

Delaware Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111973
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	357016
Inspection dates	8–9 February 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	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Scoles
Headteacher	Joanne Grail
Date of previous school inspection	4 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 11 lessons taught by nine 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 including that relating to pupils' attainment and progress, monitoring, evaluation and development planning and keeping pupils safe. They analysed responses to questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and by 73 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 pupils, especially in mathematics, across the school and the impact of the school's work to improve attainment in writing in Years 1 and 2.
- The impact of the school's work to improve pupils' behaviour.
- The quality of pupils' contribution to the community to see if it is as good as the school assesses.
- The quality of the school's links with parents and carers from the different communities served by the school.

Information about the school

The school is of smaller than average size and serves villages and the surrounding rural area. Almost all pupils are of White British or Cornish heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. While the overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, the proportion having statements of special educational needs is well above average. Most of these pupils have learning and/or behavioural difficulties, some of which are severe. The school is provided with additional resources to educate pupils who have disabilities diagnosed as relating to the autistic spectrum. This separately managed Area Resource Centre has places for the education of up to five pupils from a wider area. Its staff also support other pupils within the school, and provide outreach support and training to staff in other local schools.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are educated in a Reception class. A wide range of additional provision is located on the school site. This includes a pre-school, a children's centre, a community learning centre and breakfast and after-school clubs. None of this additional provision is managed by the governing body, hence it was not inspected on this occasion.

The headteacher is currently also acting as executive headteacher of a nearby school and a senior member of staff from Delaware School is seconded to provide day-to-day leadership of this school on a full-time basis.

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. It has improved considerably since its last inspection and now has a wide range of major strengths. Children receive an excellent start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A notable feature is the wonderful environment provided to enable them to learn outdoors. The school is particularly effective in making provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, both in the Area Resource Centre and in the wider school, and as a result pupils make outstanding progress. All pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and safe, as shown for example in their efforts to reduce smoking among family members. They make an outstanding contribution to the community through the many responsibilities they take on in school and through activities in the wider community, for example in their support for a professional basketball club. This link, a notable feature of the excellent curriculum, has many facets. Pupils have acted as designers of merchandising products, press reporters and as cheerleaders at matches. The involvement of professional basketball players from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds has broadened pupils' horizons and makes a strong contribution to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

A notable feature of the school is the excellent care, guidance and support that pupils receive. Each is well known to staff as an individual and programmes are tailored to ensure that individual needs are met. The school has excellent links with a wide range of agencies, both those located on the school site and others such as speech therapy which is made available to children and pupils who need this support. A few pupils have profound behavioural difficulties and this is a matter of concern to a small minority of parents and carers who believe this may affect their own children's learning. Staff are alert to this possibility and use a good range of strategies to ensure that it is not the case. Pupils' behaviour is good overall and in lessons is often outstanding.

Many children start school with skills and knowledge well below what is expected, especially in communication, language and literacy skills. All pupils make at least good progress so their attainment at the end of Year 6 is average and improving. This is especially the case in English where attainment was above average in 2010, reflecting the success of new approaches to the teaching of reading and writing introduced to overcome identified weaknesses. This success is the result of consistently good teaching in which interesting activities are well matched to pupils' needs. Despite this, progress slows slightly at the start of Key Stage 1 because pupils are not always clear about the purpose of the tasks they are undertaking.

Under the excellent leadership of the experienced headteacher, staff and the governing body have been very successful in creating a climate in which each pupil is developed into an enthusiastic and independent learner. This was observed, for example, when Year 6

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pupils worked together, using their outstanding information and communication technology skills, to analyse and interpret data from basketball matches. Staff morale is high and it is clear that the leadership's excellent ambition and drive have been communicated to the whole community. It is now rightly being used to bring about improvements in another nearby school. The success of leaders and managers in improving many aspects of the school and creating excellence is founded in accurate and rigorous self-evaluation, demonstrating the school's outstanding capacity for continued improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress at the start of Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that pupils are always clear about the purpose of the activity they are undertaking and of how it contributes to their learning.
 - fully utilising the skills of subject leaders to support the planning of lessons for these pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

By the end of Year 6, pupils attain very challenging targets in English. They also make good progress in mathematics, although the attainment of more able pupils is a little lower than in English. To exemplify the excellent progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, by Year 2 some can write in well-constructed and legible sentences. Often their attainment at the end of Year 6 from starting points well below those expected is in line with that expected for all pupils nationally. Pupils make excellent progress in other areas of learning, such as in their personal and social development and in their understanding of peoples and cultures present in the United Kingdom and the wider world.

Pupils have excellent knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and say they help and support each other in this, with older pupils teaching the younger ones. They say there is little bullying. Resources to help those experiencing difficulties such as family difficulties are readily available, so pupils develop the emotional skills required to cope in such circumstances. Pupils' attendance is above average, showing their enjoyment of school. They say that school is an exciting place to learn, with many interesting activities that contribute to their good overall achievement.

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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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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 has many strengths. Staff are enthusiastic and caring, and convey these qualities to their pupils. Most lessons are conducted at a good pace, with high expectations of work and behaviour. Assessment is used well to track pupils' progress and is then used to plan work that meets individual needs. This is a relatively recent development and there is some variation in the effectiveness with which the information is used. Planning is most effective in meeting the needs of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the use of the Area Resource Centre is of especially high quality. The particular skills of teaching assistants throughout the school are used well to enhance pupils' progress. The use of marking and the assessment by pupils of their own and others' work are notable strengths, enabling pupils to know what to do to improve.

External partnerships are used to great effect to broaden pupils' horizons. Links with schools in Plymouth and inner London enable pupils to learn about the lives of others. There is an excellent range of sporting, artistic and other additional activities that introduce pupils to a wide range of interests to pursue and develop, for example all pupils in Year 5 learn to play the guitar as a result of external sponsorship. These excellent links extend to preparation for secondary education, where the school continues to monitor the progress and achievements of former pupils. This is an example of the outstanding care, guidance and support the school provides. The school uses its links with other provision on the site, such as the children's centre, very well to ensure that all pupils and their

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families receive any support that they need. To quote a parent/carer of a pupil who has recently moved to the school, 'My child now enjoys learning and is free of stress.'

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Self-evaluation has been very effective, for example in identifying and rectifying weaknesses in the teaching of writing to younger pupils, and in improving behaviour by reducing the impact of poor behaviour in the classroom. The outstanding ambition and drive of senior leaders and the governing body shine through in the way all concerned strive to meet each pupil's individual needs. The success of their approach is demonstrated by the school's work to support another nearby school. The governing body has made an excellent job of consulting a sometimes disparate community about the advantages of further strengthening this link through the establishment of a federation of schools. The governing body is rigorous in holding senior leaders to account. Subject leadership is able and enthusiastic, but to some extent lacks experience, for example in developing a more focused approach to teaching in the early stages of Key Stage 1.

The governing body meets its responsibilities to keep pupils safe and responds quickly to suggestions for minor improvements. Work to promote community cohesion has had an excellent impact, both locally and in enabling pupils to take a broader world view and to be intolerant of any form of discrimination. This is exemplified by the range of community provision on the site and the strong ongoing links with a professional basketball club, including direct input by its chief executive and players. The excellent way in which the school meets individual needs, including of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, reflects the strength of its commitment to equality of opportunity. The school believes it has work to do to improve its links with parents and carers. While there is some scope for improvement, the evidence shows that, in spite of the concerns of a small minority, the very large majority have full confidence in the school.

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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	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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Reception class make outstanding progress, especially in their personal, social and emotional development, their creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They behave well and are learning to share and take turns. Leaders correctly identified a relative weakness in the development of communication, language and literacy skills. They introduced a range of measures including use of a more structured approach to the teaching of letters and sounds and timely intervention by a speech therapist. There is good evidence that progress in this aspect is now improving rapidly.

Children have outstanding opportunities to choose activities that enable them to learn in a wide range of situations. The outdoor provision is exciting, even to an adult! It has a building site, a caravan and a wide range of covered and open activity areas with an interesting range of small and large equipment. Birds are beginning to nest in the birdbox containing a web camera. Provision indoors has a similar level of quality. Teaching is excellent, and all adults have a similar approach to meeting each child's needs. Very good attention is paid to children's care and welfare, for example by ensuring that all are dressed suitably before working outdoors. These qualities combine to reflect the excellent leadership and management of this outstanding provision.

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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

Every parent or carer that returned the inspectors' questionnaire said that their children are happy at school and almost all rightly believe that their children are kept safe there. A small minority expressed concerns over the management of inappropriate behaviour. The inspection found that while a few pupils exhibit challenging behaviour, this is managed well by staff. A few parents and carers feel their children are not making sufficient progress. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view during this inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Delaware 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 186 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	49	36	49	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	47	35	48	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	40	37	51	6	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	37	30	41	12	16	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	43	34	47	4	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	36	37	51	8	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	38	42	58	3	4	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)	25	34	38	52	2	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	45	29	40	6	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	27	26	36	15	21	7	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	26	43	59	6	8	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	27	37	32	44	4	6	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	41	38	52	5	7	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	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.



10 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Delaware Community Primary School, Gunnislake, PL18 9EN

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We especially enjoyed talking with you and seeing your work. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

Yours is an outstanding school. There are lots of excellent things about it. Children get a really good start in the Reception class. We thought that the outside area is outstanding and we enjoyed watching the bird in your birdbox. You behave well and know a lot about keeping healthy and safe. You do a lot for other people, both in school and outside. We were very impressed with the work you are doing with the Plymouth Raiders Basketball Team. You are learning all sorts of things from this, including about how people from other parts of the world live. You make excellent progress in your English and good progress in mathematics. By the time you leave Year 6 your attainment is average and is improving. Your skills at using computers, cameras and webcams and other technology are outstanding. Those of you who need extra help at school make excellent progress. The teaching is good, with interesting lessons that mean you can all make good progress. There are lots of exciting activities both in and out of school, so you all enjoy school. You are cared for very well indeed, for instance when you are preparing for secondary school.

The headteacher, senior staff and the governing body lead the school very well. It is obvious that they all want you to do as well as you can at school and in the future. They have spotted where the school could be better, and have made it happen. They make sure you are safe and offer you and your families help when you need it.

Even outstanding schools can improve so we have asked the school to make sure that pupils in the early part of Key Stage 1 always know what it is that their tasks and activities are helping them to learn, so that they can make even better progress.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler

Lead inspector

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