

Mabe Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111855
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310704
Inspection date	25 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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)	118
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Tisdale
Headteacher	Nick Illsley
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cunningham Park Mabe Penryn TR10 9HB
Telephone number	01326 372662
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

how effectively leaders and managers sustain strengths and have brought about improvement, particularly in pupils' progress through Years 3 to 6 and in writing through the school

the degree to which pupils are encouraged to contribute to their own learning and to the day-to-day life of the school and community and the effect this has on their progress.

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, whole-school assembly and pupils at lunch and play. Teachers' assessment records and pupils' work were scrutinised. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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 small school serves the needs of pupils in the village and from the surrounding communities. Currently 17 children in a Reception and Year 1 class receive Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS). The children's attainment on entry varies, but mostly it matches the level expected for the children's ages. The school has a number of awards reflecting its commitment to healthy living and to participation in community events.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Mabe is an outstanding school. First class provision, excellent academic achievement and outstanding personal development and well-being reflect this exemplary learning community. The school's proven track record and its united commitment to continued improvement show an excellent capacity to improve further. 'Fantastic', 'brilliant', 'superb' and 'special' reflect the very positive views of the school expressed by almost all the parents in their completed questionnaires. One parent wrote, 'We are delighted that our child is part of such a lovely school. The standards are excellent.' Parents are right to value the education their children are getting and the pupils appreciate it too. This is illustrated by their excellent attendance, which reflects their great enjoyment of school.

The pupils' outstanding progress is rooted in high quality teaching and learning experiences. These are enriched by a comprehensive range of stimulating and practical extra-curricular activities. The excellent curriculum includes, for example, the popular 'Mabe Shindig', which celebrates the pupils' considerable creative talents and successfully develops their commitment to the local community. Provision is outstanding in the EYFS (Reception Year), enabling children to make excellent progress. Pupils continue to excel through the school because of consistently strong teaching. A key factor in pupils' academic success is the very effective emphasis on using and applying skills through practical activity and problem solving. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, pupils reach very high standards in English, mathematics and science. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection. Standards are particularly high in mathematics and science, where two thirds of the pupils attain the above average Level 5. This is because pupils are challenged and encouraged by teachers and their assistants to become very motivated learners. Over the past three years, pupils' achievements in English have improved, having previously been much lower than those in mathematics and science. Across the school, pupils' skills in speaking and listening and in their handwriting and use of vocabulary are impressive. However, spelling remains a relatively weaker aspect.

The pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being are evident in the way they sustain their concentration and constantly give of their best. They share their ideas and views without reservation. The way they learn happily from, and with, each other is a very beneficial feature of the school. For example, in Year 1, when completing pastel drawings of the Great Fire of London, one girl boosted her friend's confidence with the comment, 'You know that really is very good'. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are exemplary. The staff provide excellent care, guidance and support. Their exemplary role modelling encourages pupils to adopt very healthy, safe and considerate lifestyles. The pupils cheerfully undertake daily responsibilities such as setting out chairs and filling water bottles, carrying out these tasks very conscientiously. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely good. They participate eagerly in assemblies, religious education lessons and community events. These opportunities, and links with other schools, demonstrate and enrich their awareness and understanding of the beliefs and customs of others. Pupils make excellent contributions to the school and their community. Members of the school council, for example, represent the pupils' views very confidently in the knowledge that these are valued by staff. When interviewed the pupils were quick to express their satisfaction that their request for new furniture, especially chairs, had been acted upon so quickly. One boy commented gleefully, 'The classrooms, chairs and toilets are really "cool" and so are the teachers.'

Teachers are skilled in using a range of innovative and imaginative approaches to interest pupils. This was seen in Years 1 and 2, where 'talking tins' are used to encourage pupils to develop imaginative and descriptive vocabulary and to record their ideas as a stimulus to their writing. The staff know the pupils extremely well, give them close individual attention and, by careful questioning, involve them in evaluating their own and each other's efforts. Teachers and their assistants, strongly encouraged by the headteacher, make very accurate use of assessments of pupils' work and progress to identify where improvement and support are needed. This ensures that the targets set and the work that is given are matched precisely to pupils' needs. This precision in identifying relevant learning objectives has been a key aspect in raising standards, equally so for pupils who find learning difficult and those who are quick to learn.

The headteacher promotes highly effective teamwork and has established a self-improving, forward-looking ethos. Staff and governors make excellent contributions to the running of the school. Self-evaluation and school improvement planning are very effective. These are based on very detailed, accurate assessments of pupils' progress and ensure that target-setting helps pupils reach their full potential. In recent years, the headteacher has been very successful in raising the learning aspirations and expectations of pupils, staff and parents. Now excellent links with parents, the local community and outside agencies underpin the pupils' efforts and achievement. These reflect the shared value placed on education in this community school. Above all, exemplary leadership and management have established a continuous thread of very effective provision, which systematically promotes the pupils' outstanding achievements, both academic and personal. As a result, by the time the pupils leave the school they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education and their later life.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children's skills on entry generally match those found nationally, although small numbers mean that there is some variation in different year groups. Nevertheless, children's abilities are assessed very accurately to ensure that they are challenged and supported to the optimum. As a result, children of all abilities make outstanding progress. Provision is extremely well led and high quality teaching ensures that learning activities are planned with precision. This ensures that children are stimulated by interesting and mostly practical learning opportunities. The children greatly enjoy an excellent balance of adult-led activity and those chosen by themselves. Their enjoyment was evident and they bubbled with enthusiasm as they fished for various creatures in the water trough. 'Look at all the fish I've caught exclaimed one boy and look I can count them all!'. He did so, confidently and accurately, up to ten, showing the excellent progress in numeracy typical of the children in this class. Very experienced and capable adults safeguard the children's welfare extremely effectively. Very welcoming, reassuring and highly effective communication with parents facilitates the children's confident start to school. This is a key factor in their particularly outstanding progress in personal, social and emotional development. The staff are also very skilled in developing the children's speaking and listening skills. The children's willingness to share ideas, learn and play so joyfully promotes their excellent gains in all the areas of learning. As a result, children attain significantly above average standards by the time they transfer to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' spelling so that their achievement in writing matches that evident in mathematics and science.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mabe Community Primary School, Mabe, TR10 9HB

We agree with you and with many of your parents, who feel that yours is an outstanding school. You are all extremely polite and friendly. Thank you very much for making us feel so welcomed. Special thanks to the members of the school council who told my colleague all about your school. They said that Mabe is a 'physically active and healthy school', and we agree.

These are the other main things we found.

- You make outstanding progress and, by the end of Year 6, reach standards that are much better than in most schools. This is because you are taught, supported and cared for extremely well.
- Your excellent attendance reflects your great enjoyment of school.
- It was uplifting to see the way everyone in the school, adults and pupils alike, get on so well; your behaviour and relationships are outstanding.
- We were very impressed with the effort you put into your learning and the way you so willingly share ideas, help each other and take part wholeheartedly in the excellent range of activities provided for you.
- Your headteacher provides outstanding leadership and receives excellent support from staff and governors. They work very closely with your parents to help you to achieve your best.

Even the best of schools can improve and so, because you achieve so well in other aspects, we have asked your teachers to do the following:

- Help you to become even better at spelling words accurately.

Once again, thank you for your help. Please keep your wonderful enthusiasm for school.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter Lead Inspector