

Garras Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111816
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	356984
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2010
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 of pupils on the school roll	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Lesley Walker
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Shipman
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2008
School address	St Keverne Road Helston, Cornwall Mawgan-in-Meneage TR12 6AY
Telephone number	01326 221653
Fax number	01326 221653
Email address	head@garras.cornwall.sch.uk

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Five lessons were observed and three teachers were seen. The inspector met with pupils, staff, parents and governors. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. The inspector analysed 12 questionnaires from parents and carers, 4 from staff and 5 from pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following.

- The school's system for assessing pupils' progress.
- How well assessment information is used to guide lesson planning.
- The development of staff roles and responsibilities.
- The school's systems for communicating with parents.

Information about the school

This a very small school compared to others of the same type. It serves a rural area on the Lizard Peninsula. Its pupils come from a variety of backgrounds. Numbers have fallen in recent years. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, and some of these have particular social and emotional difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. Nearly all of the pupils are White British, with a very small number coming from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who join the school other than in the Early Years Foundation Stage is much higher than usual. Since the last inspection, a pre-school unit has been opened on site. This is run independently of the school and was not part of this inspection.

Pupils in the school are currently taught in two classes. One class accommodates Early Years Foundation Stage children and Years 1 and 2 pupils and one class accommodates pupils in Years 3 to 6. Building work has just been completed to provide a new class for the younger pupils. As well as enhancing classroom facilities, this is designed to provide better, immediate access to outside play facilities for the Early Years Foundation Stage children.

Since September 2008 the school has worked in partnership with St Martins-in-Meneage Primary School. One executive headteacher oversees the work of both schools and the expertise of some of the teachers is shared between the schools. Key Stage 2 pupils from Garras Community School visit the partner school for two afternoons a week to receive lessons in physical education, religious education and science. Currently, governors are taking steps to form a single joint consultative committee comprised of governors from both schools.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It helps pupils to get on well both socially and academically. Provision has been strengthened since the last inspection, notably through the successful working partnership formed with another nearby small school. The school makes the most of the current small class sizes, providing lots of individual support for pupils wherever possible.

Pupils' achievement is good. Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they are provided with outstanding teaching. The very small size of each year group means there is much variation from year to year in attainment. Nonetheless, attainment is at least average and sometimes above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils progress well because teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding.

The school does a good job of supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good links are promoted with external specialists to boost the support given to all individuals concerned.

The school provides pupils with a good quality and interesting curriculum. Much emphasis is placed on boosting pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding through the provision of practical and creative experiences. Whilst pupils achieve well in all subjects, the development of pupils' speaking and listening and writing skills is a particular strength. Much of the written work seen during the inspection showed pupils writing imaginatively and in a wide range of different styles.

Teachers monitor the progress of pupils carefully and assess their performance regularly. However, current systems for recording assessment information are cumbersome and do not give easy access to track the performance of individuals as they move through the school. As a result, planning for lessons is not as fully informed by assessment information as it could be.

The care of pupils in the school is outstanding. Staff have a full knowledge of pupils' individual needs and cater for these sensitively. As a result, pupils are very happy at the school. They like their teachers a lot and there is a friendly and supportive atmosphere evident in all class sessions. One pupil commented, 'Our teachers do a good job of making lessons fun,' and this view was echoed by others. Pupils develop responsible attitudes, help a good deal around the school and support each other well. Through the work they do in the locality, such as singing at different events and joining in with local festivities and the church, pupils make a good contribution to the community. Similarly, the work of the older pupils on the school council has been successful in bringing about changes in the school. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves healthy, fit and safe. They develop as confident learners and their attendance at school is above average.

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There is good communication between the parents and the school. Its strong involvement in local activities means the school is very much the centre of the local community.

There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff and they are well led by the headteacher and the assistant headteacher. The school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate and well informed by monitoring and evaluation. Staff show in discussion that they have a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school. However, occasionally within the school's self-evaluation, there is not enough detail to show why the school is successful and to show some of the refinements needed to accelerate progress even more.

Governors do an outstanding job of supporting the school. They are thoroughly engaged with, and committed to, improving the school's performance. They have worked hard with the headteacher to improve the building and facilities since the last inspection. Working closely with the headteacher, they have laid down a clear strategic vision to underpin the developing school partnership initiative. The combined energy and enthusiasm of the staff and the governors mean there is good capacity for the school to continue improving.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Streamline current systems by July 2011 to record assessment data so as to make the information more readily and rapidly available to teachers to help inform their lesson planning even more precisely.
- Ensure that by April 2011 all sections of the school's self-evaluation provide sufficient detail to:
 - fully highlight areas of school success
 - drill down to areas where fine-tuning improvements can be made.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well. All individuals show very positive attitudes during lessons. They try their hardest and generally work with enthusiasm. This was noted in a mathematics puzzle challenge given to older pupils in which some of the pupils showed a good deal of tenacity in sustaining their motivation to try and sort the problem out by using different approaches. Across the school pupils were seen working well to develop their independent learning skills in this way during practical activities. Similarly, in science activities to make electrical circuits, pupils in Years 1 and 2 worked diligently to check what worked and what did not work when building the circuits. This work seen was clearly aiding all individuals to become confident learners and helping deepen their understanding about the concepts being taught. The good range of practical experience also gets pupils talking about what they are doing. This builds pupils' vocabulary well. In this way, pupils develop above average skills of speaking and listening. In turn, this spills over into their success with writing where pupils use the vocabulary they have acquired effectively and imaginatively. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do well in all sessions because they are well supported not only by the teachers but by their classmates who are keen to share their expertise and advice.

Pupils behave well in the class and playground and this helps to support a good atmosphere around the school. Everyone gets on in a friendly and supportive way. Pupils

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have a good understanding of local and global community environmental issues. Through their activities to raise money for 'Shelter Box' and other charities and involvement in local events, they make a good level of contribution to the immediate and wider community. Pupils gain a good knowledge about how people behave in different cultures and countries around the world. However, their knowledge about how people from different ethnic backgrounds live in different parts of Britain is underdeveloped. Their wide involvement in creative and practical activities helps pupils develop a strong level of interest, sensitivity and curiosity towards the world around them. This, added to the generally good level of basic skills they acquire in English, mathematics and science, means pupils are well placed to develop successfully in the future.

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	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
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?

Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. The good relationships that teachers establish with all pupils are the cornerstone to the way in which they successfully boost the confidence and motivation of all individuals. Successful case studies were seen showing pupils joining the school with low levels of motivation and the staff doing an excellent job of turning these individuals into confident and enthusiastic learners. Teachers use the individual attention afforded by the small class sizes to monitor and boost pupils' progress. For example, in one mathematics lesson seen for older pupils, the teacher quickly noticed a particular difficulty incurred by one pupil. By applying a slightly different

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approach to the learning for this pupil she was able to ensure he made the necessary progress. Teachers are very good at adjusting their teaching according to the way in which pupils respond. For example, they balance the amount of direct teaching input and discussion against practical activity very well to ensure all individuals stay alert and interested.

Teachers plan lessons well, based on their assessments from the previous lessons, making sure that tasks are appropriately matched to the needs of individuals. They regularly assess pupils in order to track progress. However, the current records of assessments are not maintained in an easily manageable format that makes it quick and easy for staff to track the progress of individuals. As a result, teachers do not have all assessment information readily to hand to inform their medium- and long-term planning.

The school provides pupils with an interesting range of work within the planned curriculum. Staff are adept at ensuring the work provided lines up with pupils' interests. There is a good blend of practical and creative work across the subjects. Also, good cross curricular links are planned to make the most of different activities. Writing work is especially well ingrained across the curriculum, with good opportunities in subjects like science, history and geography for pupils to write in different styles. There is a satisfactory range of well attended extra-curricular activities provided and good involvement of the parents in delivering these. Currently, the school rightly recognises that pupils do not have much chance to express their views about what they are taught or to influence the makeup of the curriculum.

High quality pastoral support for all pupils ensures they are happy and feel safe at all times in school. The arrangements for providing targeted support where it is needed are especially strong. Staff are very good at supporting pupils with special educational needs and have provided strong support for individuals and their families. This has enabled pupils experiencing difficulties to sustain their progress 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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's good leadership helps staff to set high expectations for the pupils' achievements. She is good at providing an atmosphere in which all staff work in a fully committed and enthusiastic way towards promoting further school improvement. Individual staff roles are well developed. Through their strong teamwork at the school and careful monitoring of performance, staff have a clear understanding about what works well and where improvements are needed. However, some areas of the school's self-

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evaluation lack sufficient detail to help show where it is most successful and where further refinements would accelerate improvement.

Governors do an excellent job. Since the last inspection they have worked very closely with the headteacher to develop a successful partnership with another local school, support the creation of the on-site pre-school group and oversee the building of a new classroom. They monitor the work of the school rigorously.

The engagement by the school staff and the governors with the parents is good. Parents are kept well informed about all school developments and about how their children progress. Good steps have been taken to promote community cohesion. Not only has the school established strong working links with the immediate community but also has good plans to link the school with others internationally. The school links very effectively to all local external partners, including other schools and support agencies. These links are used well to boost pupils' learning. The school is vigilant at all times in ensuring that there is no discrimination and there is equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school's arrangements for looking after the pupils and ensuring their safety are outstanding. The school is extremely rigorous in all areas concerning the safeguarding of pupils. All policies and procedures are fully in place and the school is a very secure site.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

Children make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because they receive excellent teaching that engages them in a rich range of activities. Although there is some variation from year to year, children are generally working at just below the expected levels when they begin school. From these starting points children achieve well by the start of Year 1. In the lessons seen children made excellent progress. They worked confidently and with much enthusiasm. They showed good ability to articulate their ideas

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and worked in a mature way with each other during practical activities. Activities indoors and outdoors showed the children to be physically adept and well coordinated. During role play activities seen, the children worked very sensibly and imaginatively together, for example organising the post box area of the classroom. The teacher and the teaching assistant are very skilled in running activities that match precisely with the children's needs. The small number of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage year group also means that learning programmes are individualised and allow for much adult support and guidance as and when needed. This ensures high quality care, guidance and support so that all individuals feel safe. The high quality curriculum ensures that children have an excellent balance between chances to work and explore independently and chances to work together with an adult. Leadership and management of the provision for this age group are outstanding. The teaching assistant and class teacher work as an excellent team to ensure that resources and activities are organised in the very best way to benefit the children. At the same time they are skilled at ensuring the children also benefit fully from working closely with the Years 1 and 2 pupils at certain times. Assessment information for this age group is very well organised to inform all lesson planning and target setting.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a high return of questionnaires. The overwhelming majority of parents are clearly very pleased with what the school has to offer and particularly like the 'approachability of all staff' and feel that the school is well managed. Inspection findings support the views of the parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Garras Community 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 inspector received 12 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 17 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	83	2	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	83	2	17	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	92	1	8	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	92	1	8	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	83	2	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	92	1	8	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	92	1	8	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)	9	75	3	25	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	92	1	8	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	92	1	8	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	83	2	17	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	83	2	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	92	1	8	0	0	0	0

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



6 December 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Garras Community Primary School, Helston TR12 6AY

Thank you for making me feel very welcome in your school. You were very polite and friendly and I enjoyed talking with you. I have judged that yours is a good school and I can see that you agree with me.

Here are some of the good things that I found in your school.

- Your excellent achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage gets you off to a strong start at school.
- There are lots of smiling faces when you arrive at school and I can see that you enjoy being there.
- You are fit and healthy and know a lot about how to stay this way.
- Good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching provides interesting lessons for you so that you progress well through all the year groups in the school.
- Your behaviour is good in all activities in the classroom and in the playground.
- You all feel very safe in school. The adults in the school are excellent at taking care of you.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work well to keep the school improving and help you to have lots of good links with the community to boost your learning.

This is what I have asked the school to do now:

- improve the way information is recorded about the progress that you make
- provide more detail to describe areas where the school is doing well and where it could improve further.

You can play an important part in helping the school to improve by continuing to work hard in all lessons.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Lewin

Lead inspector

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