

Germoe Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111813
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310690
Inspection date	14 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	29
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	4
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Whitehead
Headteacher	Paula Hobday
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Germoe Lane Germoe Penzance TR20 9QY

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	14 October 2008
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Telephone number
Fax number

01736 763310
01736 763310

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a very small rural school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), mainly moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties, is higher than average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children from the age of four. This is based in a shared classroom with older pupils in Years 1 and 2. There is private on-site childcare provision for younger children.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving. The headteacher provides sound leadership for the school and has high aspirations and a clear vision for the future. Since her appointment a year ago, she has put in place many good new strategies to improve provision and raise standards. The changes made have already begun to have a positive influence on pupils' personal development and well-being, and on the good quality of care, guidance and support that they receive. Pupils thrive in the warm and caring ethos that the school now provides. As a result, behaviour and attitudes are good. Pupils lead exceptionally healthy lifestyles and their contribution to the community is outstanding. They are very well cared for and systems to keep them safe are good. Leaders have a sound knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have successfully refurbished the school environment and developed an exciting outdoor area that is helping pupils to improve their health and enjoy coming to school. The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

Standards are average and pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points. However, although still satisfactory, pupils' progress in writing is not as good as in other subjects. Some pupils use only a limited range of vocabulary in their writing because of weaknesses in their phonic knowledge. This is because the new sounds and letters programme is not fully embedded across the school. Teaching is satisfactory and relationships in lessons are good. Pupils like their teachers and say, 'They are really helpful.' At times, the pace of lessons is too slow and activities set do not always challenge the higher attaining pupils sufficiently. Too few pupils attain the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Recent good improvements to the curriculum have led to a rich and exciting range of activities that closely reflect the local Cornish culture. As a result, pupils are very knowledgeable about the main challenges affecting Cornish life today. They regularly undertake performances in their own outdoor theatre very much in the style of the local 'Minack Theatre'.

Parents are very happy with the school. 'Germoe is a family, a big happy family,' wrote one parent. 'I applaud the school for its ability to treat all children as individuals,' wrote another. Governors provide sound support to the school. They carry out their strategic role satisfactorily, although they do not yet hold the school to account for its decisions. The improvement, particularly in the curriculum and in information and communication technology (ICT) provision since the last inspection, along with the clear direction set by the current headteacher, means that the school currently shows a satisfactory capacity to continue improving.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision for children in the Reception class is satisfactory. Children enter Reception with skills similar to those of other children of their age except in personal, social and emotional development (PSED), where they are below expected levels. Achievement is satisfactory in the Reception class and by the time they enter Year 1, most children have achieved the Early Learning Goals for their age in all areas. Children achieve well in PSED so that they catch up on this initially weaker area of learning by the time they start Year 1. The successful catch-up in this area is due to the good care and support and because the children benefit from the good role models of the older pupils. Teaching is satisfactory, although it is not always tailored closely enough to the needs and abilities of this particular age group. For example, there are not always

opportunities for children to develop their curiosity through exploration and play, particularly in the outdoor environment. This limits children's independence skills because they do not have free and independent access to outdoor areas. Children's achievements are regularly recorded and tracked, with good photographic evidence of their successes. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by thoroughly embedding the new sounds and letters programme across the school.
- Improve teaching and raise standards by ensuring that activities always run at a good pace and match the needs of all ability groups, especially the higher attaining pupils.
- Improve opportunities for the youngest children in the Reception class to make more choices and thereby develop their skills of independently learning to explore and investigate.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory and which have areas of underachievement will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress during their time at the school. As a result, they attain standards that are broadly average by the time they leave in Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory and is slowly improving, particularly in Key Stage 2. For example, although Year 6 pupils' achievement measured over their time in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory, recent results and work seen show that there are some increasing signs of the appearance of good progress. Standards show a gradual rising trend over the past three years, particularly in reading and mathematics. A good new programme to improve writing has been introduced, but is not yet embedded well enough in both classes. As a result, some pupils' phonic skills are limited. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as other pupils because of the good support that they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils across the school behave well and develop positive relationships with their peers and adults. Good spiritual, moral and social development is evident in the way that older pupils help younger ones and in this way learn to respect the values and beliefs of others. Pupils are developing a good sense of community as a result of the close links established with the local area. For example, pupils regularly take part in 'litter picking' on the local beach. They sing regularly in the church, taking part in carol singing and harvest services. They celebrate a range of festivals from different nationalities that prepare them well for life in multicultural Britain. Pupils have good attitudes and enjoy all aspects of school life. The active school council gives pupils a real voice in the way the school works. The council regularly raises funds for charity and has been able to make many improvements, including creative developments in the outdoor areas.

Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is outstanding. They make healthy choices from the high quality lunch menu. They understand why they need to keep fit and have lots of clubs and school activities that help them to do so. Pupils confirm that there is no bullying at the

school. They feel safe and secure. The curriculum teaches them about 'sea safety' and this is appreciated by pupils. Despite good procedures by the school, attendance is just satisfactory. Although achievement is satisfactory, it is improving and the school is helping pupils to develop good working relationships and independence that is preparing them well for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy their lessons and relationships in both classes are good. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good features, particularly in Key Stage 2, where pupils benefit from good questioning to reinforce learning and where good techniques are beginning to be used to improve writing. At times lessons lack sufficient pace, with too few activities to match the needs of all ability groups, particularly those of higher attainment. Noise levels are not always managed well enough, resulting in a few pupils not doing enough in the lesson because they are distracted from their work and lose their concentration. The good focus on local issues, however, makes most lessons interesting. For example, teachers develop pupils' understanding of the past well through role play and visits. Work is regularly marked with helpful comments. Homework is meaningful and supports learning well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good creative curriculum provides an exciting range of learning activities that are well received by pupils. It has been significantly improved recently. ICT has been greatly strengthened and is regularly used in lessons. Topic work in history and geography has distinctive Cornish themes, such as visits to the local Pendennis Castle and research into Cornish tin mining, all of which adds greater relevance to learning. Planning is satisfactory. It does not always indicate different activities for pupils of different abilities. As a result, pupils of higher attainment are not always challenged by their tasks. Extra-curricular provision is very extensive and is well supported by pupils. The curriculum fosters good independence in learning for most pupils. However, in the Reception group, the lack of free access to outdoor learning inhibits the range of activities children can undertake.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are known well by the whole-school community and are treated as individuals. Each pupil has an 'individual plan' that ensures they are very well cared for. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support, including effective links with a wide range of support agencies. Parents believe that the school takes good care of the pupils, keeping them safe and secure. Procedures for child protection are robust and fully meet requirements. Procedures to track pupils' achievements are new and are now enabling progress to be measured as pupils move through the school.

The school has started to set clear targets for pupils in Key Stage 2, so that all pupils have a clear idea of what they need to achieve by the end of the year. Whilst targets are also set for younger pupils, occasionally these lack clarity to let the pupils know how well they are getting on and what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher is doing a good job of leading the way ahead for school improvement. The many good new strategies she has put in place are now beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards and improving the quality of provision. For example, the curriculum provision has improved and there are early signs that pupils' progress is starting to get better. The school has a sound idea of what is working well and what needs improving. Leaders recognise correctly that more needs to be done to ensure that all pupils, including those of higher attainment, achieve their potential. Although there remains much to do to improve standards in writing, a good start has been made on this area.

The school works well with local partners and in this way is doing a good job of cementing community cohesion. The outdoor play areas and environment have been greatly improved, through very close links with local businesses. Parents are very supportive and links with local schools are good, leading to close working relationships between pupils and teachers. There has been good improvement, particularly in the creativity of the curriculum and in provision for, and standards in, ICT, since the last inspection.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 learners' needs?	3
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15 October 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Germoe Primary School, Penzance TR20 9QY

Thank you for your help in our recent inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about the things you do at school. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found out about your school.

Germoe is a satisfactory school. We know that you enjoy school and you behave well. You achieve standards that are similar to those of pupils in other schools. Most of you make satisfactory progress in your lessons. We think that you could achieve better, particularly in your writing. We also think that the highest ability pupils could do better. The youngest children in the Reception class do not always have enough chances to carry out activities that enable them to explore and investigate independently.

Teaching is satisfactory and you are well supported and cared for. We know that you like your teachers because you told us so. We particularly liked the good curriculum that you have. Some of your activities are really exciting, particularly all the things you do in your local area. You have done really well in your fund raising activities and we were impressed by your lovely outdoor theatre. We were also very impressed by how much you understood about keeping yourselves healthy.

Your leaders take good care of you and keep you safe at school. They are working hard to make sure you enjoy school. We are asking your school to do three things to improve your school further.

- Improve your writing skills. You can help with this by trying really hard with your sounds and letters.
- Improve teaching to make sure that you all do enough in your lessons so that all of you, including the highest attaining pupils, make better progress.
- Improve opportunities for the youngest children to carry out activities that enable them to explore and investigate independently.

Thank you again for your help and good luck for your futures.

Best wishes, Denise Morris Lead Inspector