

Porthleven School

Torleven Road, Porthleven, Helston, TR13 9BX

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is now firmly good. Some is outstanding. Additional adults give very good guidance and support to children who need it.
- As a result pupils' progress has improved and is now equally good for pupils from all backgrounds and for each year group. Accordingly, attainment has steadily improved and is now in line with national averages.
- Children are well behaved, polite and happy in school. They are proud of their school and feel safe.
- The school thoroughly evaluates its own practice and has developed an effective plan for continued improvement.
- The curriculum is broad and stimulating. The school successfully promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of its pupils.
- The governing body is a committed and cohesive team, successfully holding senior leaders to account for the school's performance.
- The school works productively in partnership with other schools to share training opportunities and resources. This has improved the range of learning opportunities for pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small number of teachers do not consistently check during lessons that pupils are learning effectively, and some do not adjust their teaching quickly enough if pupils are finding the work too easy or too difficult.
- Progress in phonics (the sounds that letters make) slowed down at times because teaching is not always geared to address the various differing needs found in some classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 28 lessons, including sessions where children are given extra support with their learning, and sessions where parents are encouraged to work alongside their child in school. Five lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, examined pupils' work in their books and observed pupils' activities in the playground, in assembly and in the dinner halls.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, the chair of governors, a group of teaching and support staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including a summary of the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the school's information on pupils' progress, and records relating to pupils' safety, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke informally to parents to seek their views about the school, considered written comments sent to inspectors, and analysed the views of 72 parents through the Parent View website.
- The views expressed by 23 staff who returned a questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Chris Chamberlain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fran Ashworth

Additional Inspector

Richard Chalkley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Porthleven School is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language are very small.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional money provided by the government for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, are in the care of the local authority or who have parents in the armed services) has risen recently and is now in line with most other schools.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs supported at school action is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who need extra help and are supported at school action plus, or have a statement of special educational needs, is similar to most other schools.
- The school is a member of the Helston and Lizard Peninsula Education Partnership Trust.
- There is a children's centre on the same site that was not part of this inspection.
- The school makes use of a pupil referral unit for one of its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by making sure that all teachers:
 - routinely check during lessons to make sure that pupils are focused, understand what is required of them, and are learning well
 - adapt the work provided for pupils when activities planned are not challenging enough or are too easy.
- Accelerate the rate at which pupils learn phonics by ensuring that teaching is geared to the variety of pupils' needs found in some classes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Because teaching has steadily improved since the last inspection, the progress made by all pupils has accelerated, and pupils now progress well in each year group. Most parents agree that their child is making good progress.
- The school's records show that when children enter the Nursery, their skills and understanding are generally below the levels expected nationally for their age. By the time they have reached the end of Key Stage 2 their attainment is in line with national averages for both English and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in reading across the school has improved and attainment is now in line with the national average.
- Progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. Pupils are well supported either through differentiated activities (designed by the teacher to equally challenge children of different abilities), or in one-to-one or group sessions led by support staff. The school organises regular family learning sessions which show parents how to support their child's learning at home and so help them to accelerate their progress.
- Due to effective teaching and support, the progress made by pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is very good. The gap between these pupils and their peers is narrowing. This is demonstrated in the average point scores of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals shown to be improving in line with those of all pupils nationally.
- The progress of some children in learning phonics across Key Stage 1 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage slows at times when teaching is not directed to meeting the varying needs of all the children in the same teaching group.

The quality of teaching

is good

- While most teaching is at least good, some is outstanding. This has contributed to an improvement in the rate at which pupils learn across the school.
- In the best lessons pupils are enthusiastic and know exactly how to improve their learning. For example, in one Year 6 class, pupils go through their individual records of progress together with their teacher and identify the skills that they need to improve. They then spend time at the beginning of each day working very effectively to improve these skills.
- Teachers and support staff work closely together to provide pupils with stimulating, well-focused learning activities. The effective balance of support for all groups of pupils across the school ensures that they are all given equal opportunities to succeed well.
- The combined Nursery and Reception provides children with a constructive learning environment in which to start their education. Teachers plan activities together to provide them with a wide range of valuable and stimulating activities. Effective learning takes place as adults talk and question pupils to extend their understanding and skills.
- Typically, lessons move at a brisk pace. Teachers have high expectations and plan activities based on pupils' prior learning, and share the learning expectations with each group. However, in a small number of lessons teachers do not always check that pupils are making good progress, and are sometimes slow to change the lesson plan if activities are too easy or too difficult.
- A whole-school marking policy has been established and is applied effectively, providing particularly clear guidance in the marking of pupils' writing, to help them know what to do to improve. The use of orange and green highlighting in books is understood by pupils across the school, and makes it very clear to them what they need to do to improve.
- Learning is well supported through use of the school's computer suite. Groups of pupils regularly undertake research, access programs that provide additional support in spelling and phonics,

and use well-designed information and communication technology activities to support their learning in the classroom.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are generally keen to learn in lessons, and they concentrate well, contributing to discussions enthusiastically and working well together. Occasionally, when there is insufficient challenge in a lesson, or when teachers do not check on their pupils' learning with enough attention, pupils lose focus on their learning, and progress falters as a result.
- Most staff manage behaviour very well and use effective strategies to support those who find it difficult to meet the school's expectations of good behaviour. The school council works closely with the headteacher to identify areas for improvement. Pupils are proud of their school. In the playground and around school, pupils behave well. A small minority of parents felt that the school does not deal effectively with bullying and does not ensure that pupils behave well. However, these views were not shared by any of the parents who talked informally to inspectors before or after school, and were not supported by any evidence found during the inspection. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that adults in school are supportive and encourage pupils to be tolerant of each other.
- Pupils say that they are safe and that the school is a friendly, welcoming place. The school works hard to tackle discrimination. Older pupils work as playground buddies with younger children. They give out stickers for good behaviour and enjoy their role. Pupils are aware of the dangers of the internet and know what to do if an inappropriate issue arises.
- The school works closely with parents at improving attendance, which is now in line with that of most schools. The school rewards good attendance and strongly discourages holidays in term time.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has successfully improved the quality of teaching and because of this pupils' progress has improved. A strong ethos of continuous school improvement is shared by all staff and is led determinedly by the headteacher. Recent appointments have strengthened the senior leadership team. Consequently, the school demonstrates a strong capacity to continue to improve.
- The headteacher and senior leaders assess the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations, learning walks and pupil progress meetings. Performance management is used effectively to link staff training to teacher performance.
- The curriculum is broad and well balanced, and is used to good effect in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide appropriate additional support to increase the rate of progress of eligible pupils. For example, it funds an after-school learning club and a classroom assistant to provide additional emotional literacy support for pupils during lunchtime. A teaching assistant also works with pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, to provide extra support and help to accelerate their learning. The school's accurate tracking of the progress of this group of pupils demonstrates that these initiatives have a positive impact in helping pupils to improve their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher has developed strong links with other schools through the Helston and Lizard Peninsula Education Partnership Trust, and has accessed additional funding for school improvement through links with a school led by a national leader of education. This has enabled the school to undertake further staff training, share best practice in teaching and learning and widen the range of learning opportunities for pupils.
- The local authority has provided support to help the school improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress since the last inspection.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors have reorganised their committee structure and are clearly focused on school evaluation and improvement. Some governors are new but are already very committed to their role. Governors challenge senior leaders and hold them to account effectively. They understand how to compare the school's performance to that of other schools, and regularly spend time in school observing and finding out about teaching and learning. They undertake their own professional development to help them hold the school to account, and set challenging performance management objectives for the headteacher based on pupil tracking data. They have an overview of performance management and salary progression for other staff, and understand how pupil premium money is being used and the impact of this on pupils' progress.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors. A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

School details

Unique reference number	111985
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	405369

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Williams
Headteacher	Duncan Ratcliffe
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 March 2011
Telephone number	01326 562249
Fax number	01326 563665
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