

Penponds School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111838
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	378372
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
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 of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Treve Harvey
Headteacher	Kaye Pitcher
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight lessons taught by four teachers and held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to pupils' attainment and progress, school development planning and that for ensuring the safety of pupils. They analysed the responses to questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 49 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The attainment and progress of different groups, particularly children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils of average ability in mathematics.
- Pupils' attendance and the impact of the school's work to improve it.
- The quality of children's preparation for starting school and of pupils' preparation for secondary school.
- The quality of monitoring, evaluation and development planning, and its impact on improving teaching and learning.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than the average primary school. Pupils live in surrounding villages or the nearby town. Most pupils are of White British or Cornish ethnicity. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is average. Their needs include profound physical and learning disabilities.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught with some of the pupils in Year 1. The governing body provides childcare in the form of an after-school club. A pre-school adjacent to the school provides a breakfast club, but these facilities are not managed by the governing body and were not inspected on this occasion.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Some important aspects have improved since its previous inspection. When pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment is high in English and above average in mathematics. Pupils' achievement is excellent because they enjoy school and make outstanding progress, especially in Years 1 to 6. In lessons, they behave extremely well and respond quickly to teachers' instructions. As a result, lessons proceed at a good pace and varied, challenging tasks that are matched well to pupils' needs maintain their interest and motivation. Teachers use assessment very effectively to identify when pupils need additional help. As a result, all groups of pupils make equally outstanding progress. Targets are used very well to remind pupils what they need to learn next. This is especially effective in Years 1 and 2, where pupils recite their targets aloud before working on a relevant task.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe, for example when using the internet, and of the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. The school offers many opportunities for pupils to take part in sport and other forms of physical exercise, for example by the use of action songs and dance in learning mathematics. Pupils also make an excellent contribution to the community by taking on responsibilities such as school council membership, or contributing to local festivals. Following successful action by the governing body to limit absence due to holidays taken in term time, attendance is now high. This contributes well to the excellent development of skills pupils will need in later life, such as literacy, information and communication technology (ICT), and independence. The outstanding, varied curriculum gives pupils wide-ranging opportunities to develop these skills. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children achieve well but the accommodation is not always used fully to promote rapid progress across all the areas of learning and the level of adult support available, while sufficient to ensure children's safety, does not always enable the learning of all children to proceed at the usual fast pace.

Throughout the school, the care, support and guidance for pupils are of very high quality. Parents and carers speak highly of the support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive, and also of the effectiveness with which children are prepared to start school and to move on to secondary education.

Senior leaders and the governing body have an accurate picture of the school's many strengths and very few weaknesses. They identified improving progress in mathematics for pupils of average ability as a focus, and have taken successful action to ensure that this happens. Excellent monitoring and support have ensured

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that teaching is of consistently high quality. The headteacher and governing body express their vision for the future of the school very clearly. Improvements in pupils' attainment, progress and attendance, and in the quality of teaching and the curriculum, clearly demonstrate the school's excellent capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that:
 - there is always sufficient adult support to enable all children to make rapid progress in their learning
 - resources are organised in ways that maximise children's opportunities to exercise choice and independence.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils make excellent progress in developing their skills in English. By the end of Year 2, most can read and write with increasing fluency and by the end of Year 6, they understand subtleties in the use of language, such as starting a sentence with an adverb to create tension. In mathematics, more-able pupils also make excellent progress and attain highly. Staff identified slower progress in mathematics among those of middle ability and have taken effective steps, such as the use of individual tuition, to ensure that these pupils are now also making outstanding progress. There are no significant differences in the progress made by any group of pupils represented in the school: for example, boys and girls make equally outstanding progress.

Pupils are polite and considerate towards adults and each other. They understand how to play safely, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 understand wider matters concerning their personal health and safety, such as the dangers of substance abuse. They say they enjoy creative and adventurous activities such as their annual camp, or making paper lanterns to parade at the Christmas festival in the nearby town. They also enjoy working for local and international charities such as Shelterbox and Book Aid, exemplifying their outstanding contribution to the community. Pupils are tolerant towards those of other faiths and cultures, and communicate by email with pupils at schools in west London and the United States. In lessons, pupils work well both independently and in groups, as seen when those in Years 3 and 4 helped each other in totalling fractions. Pupils enjoy using ICT to aid their learning, as observed when children in Reception were selecting words and dragging them to the correct picture on the screen.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning
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1

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Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is outstanding because it consistently enables pupils to make excellent progress. High expectations of work and behaviour are quickly established so that pupils know what is expected of them and respond accordingly. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 read aloud from the whiteboard without prompting, because they know that is expected by the teacher. Work is carefully matched to pupils' needs, for example when learning their letters and sounds. Teaching assistants provide very effective support, especially to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In a typical lesson in Years 5 and 6, the teacher taught one group how to meet the criteria for writing at the highest level, while others wrote independently, some using ICT to improve their presentation, or seeking help from the teaching assistant when needed. Pupils then assessed each other's work by commenting on it constructively, an example of the school's excellent use of assessment. Pupils' work, especially in English, is marked well with helpful comments for improvement.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about the excellent curriculum. 'I really enjoy literacy, history and swimming,' said one. They are given plenty of opportunities to practise their developing skills, for example when interpreting data on classmates' preferences for items such as food or pets, using both paper methods and ICT. There is a wide range of additional activities, such as competitive team games against other schools, or learning how to cycle safely. Pupils requiring care after school receive good provision in the after-school club, which gives them opportunities to continue with activities such as art and craft. The school has excellent relationships with parents and carers, other schools, including the adjacent pre-school, and with outside agencies. All of these links contribute to outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils, and to enhancing the curriculum. For example,

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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the secondary school provides specialist tuition in modern foreign languages and science.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Under the excellent leadership of the experienced headteacher, teaching and pupils' achievements have improved steadily over a number of years. The morale of staff, and of parents and carers, is high because there is a clear sense of purpose and direction about the school. For example, plans for much-needed additional classroom space have been pursued with energy and are nearing fruition. Monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous, and successful action has been taken to bring about improvement. Staff share leadership responsibility very well, for example in successfully promoting new approaches to assessment, and in using data effectively to identify and rectify any slow progress by individuals.

The governing body is very effective in challenging school leaders to improve, for example, pupils' attendance; it supports them in doing so by making its expectations about holiday absence clear to parents and carers. Requirements to keep pupils safe go well beyond the minimum recommendations and excellent work has been done, for example in securing the boundaries of the large site. Thoughtful touches have been added, such as a shelter for parents and carers waiting for their children to finish school. The equally high achievement of all pupils demonstrates the school's outstanding commitment to equality of opportunity, and any form of discrimination such as very occasional bullying is tackled very effectively. Good work has been done to promote community cohesion, for example through the school's links with schools in other parts of the United Kingdom and the wider world, although the governing body acknowledges that the formal monitoring and evaluation of this aspect of its work have not always been given a high priority.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities	1

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met	
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, by the time they start Year 1, their attainment is above that expected. They make most progress in communication, language and literacy, and in their personal, social and emotional development, less so in their mathematical development. Children learn and play together well and use the older pupils in their class, who are in Year 1, as role models. They show independence and initiative, for example when writing simple sentences or using ICT. Teaching is good and children are cared for well, as staff know their individual needs and have very positive relationships with parents and carers, and with pre-schools which the children attend. The organisation of the accommodation limits children’s choices of activities indoors and out, as the two areas must be independently supervised. Progress sometimes slows because of the limited availability of adult support. For example, while two groups learned their letters and sounds, the remaining children chose their own lightly supervised activities, which caused distraction and slowed progress. Nevertheless, school leaders recognise these shortcomings and plans to rectify them are realistic and well advanced, so leadership and management of the provision are good.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About half of the parents and carers returned the inspectors’ questionnaire, which is above average. They expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school and its provision. All agreed that their child was happy and safe at school, and that they are kept well informed about their child’s progress. Very few expressed concerns about

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any of the issues raised in the questionnaire. Nevertheless, each individual issue raised was investigated and contributed to the findings in this report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Penponds School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	65	17	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	76	12	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	30	61	18	37	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	57	18	37	2	4	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	30	61	17	35	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	28	57	17	35	3	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	53	23	47	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	22	45	19	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	27	55	17	35	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	55	18	37	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	45	23	47	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	55	17	35	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	34	69	12	24	1	2	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 8 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Penponds School, Camborne TR14 0QN

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We especially enjoyed talking with you, seeing your work and hearing your views.

Yours is an outstanding school. You all make excellent progress in your work and, by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach above-average levels in the English and mathematics tests. We enjoyed watching you learn and were especially impressed by much of your work, such as the exciting stories you write. We were also very impressed with your excellent behaviour and the ways in which you learn with your partners or on your own in lessons. You know all about how to keep healthy, including the importance of such things as not smoking or drinking alcohol. You like helping other people, such as by collecting for Shelterbox or Book Aid. You told us you like your school and are happy there, so your attendance has improved and is now high. Teaching is excellent and, if you need extra help, you receive it. We particularly liked the way teachers use targets to help you learn. There are lots of exciting activities such as sport and residential visits. You are cared for very well, and staff make sure you are safe and secure.

The headteacher, staff and the governing body lead the school very well. Your parents and carers are pleased with your progress and rightly feel you are safe at school. The staff and governing body have spotted where the school could be better and have worked hard to make that happen. We have asked the staff to make some improvements in Class 1 so that the Reception children can learn more quickly. You could help, perhaps by volunteering to help the youngest children to learn their letters and sounds.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler
Lead inspector

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