

St Germans Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111982
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337800
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2009
Reporting inspector	David Edwards HMI

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	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Smith
Headteacher	Carol McGlinchey
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited nine lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, chair of governors, staff, pupils and parent representatives. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school documentation including evidence from the school's self-evaluation process, including staff, pupils and 79 completed parents' questionnaires.

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

- effectiveness of strategies to raise standards in writing throughout the school and for boys in particular
- achievement of more able and talented pupils at both key stages to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging
- opportunities within the curriculum to develop pupils' understanding of the diversity of British society.

Information about the school

St Germans is a small primary school situated in the Tamar Valley. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals, although rising, is also below average.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

St Germans is a school with an excellent culture and ethos, through which the majority of pupils are enabled to achieve exceptionally high standards. The very experienced headteacher, her staff and governors work closely with parents and other partners to provide high quality learning for pupils within an outstanding environment. Through rigorous self-evaluation, leaders possess an accurate understanding of the school's many strengths and where improvements still need to be made. Development plans are accurately focused to secure improvements and maintain the high standards achieved by pupils throughout the school and when they leave school at the end of Year 6. Consequently, capacity for further improvement is excellent.

Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and are involved in setting targets and evaluating their learning which helps them to understand how they can improve their work. The work of the school is rigorously monitored by the headteacher with outcomes communicated regularly to governors. As a result, the governing body is able to make an excellent contribution to the work and direction of the school.

Children receive an excellent start to the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the trusting and supportive relations the school is quick to establish with parents and carers. As a result, teachers are able to identify and then provide for children's individual learning needs to ensure they are very well prepared for learning at Key Stage 1.

The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good and many lessons are excellent. Teachers know their pupils well and work very closely with support staff to make lessons enjoyable for pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is extensive and this ensures all pupils, especially the more able, are appropriately challenged to do their best. Combined with an excellent academic curriculum and outstanding support and guidance, the strength of the teaching ensures pupils make exceptional progress in their learning.

Very effective developments have taken place since the last inspection to create a curriculum designed to provide well-organised, imaginative and effective learning. However, opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of the diverse cultures within British society are undeveloped. The school is aware of this and is in the process of addressing this issue by establishing links with an inner city school in another part of the country.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the school's contribution to community cohesion by promoting pupils'

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understanding of Britain as a diverse society

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

- Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. Teachers set high expectations, make clear the learning objectives at the start of each lesson and allow space for pupils to think and respond to questions. Robust systems to assess and monitor pupils' learning and progress ensure that lessons include personalised work for all pupils. Marking is carried out conscientiously by teachers and effectively informs pupils of what they need to do to improve further.
- The curriculum is innovative and stimulates pupils' interests. The superb immediate environment is frequently used to enhance pupils' enjoyment and develop an appreciation of their locality. A particular strength of the school is the regular involvement of parents and carers in sharing their skills and interests to further enrich pupils' learning.

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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- The school has developed very effective links with extended services and partners in order to provide extensively for pupils and their families. Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. Teaching assistants work closely with small groups or individual pupils and provide valuable support to teachers. Pupils' enjoyment of school and their very positive relations with adults are summed up by one pupil who said: 'The teachers are kind and the lessons are great - what a joyful place it is to be!'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle to routines quickly and are happy because their welfare is a priority and they enjoy the learning activities planned for them. Warm, yet highly effective,

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relationships with adults ensure children know exactly what is expected of them at all times and their behaviour is exceptionally good. Children are attentive listeners and carry out instruction as directed.

Most children start school with skills and abilities that are in line with national expectations but often display strengths in personal, social and emotional skills, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Discerning observations of children in lessons and through play are used wisely to inform teachers in providing for the next steps in children's learning. As a result, children make excellent progress in all areas of learning which prepares them very well to meet the challenges of the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. Impressive work has been carried out recently to develop the outdoor learning environment and allow children free-flow access to the stimulating outdoor learning area. Very good teamwork between teachers and support staff promotes the excellent progress of pupils. Teaching assistants have been trained effectively and possess a very good understanding of what is needed to support children in their learning. All adults contribute to the collection of assessment information which is used very effectively to plan learning activities and ensure that themes and topics are child-centred.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A total of 79 parents responded to the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority were very positive about the school. There were many positive comments about how much their children enjoy school. One parent summed up the views of the majority by writing: 'The head is a true leader of her wonderful team of teachers, assistant teachers and staff. I am so impressed with every aspect of the school I struggle to offer any suggestions for improvement. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful school on our doorstep.'

In essence, the findings of the inspectors reflected the views of parents. A small number of parents did express their concerns regarding the current size of one particular class. Following discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors and a group of parents, inspectors are of the opinion that the school has acted swiftly in response to concerns raised and has implemented appropriate strategies to ensure pupils' learning and

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progress are not compromised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Germans 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 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 106 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	79	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	79	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	79	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	79	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	79	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	79	100	0	0	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)	79	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	79	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	79	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	79	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	79	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	79	100	0	0	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.



27 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Germans Primary School, Saltash, PL12 5NJ

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. I was especially impressed with your good behaviour and your enthusiasm to learn. I want to tell you what I thought of your school. I have judged that yours is an outstanding school. The support and guidance you enjoy are exceptional because your headteacher and her staff and governors care very much about everything you do and not just about achieving high standards in your work. They are doing a great job to ensure you grow up with very good personal skills that will help you to enjoy life and contribute well to your community in the future.

Lots of you told me how much you enjoy school and I was not surprised. You have so many fantastic opportunities to learn at St Germans. One pupil summed up the view of you all by writing: 'Our school is a very nice place to be and the teachers make work very fun and the school trips very exciting.' I enjoyed meeting the school council who told me that you all feel safe in school and know about how to stay healthy through regular exercise and a healthy diet. Your teachers guide and support you very well when marking your work. I was particularly pleased to see how your teachers encourage you to write your own comments in your books to show how well you understand how you are doing. It is not surprising therefore to find that the majority of you achieve standards that are exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Well done!

There will, however, always be room for improvement and your teachers know some of you still have to work hard on improving your writing skills. I am sure that, with your very good attitudes to your work, you will succeed. As a result of the inspection, I have asked your teachers to make sure you are provided with more opportunities to find out about people and communities in other parts of Britain that are very different to the way you live in Cornwall.

Finally, I wish you every success for your futures and I hope the Christmas Fair was a great success!

Yours sincerely

David Edwards

Her Majesty's Inspector

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