

St Agnes School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111869
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	289082
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

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 on roll	
School	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Smith
Headteacher	G M Foxwell
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	Trelawney Road St Agnes TR5 0LZ
Telephone number	01872 552648
Fax number	01872 552648

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves a coastal village and the surrounding rural area. A significant proportion of parents work in the tourist industry which creates difficulties over the timing of their own family holidays, which in turn affects attendance.

The school welcomes an above average number of pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities is well below average. No pupils speak a language other than English at home.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. To quote parents who had recently moved to the area, 'We were immediately impressed with the happy, caring working environment.' Older pupils started school with skills and knowledge below those normally expected, but recently admitted younger pupils now arrive with the expected levels. They make good progress in the Reception Year and most attain the standards expected for children of their age. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2, at the end of which pupils attain average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6 older pupils also attain average results in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement. In 2006, the proportion attaining the nationally expected level in English was below average and targets were not met. The school has identified the reasons for this and taken action and the current Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve the targets set. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their behaviour has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. Attendance is below average, but the school does all it can to improve it.

Teaching is good. Teachers explain work clearly, in small steps that pupils can easily understand. This is appreciated by pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils and work is well planned to match their needs and abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported by teachers and their assistants, although the latter are used more effectively in some classes than in others. Marking of work is variable. The best is very good, helping pupils to improve their work, but some is more cursory. The curriculum is good, and especially good use is made of local resources. There is also a good range of after-school activities for older pupils. Pupils are given good care, guidance and support. Their welfare is given a strong emphasis by all adults in the school and they receive good academic guidance due to the careful tracking of their progress which is used to set them appropriate targets for the next stages of their learning. Unusually and beneficially, the concept of simple targets is introduced in the Reception class.

Leadership and management are good. There is a clear direction to the school's work, supported by the excellent governing body. Recent changes have led to some lack of clarity over the roles of middle managers and responsibility for subject leadership. The impact, for instance on improving teaching, is satisfactory, but is less effective than it might be because of this. Monitoring of performance by staff is largely confined to the headteacher and his assistant and is less well understood by others; however the quality of monitoring and evaluation is satisfactory overall. The governors have taken a strong lead in developing their own systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work and contribute much to the good potential to improve further. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, for instance in behaviour, provision for information and communication technology (ICT), and in the Foundation Stage (Reception class), which is now of good quality.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of the marking of pupils' work to ensure that it always reflects the best practice in the school.
- Improve the management of support staff to ensure that their skills are always used to best effect.

- Ensure that middle managers and subject leaders understand their role in monitoring, evaluating and improving the school's work and hence have greater impact, for instance on improving teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage, by the end of which they are beginning to read and write, and to use numbers well. In Years 1 and 2 pupils continue to make good progress and by the end of Year 2 most can read and write at length and solve simple mathematical problems, attaining standards in line with national averages. By the end of Year 6 they attain standards in national tests that are also in line with the average. In 2006 the school identified and rectified weaknesses in spelling that had led to a fall in standards attained in English. More able pupils, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress due to the support they receive. Pupils' achievement is good because they make progress in their work that exceeds both national and local averages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They work and play well together and have an especially good understanding of the spiritual, social and cultural traditions of the locality. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, for instance through an understanding of both the health and environmental benefits of walking to school. They behave well both in lessons and when playing together, and report that there is little bullying. They enjoy their lessons, although attendance is below average, largely because of family holidays. The school has taken good action to improve attendance through close contact with parents and the use of incentives. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, such as through performance at local festivals and through events sponsored for charity. There is good development of the skills pupils will need in later life, including the use of ICT and through working in teams.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan work that meets the needs of their pupils, including the most and least able. They are especially effective at explaining the work and, by careful timing, ensuring pupils work at a good pace. Assessment is used well to achieve this, especially in the Foundation Stage. Pupils respond with confidence to good quality questioning. Teaching assistants and other helpers are generally effective, especially in supporting less able pupils, although there is no clear overview of their work, leading to variation between classes in the effectiveness with which they are used. While most marking is helpful, in some cases it is restricted largely to ticks and crosses and does not help pupils know what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils are taught all the required subjects and especially good use is made of the many learning resources in the area, such as the coastline, visits to a heritage tin mine, and by local craftspeople

visiting the school. Pupils are proud of this heritage. There are good opportunities for pupils to experience sport, exercise and the creative arts. Good use is made of ICT, a considerable improvement since the last inspection. There is a good range of clubs and activities for older pupils although the younger ones have fewer opportunities. Pupils have little opportunity to experience a modern foreign language.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for well. Required arrangements to protect children and ensure their safety are in place. Pupils' views are obtained through questionnaires and the school council, and their ideas, such as for playground equipment, are acted on. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and they are given simple targets for the next things to learn. They both understand and value this process. The school has very good links with local secondary schools and the nearby pre-school, hence parents rightly believe that their children are prepared well for the next stage of their education. There is good academic guidance and support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior leaders and managers have a clear view of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses, however recent changes in responsibilities have led to a lack of clarity on the part of some staff about their role, reducing their impact in evaluating and improving the school's work. Satisfactory self-evaluation has ensured that most key points in the school's provision, such as weaknesses in English and in attendance, have been identified and rectified. However, there remain important aspects such as the management of teaching assistants and the consistency of marking that still need attention. Parents' views are sought and acted upon well. The governors and staff have correctly identified pupils' literacy and communication between staff as areas in need of development and have put in place excellent systems to ensure that improvement is taking place. They make a very good contribution towards ensuring that the school is well placed to make further improvements, building on those that have taken place since the last inspection.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We very much enjoyed talking and listening to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. We want to thank those of you who took time talking to us. We especially enjoyed attending your lessons and seeing your work around the school.

We agree with you and your parents that your school is a good one. These are some of the best things about it:

- You make good progress in your work and attain standards equal to children in other schools by the time you leave Year 6.
- You behave well, get on well together and help each other. You tell us that, although some bullying happens, the staff deal with it well.
- You know how to keep healthy and safe, and know how to care for the environment and why this is important.
- You are taught well. Teachers know what you need to learn and all the staff are very good at helping those of you who find some of the work difficult. You told us that the teachers explain the work very clearly.
- You are taught interesting things which make good use of living in a lovely part of Cornwall. There are lots of trips and clubs for older pupils.
- You are very well cared for by the staff and feel you can talk to them about problems. You are given targets you understand and which help you to improve your work.
- The headteacher and the governors lead the school well.

We have asked the school to improve a few things. We have asked that all the staff mark your work in a way that shows you how to improve it, and that the best use is always made of the good teaching assistants in helping you. We have also asked that the staff have a clearer idea of how to improve the teaching of different subjects in the school.

You can help by making sure you always come to school unless you are too ill to do so. Your attendance is not quite as good as it is in most primary schools.

Thank you again for your help, and good luck in the future.