

Probus Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111865
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	356991
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Kevin Jane HMI

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	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathy Tappin
Headteacher	Robert Adams
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors saw seven teachers at least twice and observed 15 lessons. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' performance, the school development and other plans, minutes of governing body meetings and school policies, curriculum planning documents and monitoring files. In addition, 95 parents' and carers', 13 staff and 96 pupil questionnaires were scrutinised.

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

- The extent to which the action taken by the school to improve girls' progress in mathematics and close gaps in attainment on remaining groups has been effective.
- The quality and consistency of teaching and its impact on learning and progress across the school.
- The rigour and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and how closely it is aligned to the findings of this inspection.
- The extent to which the school has coherent plans for promoting community cohesion and has evaluated the impact of actions.

Information about the school

Probus Community Primary remains a slightly smaller-than-average primary school serving the village and surrounding area in Cornwall. The number on roll is very similar to when the school was last inspected and pupils are currently organised into seven single-age classes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The great majority of the pupils are of White British cultural heritage. Since the school was last inspected, the governing body is now responsible for the management of the Little Acorns pre-school setting and also the extended before- and after-school and holiday periods provision. The Little Acorns pre-school was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006 in June 2010 and therefore was not included as part of this inspection of the school.

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

Significant improvement has taken place since the last inspection and Probus Community Primary is now an outstanding school. The strengths reported in 2008 have been maintained and the quality and consistency of teaching, the curriculum, and aspects of leadership and management are much improved. This has resulted in sustained improvements over the last three years in attainment and in the academic progress that pupils make by the end of Year 6. Pupils clearly enjoy their time at school and are rightly proud of it. Equally, the school enjoys the confidence and support of the great majority of parents and carers who report that they are also very pleased with the school. Comments such as: 'We feel very lucky to have our children at Probus school. Whenever we have had a problem it has been dealt with swiftly and effectively. There are some really great teachers and the headteacher is excellent' and 'A wonderful school, well run and great staff. Our children have flourished in this environment' were typical of those parents and carers who wrote positively in response to the questionnaire.

The school has formally adopted the management of the extended school and pre-school educational provision since the last inspection. This adds very good value to the role of the school at the heart of its community. Transition from home to school for the youngest children is managed well and children thrive in the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class. All aspects of this provision are good although there is not yet a sufficient balance of adult-directed activities and those that children determine for themselves inside and outside the classroom.

Pupils make good progress overall and attainment is above average in national tests at age 11, especially at the higher levels in English and mathematics. Also, differences between the rates of progress among the various groups of pupils at the school, relative to their starting points, are minimal. This is because the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress is thorough and accurate. It also helps with identifying where intervention is necessary to ensure all pupils make good rates of progress. Nevertheless, there is scope for further improvement in the consistency in marking pupils' work and in ensuring that, for older pupils, additional adults are deployed to support teachers in whole-class sessions in assessing pupils' engagement and participation in lessons.

The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and is fully committed to further improvement. The headteacher and other senior managers are providing high quality leadership and there is a strong sense of team work and common purpose among all in the school. Priorities for improvement are focused on raising standards; the track record of pupils' academic performance and their personal development has been continuously improving. This demonstrates that the school also has outstanding capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that there is greater consistency in the quality of marking of pupils' work throughout the school and in particular:
 - ensure that marking informs pupils what they need to do to improve their work or reach their individual targets
 - ensure that marking requires a response from the pupils so that they fully engage in their learning.
- In Key Stage 2, make sure that all additional adults are fully deployed to assist the teacher in assessing pupils' engagement and participation in the warm-up or starter sessions.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class, ensure that the curriculum planning provides a better balance of adult-directed learning and child-initiated learning inside and outside the classroom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally in line with age-related expectations and above the national average by the end of Year 6. Over the last three years, pupils' attainment has exceeded the national average in English and mathematics. The school has been successful in ensuring that the rates of progress for all pupils are good and there are no discernable differences in the progress made by boys or girls, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those known to be eligible for free school meals. Such groups in the school are small in number, but they make good progress because the school has very effective systems to assess, monitor and track their progress. Regular pupil assessment and flexible grouping arrangements, for example in mathematics in Key Stage 2, ensure that pupils at risk of underachieving are diagnosed for additional support early. Greater numbers of pupils have also attained the higher levels in English and mathematics over the last three years.

Without doubt, pupils enjoy their learning in lessons and the wider opportunities afforded to them. This is reflected in the highly positive relationships and pupils' excellent behaviour. In the best lessons seen, care was taken to provide suitably challenging and relevant tasks which motivate pupils' interests. For example, in a lower Key Stage 2 mathematics set, lively instruction in how to add three-digit numbers together generated great enthusiasm among all pupils so that they were able to practise their skills and knowledge accurately and confidently. In the plenary session, the learning was extended in a 'Countdown' type session where the degree of challenge in using all four operations in number was greatly enjoyed, particularly in explaining alternative ways of achieving the target number.

In Year 1, a well-planned series of English lessons drew successfully on the pupils' first-hand experience of making teddy bears to structure their story writing. Good collaboration between the pupils enabled them to recall the events and how to assemble a story in four parts so that they made good progress in their writing skills. In a Year 6 class, more sophisticated writing skills were in evidence and pupils were taught how to effectively link ideas in a factual account about fox hunting without stating personal views. A high degree of challenge was evident in this task, but pupils showed maturity and perseverance in

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analysing each other's writing and discussed technical aspects of sentence construction confidently.

The school has secured a good balance of attending to academic attainment, progress and personal development. The social and moral development of pupils is excellent and provision through the curriculum, as well as arts, music and modern languages, and themed topics, is supporting their cultural development particularly well. The pupils are fully aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and they also report feeling safe and are confident that adults will listen to them and resolve problems fairly and swiftly. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their educational lives as a result of attention to basic skills and the responsibilities they are given. Their involvement in the local community and in the school is securely good and reflected in the high numbers of pupils who attend the extensive and broad range of after-school clubs.

Attendance rates are average and can be explained by pupil illness in the main. The school takes all reasonable steps to promote and encourage the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection as a result of the senior leaders undertaking robust and accurate lesson monitoring. This is making a

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strong contribution to improving the academic performance of the pupils and it is now consistently good throughout the school. A number of key factors account for this, including: the organisation of interesting tasks matched to the pupils' abilities; the application of flexible grouping arrangements; and the teachers' use of subject knowledge in explaining new learning and the effective use of good quality resources. These factors serve to enthuse and motivate the pupils so that they are willing to learn, and keen to engage in, and concentrate on, the tasks they are given. Lessons move at a brisk pace so that there is no time wasted and the teachers use a range of good assessment techniques to inform next steps in learning. While each pupil has clear individual targets, the marking of their work lacks consistency and does not always tell them what they need to do next to improve. Adult support for individuals and groups makes a good contribution to pupils' learning, although for the older pupils it is less successful when the class is taught as a whole. In this situation, adult support is typically passive and results in missed opportunities to support the teacher in assessing pupils' engagement and participation in lessons.

The revised curriculum has improved the quality of education for pupils of all abilities. It is very successful in widening their knowledge and understanding of the world; in enabling them to reach standards that are consistently higher than national averages. This is because there is very good attention to the acquisition of basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology and their application in other subjects. Curriculum planning aligns subjects sensibly and themed weeks, such as the 'eco week' visits, computer animation projects, modern languages, musical tuition and visual arts all provide very memorable experiences. In addition, great care is taken to ensure that personal development programmes complement the academic curriculum.

The school is particularly successful in securing a caring and supportive atmosphere. It knows its individual pupils extremely well both in terms of academic performance and in their personal development. Pupils accept responsibilities willingly and take great pride in their roles as prefects, serving as members of the school council and those involved in the 'buddying' system. Transition arrangements when pupils start school and when they leave for the next stage of their education are highly effective. The school's work with parents, carers and outside agencies for those facing particular circumstances is embedded very well. The school's breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs provide equally outstanding care and, as a result, the great majority of pupils feel safe and happy in school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

Determined and focused leadership, rigorous and accurate self-evaluation, highly effective planning for improvement and a common purpose among all who are involved in the school have served to drive up standards and improve the rates of progress for all pupils since the last inspection. Leadership and management of the school are now outstanding. The school has aligned the outcomes of whole-school monitoring to priorities for improvement, with ambitious and challenging targets in the school development plan and is fully realising its declared aims.

The governing body is actively supportive, well informed and has demonstrated its ability to shape the strategic direction of the school by adopting responsibility for pre-school education for the youngest children and for extended provision before and after school and in holiday periods. It provides good levels of challenge and holds the school to account well for its academic performance.

The school strives, very successfully, to be inclusive and to ensure there is no discrimination of any sort. Care is taken to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity. The success of this is seen in the minimal gaps in the academic and personal performance of all groups of pupils. Equally, the safety of pupils is afforded a high priority and policies and procedures meet, and in some respects, exceed government requirements, such as in the exemplary single central record of adults who work with pupils. Partnership work with other schools and outside agencies adds good value to the experiences of pupils. Partnership with parents and carers is also highly effective and this is confirmed by the very high degree of satisfaction, confidence and support of the parent body

The school's duty to promote community cohesion is developing well. Knowledge of the context of the school population is fully understood and has led to the identification of key actions which are synchronised well with some priorities in the school development plan. The evaluation of the impact of these actions is at an early stage of development.

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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 met	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children of statutory school age are taught separately in a Reception class and this provision is good in all respects. When children start school, their attainment is usually broadly in line with age-related expectations and they make good progress in the areas of learning in relation to their starting points. In particular, they develop good social and language skills because focused attention is paid towards teaching letters and sounds systematically. For example, when a visitor to school brought in their baby, the children were able to write what the baby could do in simple sentences. As a result of a stimulating, calm and purposeful environment, good gains in learning and personal development are made. However, the organisation of activities which are adult-led and those initiated by the children, utilising all resources inside and outside the classroom, is not yet sufficiently well balanced in curriculum planning. The progress of the children is monitored effectively by perceptive observations and recorded in individual learning journey logs which enable additional support to be targeted effectively, including for those children who need extra help. All children are treated with respect and are well cared for. They are confident in asking adults for help, they cooperate well in their activities with each other and clearly understand the routines of the classroom.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well and there is a strong team of suitably qualified adults focused on supporting the needs of all the children. Parental partnership is particularly good in ensuring the effective and smooth transition from home to school and into Key Stage 1. There are good procedures and policies for welfare and safety and thus all statutory requirements are met.

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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

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are very supportive of the school and the quality of education and care that their children receive. The profile of responses is extremely positive in all questions and confirms how parents and carers are happy with their overall experience of the school. Evidence from the inspection fully endorses these views. A very small minority of parents and carers reported that they were less happy with the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour in their written comments, but no evidence was found to substantiate these views during this inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Probus Community Primary 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 95 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 187 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	63	26	25	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	57	33	31	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	51	49	35	33	8	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	54	29	28	6	6	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	62	59	30	29	1	1	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	65	62	27	26	0	0	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	52	36	34	1	1	2	2
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)	57	54	30	29	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	56	29	28	5	5	5	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	46	37	35	4	4	5	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	47	37	35	1	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	61	58	31	29	1	1	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	60	26	25	3	3	3	3

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 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 2009/10 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.



4 February 2011

Dear pupils

Inspection of Probus Community Primary School, Truro TR2 4LE

I would like to thank you for being so helpful to us when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking with you in lessons, around the school and sharing some of the super opportunities you have for learning and hearing about how much you enjoy school. You told us how proud you are of your school and you are right to be so! Our inspection found that Probus Community Primary is an outstanding school and here are some of the things we were particularly impressed with.

- Your headteacher and the other adults are working very hard to make sure that you all have every opportunity to improve in your school work and in your personal development. This is resulting in significantly higher standards and better progress for all of you, well done!
- Your behaviour and attitudes towards each other are outstanding.
- You work hard in lessons and respond well to your teachers who plan interesting activities so that you make good progress in your work.
- You have good opportunities to make a contribution outside the classroom and in the local community, which extends your knowledge and understanding of the world around you and helps you to develop as young people.
- You told us that your teachers look after you very well, keep you safe and help you to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. We agree with you.

To make the school even better we have asked it to improve three things.

- Make sure that all the adults in the school play a full role in helping you to make as much progress as you can in your lessons, especially for the older pupils.
- Make sure that the way teachers mark your work is more consistent and helps you to understand what you need to do next to improve. You can help here by reading carefully what they write and responding to the comments.
- Ensure that for the youngest children there is a better balance in those activities that you choose for yourself and those that are taught by the adults.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Jane

Her Majesty's Inspector

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