

St Keverne Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	111821
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	378366
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2012
Lead inspector	Peter Clifton

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	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martha Mita
Headteacher	Tom Harman
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Peter Clifton

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Seven lessons were visited and three teachers observed teaching. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school improvement plan, the school's information on pupils' progress, samples of pupils' work and information sent home to parents and carers. The responses to 23 questionnaires from parents and carers, seven responses from staff and 28 pupil responses were examined and analysed.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school serving the local area. All pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There are two classes, both mixed age. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a combined Reception and Year 1/2 class. The other class is for Years 3 to 6. The school is formally federated with another local primary school and, since summer 2011, has been part of a four-school partnership. The headteacher, who has led the school since September 2011, is also the headteacher of the other schools in the partnership. The school meets the government's floor standards. It received a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector in December 2010.

Pre-school provision on the site is not managed by the governing body and was not a part of this inspection.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is emerging from a lengthy period of uncertainty, during which time there have been several changes of headteacher. The uncertainties are now resolved. The governing body and headteacher are firmly focused on building further on the improvements recognised in the monitoring visit. A positive start has been made in sharing expertise from across the partnership.
- Teaching is typically satisfactory and this has led to pupils' satisfactory achievement. Improvement in teaching in Key Stage 2 is quickly closing gaps in achievement. Classroom initiatives, such as a project to improve creative writing, including interactive work and drama, have led to significant acceleration in progress for some pupils, particularly in writing and in English overall. These initiatives promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, fostering pupils' confidence and self-esteem as well as cultural awareness.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make at least satisfactory and sometimes better progress because teaching is mostly well matched to the needs of individuals. However, lesson planning is not always sufficiently distinctive or challenging, and this means that progress is variable. In Years 1 and 2, teachers' expectations about what should be achieved in the time available are not always made clear enough and the pace of lessons is sometimes too slow.
- Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Disruption to lessons is uncommon. Pupils, parents and carers confirm that pupils feel safe. Pupils comment that they treat each other with respect, and most say they enjoy coming to school. Attendance has improved recently and is broadly average.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the summer term 2012, move the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by:
 - raising expectations about what should be achieved by pupils in the time available
 - ensuring that the pace of lessons is consistently brisk
 - fine-tuning planning to meet the needs of different groups of pupils more closely, especially those who are more able.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - sharing strengths from across the partnership to model effective teaching in mixed-age classes
 - making more robust checks on the quality of teaching and learning so that weaknesses identified are quickly addressed.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most parents and carers feel their child is making good progress. The lessons observed and pupils' work seen show that, although some pupils make good progress, overall, progress and achievement are satisfactory. Children start at the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typically in line with levels expected for their age. Reception children can read simple words like 'log' and 'frog', using letter sounds to help them. They choose activities and play together confidently in the outside area. However, there are occasions when lessons do not meet their needs sufficiently, such as when they sit on the carpet with pupils from Years 1 and 2 for too long rather than working on tasks designed for their abilities. This limits their progress. The small numbers in most year groups means that there is considerable variation in attainment at the end of the Reception year. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is usually average but in some year groups is below average.

Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is below average because the use of letter sounds to help with reading is not yet fully secure. By Year 4, pupils talk about their reading books enthusiastically, appreciating the author's use of humour and description. By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading is broadly average and rising. By this age, pupils have good reading habits and express clear preferences about different authors.

The school's focus on improving pupils' writing has been successful in boosting attainment and progress but there is some inconsistency. Year 1 pupils are beginning to use connecting words to join their sentences together but Year 2 pupils do not write confidently. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' writing shows some good use of vocabulary and clear understanding of how ideas are developed and sustained, for example in persuasive writing. There are several examples of writing showing attainment above that expected. Typically, pupils make satisfactory progress in literacy overall, for instance, in identifying nouns and adjectives in a text and developing note-taking skills.

Progress in mathematics is satisfactory but there are examples of faster progress.

For instance, more-able pupils in Years 3 to 6 made good progress in reading scales, working out the values of the intervals. Pupils relished the opportunity to explain their thinking to the class.

Lower-ability pupils are, on a few occasions, given help too readily, so that they are not given enough opportunities to think things through for themselves, slowing their progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress that is similar to that of other pupils. They are given additional help and guidance which enables them to work cooperatively and learn effectively alongside other pupils.

Quality of teaching

Teaching promotes mostly satisfactory and sometimes better achievement. Relationships in lessons are positive and most pupils are encouraged to share what they know and understand through answering teachers' questions and discussing their ideas with each other. Cooperation in groups is promoted well by adults. Teaching in Reception provides children with a sound basis for reading and writing. In Key Stage 1, practical activities in mathematics and music help the pupils to enjoy their learning, but teaching is less successful in inspiring some pupils, particularly boys, to write well independently. Strategies to help them, such as the use of word banks or being clear about what is expected in the time available, are underdeveloped.

Overall, the quality of teaching has a satisfactory impact on the curriculum on offer. There are strengths; for example, a topic on 'Ancient Egypt' was used well as a focus to help pupils to develop mathematics and writing skills. In a lesson about the values being promoted by the Olympic Games, pupils were skilfully encouraged to think hard about their own leadership skills. Pupils enjoy and appreciate the opportunities to link some activities with the partnership schools and this promotes, and brings positive benefits to, pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

Lessons have clear objectives which are shared with pupils and targeted at the wide range of needs of pupils. However, planning is not yet sufficiently fine-tuned to promote consistently good progress. While parts of lessons move on at a brisk pace and pupils show considerable application, there are other times when learning is slowed because the teacher takes too long to give out information or develop ideas. Some activities provide the pupils with a strong challenge which pupils have to think about carefully, resulting in considerable gains in progress. However, this is not always the case. There are occasions when activities are too easy, particularly for more-able pupils. While most parents and carers express positive views about teaching, there are, rightly, a few who think that more needs to be done to help their children.

Pupils read the comments made in their books which suggest how they could improve their work. However, about one third of the pupils indicated in the questionnaires that they only sometimes know how well they are doing. The school is developing strategies to help the pupils to decide for themselves what could be improved.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Around the school pupils are courteous and polite. They expressed mixed views about lessons. While some say they find these interesting, there are times, they say, when activities are dull. Similarly, although no inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection, the pupils comment that there are occasions when poor behaviour does interrupt their learning, but that this is uncommon. These views are supported by parents and carers in questionnaire responses.

Pupils say they feel safe. Those who discussed this with the inspector expressed no concerns about various types of bullying they have learned about, including through the use of information and communication technology or mobile telephones. While they say they occasionally 'fall out' with each other, this, they confirm, is usually short-lived. The school is a harmonious community. Pupils commented that any issue is quickly dealt with by staff. However, about one quarter say they are only sometimes happy about coming to school. This year pupils have improved their punctuality and attendance significantly because the school effectively promotes regular attendance and the governing body play their full part in discouraging absences such as taking holidays in term time.

Leadership and management

The considerable number of changes in leadership arrangements since the time of the previous inspection has not been helpful in driving through change. Despite this, action to sustain improvement is having a positive impact. The focus to improve writing at Key Stage 2 has been the school's most notable success. Other successes include improvement in attendance and implementing a robust system to track pupils' progress. Planning for improvement, judged to be more robust and formalised at the time of the monitoring visit, is currently being reviewed to incorporate actions into a federation plan. The headteacher has an accurate view about the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and is developing strategies to pinpoint weaknesses quickly and to promote improvement, including using staff from the partnership to model best practice. However, these strategies have yet to show impact. Overall, while a few significant weaknesses remain, the success already evident, of action taken, shows that the school demonstrates capacity for improvement.

The curriculum provides appropriate opportunities to develop pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects and pupils confirm that there is a good offer of extra-curricular activities that help to make school more enjoyable. There have clearly been improvements to the curriculum for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and this has led to gaps in achievement quickly closing. However, leaders and managers recognise there is more to be done to engage the interest of boys and promote better achievement for more-able pupils. Sound provision to secure equal opportunities and tackle discrimination for pupils shows its impact in the equal progress of all groups.

The governing body supports and challenges leaders effectively, for example, by asking questions about pupils' rates of progress. A programme of regular visits to the

school has been set up. Members have a clear understanding about their responsibility for safeguarding and arrangements to promote these are comprehensive and meet statutory requirements.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, especially social and moral development. This is demonstrated by the confidence and maturity displayed by older pupils and the good relationships in school. Strategies include the awarding of 'golden tickets' that pupils earn to show they value each other, such as by helping younger pupils or behaving well at lunchtimes.

The new partnership arrangement, although early in its inception, is beginning to make an positive impact in the school, for example, through the creation of a gifted and talent mathematics group, joint ventures to promote environmental understanding, story telling, and art and design activities.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

9 February 2012

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of St Keverne Community Primary School, St Keverne TR12
6NQ**

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly to me when I visited your school, and for your responses to the questionnaire. St Keverne School provides you with a satisfactory education. Your school has gone through many changes recently. Your new headteacher has a good understanding about what needs to be done to make further improvements. I have asked him and the governing body to make sure that teachers from the different schools in your school partnership work more closely together to learn from each other how to help you to learn better.

Your school has made changes to help with your writing and these have been particularly successful, especially for those of you who are in Years 3 to 6. Quite a few of you are now doing a lot better.

I looked very carefully at the work you are given. Much of this is helping you to learn well but there are occasions when it is either too easy or hard. I have asked the school to make sure it is at just the right level, especially for those of you who find learning easy. Other things your teachers can do to help you include making sure that you are given clearer information about what you need to finish in the time available, and ensuring lessons move on quickly so that you do not become restless.

You get on well together but about a quarter of you said that you were only sometimes happy about coming to school. The school is aware of this and is working to make your learning more enjoyable. Most of you come to school regularly and on time. You behave well at playtimes but quite a few of you have said that behaviour in lessons is not always as good as it should be.

Your headteacher, governing body and all the teachers are keen to help the school improve. You can help by always coming to school, unless you are unwell, and by listening carefully to your teacher all of the time.

Thank you again for all your help and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton
Lead inspector

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