change, but under the dedicated guidance of an experienced chairperson, it retains sufficient expertise and supports staff satisfactorily. Governors are aware that while safeguarding is secure, a number of newly

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updated procedures have yet to be monitored to bring consistently good practice. This is an inclusive school, which ensures freedom from discrimination and provides equal opportunity, as demonstrated for example, by all pupils achieving equally. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. School, local and global issues are developed well through links with local schools, charitable donations and through the creative arts, for example. The school has planned links with schools with ethnically diverse communities in Britain, but accepts that promoting the national aspect of community cohesion is work in progress.

*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:<br>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>3</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>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>3</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 on entry to the Reception class vary from year to year. Typically they match those expected of children of this age. On entry to Year 1, attainment is broadly average and shows that children, across the range of abilities, have achieved satisfactorily. Staff communicate supportively with parents and liaise well with the adjacent pre-school to ensure that the children have a successful passage into the Reception class. Staff complete regular observations and assessments of the children's developing skills. They record these in 'learning journals' and use these satisfactorily to sustain their steady progress across all the areas of learning. Staff are particularly effective in identifying and tackling children's special educational needs and/or learning disabilities at an early stage. They also safeguard the children's welfare securely. Children enjoy their work and develop positive attitudes to school. These qualities are evident in the way they confidently make and undertake their own learning choices. Children show a good understanding of healthy living by making sensible choices at



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snack times and remembering to wash their hands before eating and cooking. Children have access to a satisfactory range of facilities and resources and experience all the required areas of learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, rather than good, because at times, there is too much adult intervention, restricting opportunities for children to develop their creativity during their self-chosen learning activities.

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

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:   |          |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage                          | 3        |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage                       | 3        |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3        |

**Views of parents and carers**

The large majority of the parents who responded in the questionnaire are happy and have confidence in the work of the school. Most parents agreed that teaching, pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles and enjoyment of school are good. Other common threads within parents' comments included praise for the work of the relatively new headteacher and the view that the school is improving after a period of uncertainty. There were a number of parental criticisms, which stemmed from a minority of parents who expressed disagreement with the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and the degree to which the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors are mindful of these parental concerns and note the challenges, especially in small schools, that instability in staffing often brings. Inspectors observed mostly good behaviour and good communication with parents during their visit. Inspectors also welcome the shared efforts to rebuild partnerships and confidence in the school in order to better promote pupils' achievements.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pensilva 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 inspectors received 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 158 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly Agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |    |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | %  |
| My child enjoys school  | 29             | 50 | 25    | 43 | 3        | 5  | 1                 | 2  |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 20             | 34 | 32    | 55 | 6        | 10 | 0                 | 0  |
| The school informs me about my child's progress   | 19             | 33 | 26    | 45 | 9        | 16 | 1                 | 2  |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 16             | 28 | 29    | 50 | 8        | 14 | 1                 | 2  |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 30             | 52 | 24    | 41 | 0        | 0  | 1                 | 2  |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 22             | 38 | 30    | 52 | 5        | 9  | 1                 | 2  |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 20             | 34 | 34    | 59 | 0        | 0  | 2                 | 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             | 28 | 26    | 45 | 4        | 7  | 2                 | 3  |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 21             | 36 | 26    | 45 | 6        | 10 | 1                 | 2  |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 10             | 17 | 29    | 50 | 12       | 21 | 7                 | 12 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 14             | 24 | 25    | 43 | 11       | 19 | 3                 | 5  |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 13             | 22 | 32    | 55 | 3        | 5  | 3                 | 5  |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 23             | 40 | 30    | 52 | 1        | 2  | 2                 | 3  |

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"><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.**



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pensilva Primary School, Pensilva PL4 5PG

Thank you for the way you so warmly welcomed and assisted us during our visit to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work. We were impressed by your good attitudes and contributions to your learning and by the close, personal support you receive from the caring staff of the school. We judged Pensilva to be a satisfactory school and agree with your teachers and governors that it is improving steadily.

These are some of the other main things we found:

- The levels of attainment that you reach in Year 6 broadly match the national average. You are enthusiastic learners and an increasing number of you reach above average levels and standards are rising. These show that whilst teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, they are improving and there is more good teaching now.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors have strengthened how they work together and are helping you to improve your progress.
- Staff work effectively with other schools and agencies and are working hard to develop a closer partnership with parents to support your learning. You appreciate their efforts, enjoy school and are good at adopting healthy, safe lifestyles.

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

- Improve your spelling, sentence writing and basic number skills, especially boys' skills.
- Improve the way your work is assessed and the way targets are used to help you learn and make better progress.
- Ensure that learning activities help you to develop your skills better and provide more opportunities for you to learn by using computers and develop a better understanding of multicultural Britain

Thank you for helping us with the inspection. We hope that you carry on enjoying your learning. You can help by making sure that you know what you have to do to improve your work.

Yours faithfully

Alex Baxter

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