

Penpol School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111849
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310702
Inspection date	26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Laurie Lewin

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	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Whitehouse
Headteacher	Paul Hodson
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	2 St George's Road Hayle TR27 4AH
Telephone number	01736 753472
Fax number	01736 753472

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress of pupils at Key Stage 1, particularly that of boys; pupils' progress in writing and standards in this area across the school; and standards in information and communication technology, design and technology, music and physical education. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report

Description of the school

This a large school in which nearly all of the pupils are from White British cultural backgrounds. A significant proportion of the pupils come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. The attainment of children starting school is well below the expected level. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The school has received national acclaim for the quality of pupils' film-making work.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that helps pupils to achieve well not only academically but in learning to become confident and mature individuals. The school has gone from strength to strength since its last inspection. It has improved standards and many aspects of its provision.

Although they start school with skills and abilities that are mainly well below the expected levels, by the time they leave, pupils achieve well, often making excellent progress, and reach above-average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils also do well in information and communication technology (ICT), art, design and technology, music, physical education and religious education. Some of the work seen is stunning in terms of the quality of presentation and content. As they progress through the school, pupils become adept at producing work of increasing depth and detail. They are very proud of their achievements and keen to talk about their accomplishments. The school is very successful in bringing pupils' creativity to the fore and encouraging them to think and work imaginatively. For example, in some poetry writing seen, one older pupil wrote: Inside my head is a country, Of buds and food and trees, A land where dreams come alive, But only if you believe.

The quality of ICT work is especially high throughout the school, with Foundation Stage children making excellent use of computers for artwork and, by Year 6, pupils making excellent quality films using artwork and digital photography images. Although many samples of good quality imaginative writing are seen, the staff identify rightly that the quality of writing for some pupils, particularly boys at Key Stage 1, is not as good as it could be. Excellent strategies have been put in place to remedy this. For example, the school's emphasis on developing pupils' oral story-telling skills and publishing their work in the local community is doing much to promote pupils' enthusiasm, confidence and incentive for writing. Many pupils are very successful in sports and music, with the school winning many regional competitions and awards. Many of the films produced by the older pupils also contain very good quality singing accompaniment.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who make up a significant proportion of the school's population, make outstanding progress because of the top quality support they are given. Teaching assistants are a particularly valuable asset in this respect and work extremely well with groups of pupils or individuals. The school shows much expertise in ensuring that all groups of pupils are incorporated fully in all activities. In this respect, it is leading the way with its exemplary work to set up video-conferencing facilities with a pupil who is unable to attend school because of long-term health issues. Year 6 staff and pupils are skilled in managing the technology to enable this link. This was very apparent in some work seen where a 'water rocket', launched on the school field complete with a miniature camera, meant that the video-conferencing pupil became the school's first astronaut!

Pupils spoken to say their teachers do an excellent job of teaching them, and they are right. Staff are talented and creative and use their skills in excellent fashion to find new ways of making work interesting. They work very effectively together to ensure standards keep rising. Teachers tailor work very carefully to match the needs of all individuals – both in lesson planning and in activities such as writing scripts and music for school productions. The curriculum provision is excellent and provides pupils with a very extensive range of exciting and interesting activities, and with a host of trips and visitors coming in to work with pupils. The staff enhance the curriculum with good humour and activities that pupils consider more fun than work. This brings a good deal of 'magic' into pupils' learning, which ensures that they really enjoy their

time at school. Unsurprisingly, this results in pupils showing excellent personal development, including very well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and throughout the school there is a friendly and caring atmosphere in which pupils and adults relate extremely well to each other.

Pupils feel safe in school. Their attendance is good. They are healthy and fit and make a great contribution to both the immediate and wider community. The strong academic and personal skills that pupils acquire mean they are very well prepared to succeed in the future. Pupils express their views very clearly to aid school improvement. For example, they say that the very cramped playground and school hall 'sometimes make it really difficult for us to do the things we want to do!' The school is rightly pursuing all possible means to improve this area of its provision.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are top quality and are areas that rightly impress the parents, who feel that the school looks after their children exceptionally well. The relationships with parents are very strong and the school is very successful in getting parents closely involved in helping their children progress. An excellent example of this is the innovative use of assessment leaflets. These provide parents and pupils with a clear picture of what is being covered in lessons, how the individual is progressing and what can be done to improve his/her work in the future. This system has become a key tool for the school that is helping boost pupils' progress.

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher is extremely skilful in setting up clear communication at all levels. He creates an atmosphere in which all individuals feel valued members of the school community. As a result, staff and governors do their very best to ensure pupils have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Working as a strong team, the staff and governors continually set challenging targets to keep the very good momentum of improvement going. Together they have a finely tuned understanding of what is working well in the school and where improvements can be made. Their high levels of commitment and enthusiasm coupled with innovative ideas and action plans mean that there is an excellent capacity to keep the school improving.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Staff make excellent provision for ensuring that children get off to a really good start at school. The very wide range of top quality, interesting activities provided caters very effectively for all individual needs. Children engage fully with these activities and show much enjoyment either working together or alone. In particular, the provision for supporting pupils who arrive at school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. Rigorous assessment of the children by the staff ensures that they have a very finely tuned understanding of where extra support is needed to help children overcome difficulties. Excellent teaching helps children make good and often outstanding progress, moving from well below the expected levels when they start in the Reception year to below the expected levels by the time they start Year 1. In particular, children make especially rapid progress with their personal, social and emotional learning. The particularly strong emphasis on top quality role-play and social activities is at the heart of this excellent progress. Excellent links with the parents and pre-school organisations also serve to help the children rapidly settle in to school life.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the success of current strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing, especially for boys in Key Stage 1.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

27 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Penpol School, St George's Road, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 4AH

- It was really good fun coming to see you at your school! Thank you for making me so welcome, talking to me and helping me during the school's inspection. I especially enjoyed the good discussion I had with some of you from Year 6. I learned a lot. I think you would all make very good future inspectors! You will be pleased to know that the school is doing an outstanding job. You need to give a big round of applause to your headteacher and staff for all that they have done to improve things for you (if this is being read out to you in assembly – give them all a big clap and a cheer now). Here are some of some of the most important bits of the report that I thought you might like to know about:
 - You work really hard in lessons and your achievement as you move through the school is good and often excellent. This helps you to reach above-average standards in many subjects.
 - Your personal development is excellent and you learn to become confident and very considerate as you progress through the school.
 - You have an outstanding curriculum and your teachers work hard to make it as exciting and interesting as possible for you.
 - You told me that your teachers are doing an excellent job and I agree with you. You are lucky to have such talented and creative people working with you.
 - The school does a top quality job of making sure you are safe and that there is always someone available to help with any problems.
 - Your headteacher does a tremendous job of helping everyone work together to make the school as good as it is.

To improve further the school should now:

- Push ahead with ideas such as the current excellent work with story telling to help improve writing throughout the school and especially for boys at Key Stage 1.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

Yours sincerely Laurie Lewin (Lead inspector)

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(Lead inspector)