

St Maddern's Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111996
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337808
Inspection date	3 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Grahame Sherfield HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patricia Hersant
Headteacher	Teresa Rowe
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 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 eight lessons and observed five teachers, spending 50% of their time looking at learning. They held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at key documents, such as the development plan and the minutes of meetings of the governing body, and 17 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- the progress being made by pupils of average levels of attainment and above in Years 3 to 6
- the extent to which pupils contribute to the school community
- how effectively the new integrated topics contribute to developing pupils' skills and understanding in information and communication technology
- the effectiveness of the leadership of subjects within the context of this very small school
- how effectively the school promotes the cohesion of the British and global communities.

Information about the school

This very small school serves a White British community in this west Cornwall village. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, and of those eligible for free school meals, are well above average. There have been some significant changes in staffing and the headteacher and one teaching assistant are the only staff who were in post at the previous inspection.

The nursery provision on the school site is managed by a private provider and subject to a separate inspection.

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

St Maddern's is a good school. Pupils behave well, enjoy their learning and feel safe within the outstandingly caring environment which the headteacher and her staff have created. Attendance is high and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are excellent. Parents and carers are very strongly supportive of the school. One said that she would 'highly recommend St Maddern's to anybody,' while another praised the 'lovely school'. Inspectors agree with these views which are representative of all parents and carers who returned the questionnaire.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the school has successfully maintained an improving trend in attainment by the end of Year 2. Inspectors' observations as well as the school's own data show that pupils are achieving well and are on track to reach above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the summer of 2010. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 also achieve well. Rigorous tracking of the progress of individuals is ensuring that pupils of average and above average attainment are making good progress in English and mathematics which is similar to that made by their classmates with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's data, supported by inspection evidence, show that pupils are on track to attain average standards in the national tests this summer and several are on course to reach the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school community and there are developing opportunities for them to find out more about other parts of the world. But the scope for pupils to build understanding of the cultural diversity of life in many parts of Britain is less extensive. The school has outstanding partnerships with a wide range of external organisations which extend the opportunities for pupils, both academically and in their personal development. Pupils work well in lessons. Much of the teaching observed by inspectors was good, with careful planning and good classroom relationships. Work is marked frequently but guidance on how to improve further is not a strong feature. Pupils' targets for improvement in English and mathematics are often rather general and lack precise areas for them to work on. New topics that link work in different subjects are successfully engaging pupils' interest and making a good contribution to developing pupils' skills, particularly in literacy. The school has correctly identified that opportunities for developing skills in information and communication technology are underdeveloped.

The headteacher has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, based on effective systems for monitoring and evaluating its work, and clear priorities for further improvement. Staff work as a close-knit team, sharing a determination that the school should continue to improve, and subject leadership is provided through appropriate collaborative approaches. Challenging targets are set and the school has a

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good record of reaching these. Consequently, the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' understanding of how to raise their attainment by ensuring that:
 - teachers' marking provides clear guidance on how to do better
 - targets for improvement for individual pupils in English and mathematics identify precisely where pupils need to focus their efforts.
- Improve the provision for developing pupils' skills in information and communication technology by:
 - providing more opportunities for them to develop their skills in the various subjects of the curriculum
 - upgrading equipment as needed.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils concentrate well in lessons and work effectively both independently and in cooperation with others. In one mathematics lesson, more-able pupils moved smoothly and independently into their main activities, leaving the teacher free to provide the further help that their classmates needed. Pupils respond well to the caring and supportive approach shown by the staff and this makes a strong contribution to their capacity to sustain their efforts and to their high level of enjoyment.

A key strength of the school is the careful tracking of the progress pupils make each term. All are well known to the headteacher who carefully scrutinises how well they are doing. Expectations of progress are high. The school's high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the high level of support and care they receive. The school has focused particular attention on checking the progress of pupils of average and above-average attainment. Additional support or challenge has been provided where needed. As a result, these pupils also make good progress in their work in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school in Year 6.

Pupils have an excellent grasp of the importance of eating healthy food and of taking plenty of exercise. They make a good contribution to the school community, taking on various roles within their classroom. Year 6 pupils value the opportunities to become a 'playground buddy' and a prefect. Pupils feel that their ideas are taken seriously by the school. As one explained, 'I like this school because the staff listen to me.' Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy, their outstanding attendance record and their good collaborative and independent skills equip them well for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers engage their pupils within a positive atmosphere and teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils benefit from frequent marking of their work where teachers give encouragement and reflect how well pupils have addressed the objectives underpinning the work. Only occasionally do pupils receive clear guidance on how to improve their work in the future. Pupils receiving additional support have targets that give clear indications of what they need to do to improve in English and mathematics but the targets for most other pupils are not precise enough. Good teaching observed was characterised by good planning with clear attention paid to the differing needs of the pupils. What pupils were to learn by undertaking activities was clear and pupils were well managed. Where teaching was satisfactory, teachers' explanations sometimes lacked vigour and opportunities were missed at the beginning and the end of lessons to challenge pupils of varying levels of attainment.

Pupils value the way in which the new topics excite their interest, particularly through visits, for example to the Maritime Museum, and this contributes to the enjoyment of learning that most display. As one put it, 'This school is fun because we do activities.' Provision for music is a strength. The emphasis on literacy means that other subjects, for example history, sometimes receive less thorough treatment. The school's software resources are not currently being used fully to develop skills in information and communication technology and the laptop computers are ageing and in need of

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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replacement. The newly appointed subject leader has a plan to address this. More vulnerable pupils are very well cared for in the friendly atmosphere where staff have very good knowledge of all pupils and their families. Rigorous and thorough approaches are used very successfully to promote good attendance.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The staff work with the headteacher as a small, mutually supportive team that shares an ambition for the school's continuing improvement. The school's approach to ensuring leadership for subjects is based on staff working collaboratively. Where a subject has been identified for particular attention, such as information and communication technology at present, a teacher takes on the leadership of the improvement sought. This approach is tailored well to the circumstances of a very small school. Governors strongly support the school, its pupils and its place in the local community. They are well informed about what the school does well and what is in need of further development. They are less effective in holding its leadership to account for the progress made with the school's priorities for improvement.

The school is successful in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and has succeeded in ensuring that average and higher-attaining pupils do well too. This shows its effectiveness in promoting equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve as well as they can. The school also ensures that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times. It makes a good contribution to community cohesion. There is a strong sense of community in the school and it has very good links with the local community. The school is twinned with another in Spain and a visit from a Spanish teacher is planned. St Maddern's has joined an initiative, led by a local secondary school and funded by the European Union's Comenius project, to develop partnerships with schools in Europe focused on biodiversity. There are opportunities for pupils to understand other cultures through the curriculum but the school acknowledges that its contribution to promoting pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in other parts of Britain is underdeveloped.

The school's rigorous arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding. All necessary policies are in place and used very well. Checks have been made on all adults who work within the school and the outcomes of these are recorded carefully.

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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	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills when they join the school vary widely from year to year as the numbers are very small. In 2008/2009, children made good progress from their starting points in all areas of learning and their attainment by the end of the Reception Year was a little above expected levels.

All welfare requirements are met and children are happy and well cared for in the warm and welcoming atmosphere. Arrangements for the start of the day work well and children enter the classroom happily. Behaviour is good and children get on very well with each other and with the staff. The children benefit from the high number of staff who are available to support them in their learning. A good balance of adult-led and child-selected activities is evident in planning, although limited opportunities were observed by inspectors for children to choose activities. Good use of the outside area was planned during the inspection but damage to the cover in the recent snow meant that heavy rain prevented the activities from taking place.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are shared by two teachers who are both new to the role. They are settling in well and developing their understanding of the provision's strengths and areas for development. Currently, assessment information is not being used sufficiently to ensure all activities fully meet the needs of individual children.

There is a good partnership with parents and carers who are very positive about their children's experience in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Links with pre-school provision are good and children are well known to staff before they join Reception.

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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	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned the Ofsted questionnaire are very strongly supportive of the school. All respondents are positive about all the statements. Parents and carers are particularly pleased with children's enjoyment of school and the progress they make. Inspection evidence indicates that these positive views are fully justified.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Maddern's Church of England 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 17 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 33 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	94	1	6	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	82	3	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	59	7	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	71	5	29	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)	12	71	5	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	71	5	29	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	53	8	47	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	59	7	41	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	71	5	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	71	5	29	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

	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"> ■ 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.



4 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Maddern's Church of England School, Madron, TR20 8SP

Thank you for your involvement in the recent inspection, particularly for the friendly and open way in which you talked to us. We enjoyed visiting your school very much.

You go to a good school and we think you are right to be pleased with what it offers you. Here are the main things we found out.

- You make good progress in your work, supported by effective teaching and an interesting range of activities.
- You behave well and your attendance at school is excellent.
- The children in Reception get off to a good start.
- The school cares for you exceptionally well and you feel very safe.
- The governors, the headteacher and the other staff have been successful in making improvements and are determined to make the school even better.

These are the main things we have asked the school to do to keep improving.

- We have asked the school to make sure that your teacher's marking gives you more guidance on how to improve your work and that your targets for improvement in English and mathematics are more precise. This will help you to concentrate on the aspects that will help you to do better. You can help by doing your best to follow the advice and to work on the targets.
- We have also asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to use information and communication technology in your work. I hope you will make the most of these new opportunities to develop your skills.

Thank you again for your involvement in the inspection and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Grahame Sherfield

Her Majesty's Inspector

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