

Biscovey Nursery and Infant Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111903
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	357000
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona Edgington
Headteacher	Richard Hope-Pears
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, observed eight teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Talks were held informally with parents and carers before the start of the school day. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at policies, pupils' books, safeguarding records and evidence of the monitoring of teaching and learning. They also scrutinised questionnaires from 74 parents and carers.

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

- Whether the strategies that have been put in place have been effective in improving pupils' attainment in writing, particularly that of boys.
- How effective the behaviour management strategies have been in ensuring consistently good behaviour from pupils.
- How well assessment systems are used to adjust planning and ensure that work is well matched to pupils' needs.
- Whether planning for improvement is sufficiently well focused and if this has had a positive effect on raising standards for pupils throughout the school.

Information about the school

Biscovey Nursery and Infants' School is an average-sized school serving the town of Par. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. Almost none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The percentage of pupils currently identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The school has a unit for deaf pupils, which currently has one pupil, and a morning nurture class for vulnerable pupils. The governing body also runs the Bizzy Bees Club, a registered childcare provision, out of school hours and during holidays. This provision is included in this inspection. The school has recently received the Cornwall Celebrating Volunteering Award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school is providing a satisfactory quality of education. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in response to satisfactory teaching and provision for their care and support. Most pupils say they enjoy school and this is endorsed by parents' and carers' responses in questionnaires. One parent commented, 'All round, we are very pleased with the school.' Attainment in reading is above average and the majority of pupils, including boys, are making good progress from low starting points. Although pupils' progress in writing is satisfactory, their writing skills are variable throughout the school. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is average. Pupils' life experiences reflect a satisfactory understanding of different viewpoints and the beliefs represented in the United Kingdom. Weaknesses in aspects of the school's contribution to community cohesion mean that pupils' understanding of the wider world is not as strong as it should be.

Teaching is satisfactory in most classes; it is good in Year 2. There are satisfactory systems for assessment and they are generally used appropriately to adjust planning and to track pupils' progress. However, the lack of consistency between classes in Year 1 means this is not always the case. In addition, pupils' targets for improvement are often written in such a way that pupils do not always understand, so they actually do not always know what to do to improve. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. However, they are not focused sufficiently on eradicating the inconsistencies in teaching and learning in Year 1. The school is now acting on this. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and is based on first-hand information. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory, as indicated by the improving attendance and the behaviour of pupils, issues raised by the previous inspection report. Also, overall attainment has risen from significantly below average to broadly in line with the national average.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' writing skills throughout the school by making sure teachers:
 - build on the good practice observed in Year 2
 - provide a more structured approach to teaching writing in Reception
 - consolidate programmes for improving writing before new ones are introduced.
- Develop pupils' understanding of others' opinions, views and beliefs, and of the multicultural nature of the United Kingdom and the wider world.

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- Improve the use of assessment information to set targets for pupils that they can understand and know what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure that all leaders and managers are sharply focused on improving the consistency and continuity of provision throughout the school, especially in teaching and learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Outcomes for pupils are satisfactory and most say they enjoy their learning. Progress in lessons is variable. In Year 2, where levels of engagement are high and activities are stimulating and adventurous, pupils' learning is good. For example, they enthusiastically recorded their descriptions of Rumpelstiltskin to add to a 'wanted' poster for the fairy tale character. In other lessons, learning slows when teachers spend too long on low-level activities or extended explanations.

The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory overall. They make good progress in Year 2, where there is well-targeted support by teachers, assistants and volunteers. Children in the Nursery with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also well catered for, enabling them to make good progress in their speaking skills.

Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make slightly better progress than their peers, reflective of successful intervention programmes, especially in Key Stage 1. The school has been successful in raising boys' attainment in reading. However, their writing skills are still below those of girls, although recent assessments show that the gap is narrowing, particularly in Year 2. Consequently, pupils' basic skills are satisfactory. They make good use of their information and communication technology and numeracy skills, but their underdeveloped writing skills limit their ability to write for a range of purposes.

Pupils' attendance is above average. Behaviour is good and pupils say that it has improved recently. In many lessons, especially in Year 2, behaviour is good, and pupils engage in learning well. Most pupils are polite, helpful and willing to assist others. However, a small minority of pupils demonstrate boisterous behaviour at playtimes, which was a concern to a few pupils and parents and carers. Many pupils know about a healthy lifestyle and the importance of taking good exercise, but a minority do not carry this out in practice. Pupils undertake a range of responsibilities around the school and generally make a good contribution to the wider community, for example by giving concerts in residential homes for older people and collecting for charity. However, the school council has not been in action for some time and pupils have few opportunities to let their views be known. Pupils have good social skills and they clearly know what is right and what is wrong. However, their understanding of spirituality and their knowledge of different cultures and world views are less well developed.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

Planning is good and clearly identifies what pupils will learn. Teaching strategies to improve pupils' behaviour have largely been successful in classes, in assemblies and as pupils move around the school. Occasionally, however, teachers' time management is ineffective and when this happens, pupils quickly lose interest and can become restless. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Year 1 have led to an uneven learning experience for these pupils. The nurture class is well run and provides vulnerable pupils with good support and a range of life skills that enable them to integrate well in mainstream classes in the afternoon. As a result, these pupils are making good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Assessment is used effectively in some classes, but variations in practice mean that its use is satisfactory across the school. Most teachers have good working notes on pupils' progress and use tracking sheets to see whether individuals and groups are making sufficient progress. Marking is good in Year 2 and pupils are helped to judge their own progress and attainment by the use of 'marking ladders'. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils appropriately. Planning is good and clearly identifies suitable cross-curricular links. However, although there have been some visits to enrich pupils' learning, as well as visitors to school, these do not provide sufficient opportunities to widen pupils' understanding of the world in which they live. The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. There are good arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school takes care that no pupil is put at risk.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher communicates appropriate ambition and drive for improvement. The school's development plan is clearly focused on key areas for improvement and is rooted in an accurate analysis of assessment data. The deputy headteacher, who is the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, and other senior leaders are effective and have produced well targeted action plans to improve the school. There has been some good monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders, including perceptive lesson observations, but there are still inconsistencies of practice at Key Stage 1 that have not been fully addressed. The members of the governing body, some of whom are new appointments, have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They also have good systems for ensuring that the school meets its statutory duties. However, the governing body is not sufficiently proactive about holding the school to account for the quality of provision.

The school promotes equality of opportunity appropriately and there have been some areas of success. For example, the gap between boys' and girls' performance has narrowed and there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, because of uneven provision, not all pupils in the same year groups get the same learning experiences. The school has satisfactory partnerships with outside agencies. There are good links with the on-site Bizzy Bees Club, run by the governing body; it is well organised and managed. It meets all the requirements for out-of-school day care. There are also useful links with extended services, which contribute to some of the enrichment activities in school. The school has been very successful in recruiting volunteers and has recently been given an award for its efforts. These volunteers have had a positive effect on pupils' attainment in reading, as many of them come in to hear pupils read. Resources are managed appropriately and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's procedures for safeguarding are satisfactory. Good attention is given to ensuring that staff are well trained and the governing body has ensured that the requirements for safer recruitment have been met. All child protection requirements are in place and training is current. However, some risk assessments are not up to date and policies have not been reviewed to include the latest guidance. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. It has good links with the local community and promotes Cornish culture well. Relationships with local faith communities are good and clergy regularly take assemblies in school. However, links with other communities in the United Kingdom to extend pupils' understanding of the wider world are less well

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developed. There are some links with a school in Italy, but so far these have only involved staff, and not pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress in their learning, although this is stronger in their social and mathematical development than it is in their communication, language and literacy skills. Most willingly take part in activities and make choices about which ones they will do. Children know how to keep safe and healthy. Behaviour is good and many take care of each other when engaging in activities.

Provision is satisfactory overall and good in the Nursery. Teachers have a good understanding of children's needs and provide them with a rich learning environment. 'Free-flow' learning takes place in both Nursery and Reception and children evidently enjoy their learning experiences. There is a good balance between child-initiated and teacher-led activities. However, teaching in Reception is variable and teachers do not always provide children with enough support in their learning in writing, for example. Learning resources are also less exciting in Reception. All safeguarding requirements are in place and staff ensure pupils' well-being at all times. Partnerships with parents and carers are satisfactory and most are happy with the provision. Links with the pre-school are developing well.

The good leadership and management are ensuring that provision and outcomes are improving rapidly. The leader and her staff have a good action plan, which is already having a positive impact on provision in the Nursery, and this is now extending into Reception. Children are making better progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of good management and careful planning. There is a strong vision and commitment to further improvement.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost one third of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Most are supportive of the school. All say that the school keeps their children safe and that their children enjoy their learning. Nearly all agree that the school keeps them well informed about their child's progress. For example, a parent commented, 'We are pleased with our son's progress so far and feel his learning capabilities have been quickly identified.' A minority of parents and carers do not think the school is well led and managed or that it takes into account their suggestions and concerns. A few thought that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection evidence endorses parents' and carers' positive views. It also indicates that there are some inconsistencies in the leadership and management of the school, which have an impact on its overall effectiveness. The inspection evidence shows that behaviour is good in lessons and around the school but that it could be better at playtimes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	65	26	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	62	25	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	44	59	25	34	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	54	26	35	6	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	43	58	25	34	5	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	64	20	27	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	53	26	35	7	9	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)	33	45	31	42	5	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	51	28	38	5	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	41	27	36	15	20	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	46	25	34	10	14	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	26	35	30	41	11	15	5	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	53	29	39	5	7	1	1

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 Biscovey Nursery and Infants' School, Par PL24 2DB

Thank you for making us welcome at your school. I want to thank all those children who spoke to us about the school. You answered our questions well and I can see you enjoy your school. We were pleased to see the way you work together well and help those who are finding things a little difficult sometimes.

We think your school is satisfactory and there are a number of things that were good.

- You are all making good progress in reading.
- You behave well in lessons and assemblies.
- The children in the Nursery enjoy learning a lot.
- Pupils in Year 2 concentrate well.

These are the things we have asked the school to work on:

- To help you to be even better at writing.
- To give you more opportunities to learn about what it is like to live in different parts of the United Kingdom and the world, and what people in these areas believe and think.
- To help you understand your targets better.
- To make sure everyone gets the same good quality education in all classes.

All of you can help by taking extra care when you write. You can also find out about other parts of the country and perhaps talk to pupils from other schools. You can all try and understand what you need to do to improve your work. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Dennett

Lead inspector

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