

The Beacon Infant and Nursery School, Bodmin

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111910
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	357001
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Garvey

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Dixon
Headteacher	Sally Attwell
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 11 lessons taught by 10 teachers. One joint observation was undertaken and a number of lessons were also briefly observed alongside senior staff. Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, senior leaders, other teachers, and representatives of the governing body, and inspectors spoke to a number of parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at the School Improvement Partner's reports, pupils' books, other samples of children's work, information on pupils' recent progress and safeguarding policies. Questionnaires from 31 parents and carers and 16 members of staff were scrutinised.

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

- The levels of pupils' progress, especially of boys and particularly in reading.
- The effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in raising attainment.
- Whether the school is doing all it can to increase attendance.
- How well leaders and managers know their school, and how much impact they have had on improving attainment.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school of its type. There are two Nursery classes, two Reception classes and three classes in Key Stage 1, one of which is a mixed-age combined Year 1 and Year 2 class. The school has a child development centre that caters for 10 pre-school pupils. Currently, eight pupils attend on a part-time basis. Many pupils live in the town, but a few live in the surrounding districts. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. These pupils have a wide range of needs, including speech, language and communication, moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. More pupils than usual join the school at times other than at the usual points of entry. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. Most pupils are of a White British background. Few have minority ethnic heritage. The school has received a number of awards, including Sportsmark, the National Healthy Schools award and Investors in People. It is also a local authority centre for the use of special techniques to improve pupils' reading skills.

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. The heart of its work is the way that it values each one of its pupils, creating outstanding equality of opportunity for all. It has a vibrant atmosphere and staff are unrelenting in helping their pupils to progress. Parents and carers are right to appreciate the education their children are getting. One parent summed this up by saying, 'I am very happy with my child's progress. Teachers are friendly and always available.' Outstanding care, support and guidance encourage pupils to achieve well.

When they join the Nursery, children generally have communication, language and literacy skills as well as personal, social and emotional development skills that are particularly weak.

The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children an outstanding start and they make rapid progress. A few children also benefit from the on-site child development centre, which offers pre-school assessment and support, and they progress well. Good progress continues throughout the school for all learners. Progress is good in literacy and numeracy, including for learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, the attainment of pupils by Year 2 has consistently shown considerable improvement and is now at the national average, overall. However, pupils' attainment in literacy is still behind that in numeracy by the time they leave the school.

An extremely flexible curriculum, which the school adapts well to meet individual needs, helps pupils to make rapid gains. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. ♦ Relationships in class and the meticulous way that teachers use assessment to plan for individual needs lead to all learners making good progress. Pupils apply their basic skills securely. Behaviour is good, but pupils do not always cooperate as well as they could when working in groups. Although attendance is no more than average, there are recent improvements and the school works hard to help parents and carers to ensure that their children attend school. Work in partnership with others is outstandingly effective and an example of this is the way that the parent-support adviser works with a range of other agencies and has succeeded in helping individual pupils and their families to improve attendance. The pupils say they learn well and feel very safe in an environment in which there are outstanding safeguarding procedures. Even very young children know how to keep themselves healthy, taking part with enthusiasm in extra-curricular activities. Pupils have a good appreciation of other cultures, both in the United Kingdom and abroad, and have plenty of opportunity for reflection.

Under the leadership of a caring headteacher who promotes teamwork in an inspirational manner, staff thrive at the school and are very willing to implement new ideas. New staff are integrated into the school's pursuit of excellence very quickly and their rapid development means that there is no let-up in the drive for improvement. Leaders at all

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levels have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and the governing body gives good support. Accurate self-evaluation plays a key role in determining priorities and senior staff have outstanding capabilities, shown in the ways they have responded flexibly to changing needs. Consequently, the school has outstanding capacity to make further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve basic skills by:
 - improving attainment in literacy to match that in numeracy
 - improve pupils' collaborative skills by providing more opportunities for them to work together to solve tasks.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Having made outstanding progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage from their well below average starting points, pupils enter Year 1 with attainment that is close to expected levels. By the end of Year 2, the pupils are currently attaining levels that are above expectations in numeracy and levels that would be expected in reading and in writing. Boys' progress in reading has been especially rapid recently. Learners with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well as a result of well-targeted interventions and outstanding emotional support. These have had particular success in helping younger children to read and write more confidently. It also means that children with behavioural and moderate learning difficulties concentrate well and make good progress. As a result, all groups of learners are achieving well.

The school gives high priority to helping the pupils feel safe in a secure, friendly and happy environment. Children are thus able to work without distraction. Consequently, they do well in their work and they enjoy the rich variety of activities planned for them. The teachers and their skilled assistants collaborate well to promote good achievement for all pupils. In a Reception class, the pupils watched a role-play of a visit to the dentist. Their attention was rapt and they laughed appropriately at the entertaining spectacle put on by staff. Later, the children were seen to use the skills learned into their own role-play and this contributed to their excellent appreciation of what a healthy lifestyle means. Although they make good progress in personal, social and emotional development, there are times when loss of concentration can slow progress for some learners. Most learners look forward to school and attend regularly, but a few individuals are regularly absent. Overall, the pupils' good progress and positive attitudes to their work prepare them satisfactorily for the future. ♦♦

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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	2
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	2
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	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 curriculum is rich and exciting. Classrooms displays provide a treasure trove of learning opportunities and are word-rich and full of interesting things to do and look at. These resources are used well by learners and this helps to maintain their interest and has led to rapid progress. As a result of accurate self-evaluation, the curriculum was adjusted to promote reading among Year 2 boys. The use of reading key-rings, specific reading for a purpose programmes, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT), together with the vibrant classroom displays, have accelerated boys' progress in reading. Boys' current attainment in reading is now at similar levels to that in writing and to that of girls. Given the very low levels of communication, language and literacy skills when the children joined the school, this represents impressive progress, although pupils' attainment in literacy, overall, still lags behind their numeracy. The governing body was aware that reading improvement was a priority and directed funding to help the school to address this effectively.

The curriculum ensures learners understand what a safe and healthy lifestyle means in practical terms. For example, a vegetable garden and nature area provide healthy outdoor activities and many classroom activities promote health awareness. One group of Nursery children were planting vegetable seeds at playtime and could explain when they would grow and how good the resulting food would be for them. Environmental monitors showed inspectors around the nature garden, where they took responsibility for seeing that other

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pupils played safely. A diverse range of clubs is a highlight for many pupils and greatly adds to their enjoyment in learning. One is a French club, and Year 2 pupils were happy to speak French to inspectors at playtime.

Staff have a passionate and enthusiastic approach to teaching and their high expectations and precise and imaginative preparation encourage pupils to achieve well. Pupils demonstrate good ICT skills which are well modelled by their teachers and assistants. Teaching and learning were at least good and the school has worked hard to support and develop the skills of the teachers and support staff. As a result, teaching is rapidly improving and several lessons seen were outstanding. Where teaching was not outstanding, engagement lessened because learners did not have enough opportunity to work collaboratively and were listening to the teacher for longer than was necessary. Assessment is seen as fundamental to pupils' progress and the excellent ways in which teachers use assessment to target specific needs are helping pupils to achieve well. For example, the learning needs of pupils who join the school during term time are rapidly and accurately assessed and, consequently, work is quickly adapted to meet their needs. Consequently, these learners make good progress in line with that of the rest of their class. ♦

Underpinning the rapid progress that learners make is outstanding care, guidance and support. The many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have prompted staff to build up excellent skills in meeting the particular needs of individuals. Those skills are used to outstanding effect on a daily basis. Work with parents and carers is seen as crucial to promoting learners' enjoyment of school and, therefore, their progress. A new parent-teacher association has been established and family-learning courses run regularly. The work of the school's parent-support adviser is highly effective in demonstrating the importance of education. Parents and carers were observed queuing up to speak with her in the mornings. Staff, together with the parent-support adviser, ensure that when learners return from absence, they catch up quickly, so their absence does not act as a barrier to their learning. Adults pinpoint exactly what absentees have missed and a remedial plan is followed to give the child the support necessary to catch up.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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?

Leaders and managers at all levels effectively communicate to all staff a vision of achieving outcomes of the highest quality. Morale among staff is high and everyone works together to foster a belief that the school can and will succeed. This conviction stems from the outstanding individual leadership of the headteacher, whose commitment has never

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wavered on a long journey of continuous improvement. She is supported by talented individuals who have the capability to aim very high and to continue the significant improvements made so far. Individual staff readily take on responsibility for leadership and manage their respective areas of responsibility with commitment and flair. In short, this is a highly effective team. Their efforts lead to the school's outstanding success in removing the barriers to learning for all pupils, improving their life chances, tackling discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity for all. The school's endeavours are aided by excellent relationships with parents and carers. The school actively seeks out partners who can help it to develop and it has secured extremely effective partnerships with a wide range of providers. With the high level of diverse needs of its pupils, the school has had to develop very effective safeguarding procedures. Inspectors saw evidence of the school assiduously pursuing safeguarding issues and pupils are kept very safe, as a result. Child protection procedures are applied with meticulous care and sensitivity.

The school's processes for self-evaluation are robust and they are well supported by the governing body, which supports and challenges senior leaders appropriately. However, there are inconsistencies when the systems used by the governing body do not match those used by the school, for example in finance. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning exceptionally well and, as a result, are able to use the strengths identified to spread excellent practice to all staff. The quality of teaching and learning has improved rapidly as a result. The quality of leaders' and managers' support is reflected in the many staff who have gained promotion recently. The school rapidly assimilates their successors into the culture of high expectations.

The promotion of community cohesion is good. The school is well aware of its own ethnic, religious and socio-economic context. Links with a school in a culturally and ethnically diverse area of the United Kingdom were seen in an interesting display of exchange letters and cards from pupils. Similarly, good links with schools in Tanzania and India allow for further cultural exchanges which widen learners' horizons.

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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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Excellent leadership and management lead to a wonderfully inclusive and rich learning environment where children flourish and make outstanding progress. The highly effective leadership is recognised as exemplary by the Local Authority. Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the Nursery and Reception classes and make rapid progress as a result. Teaching is never less than good and is outstanding in Reception classes. There is an optimum balance of outdoor and indoor learning and between activities led by adults and those chosen by the children themselves. The curriculum is carefully planned and structured for each child and the diverse range of activities on offer lead to exceptional engagement and enjoyment. From very low literacy levels on entry, Reception children were observed to write riddles to describe a photograph inside a card and read their writing out loud with confidence. ♦

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

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Views of parents and carers

There was a lower than average response rate to the questionnaires. Of those parents and carers who returned questionnaires, almost all were pleased with many aspects of the school's work. The inspection team also found these views mirrored in other parents' and carers' responses during the inspection. Every parent and carer that responded said they were happy with their children's experience at the school. A few parents and carers would like the school to deal more effectively with unacceptable behaviour and a few felt that the school did not take account of their particular children's needs. Inspectors found that the school was welcoming to parents and carers and always followed up any particular concerns, particularly about behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Beacon Infant and Nursery 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 177 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	65	11	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	74	7	22	0	0	1	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	58	13	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	55	13	42	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	66	10	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	73	8	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	68	9	29	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)	16	52	15	48	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	48	11	35	4	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	48	12	39	4	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	48	12	38	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	65	10	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	68	9	29	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	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.



20 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Beacon Infant and Nursery School, Bodmin PL31 1LJ

Thank you so much for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. I think your school is a happy and a very exciting place in which to learn.

It was so good to see you all enjoying your learning and achieving so well. You get good and outstanding teaching which plans your work carefully to help every single one of you to learn. I particularly remember seeing some of the Reception children learning about the dentist, other pupils speaking French in the playground and seeing some children planting seeds in their garden. There were many other memorable moments for us all. You are very lucky to have such wonderfully decorated classrooms and I know you use those displays very well and that they help you to learn. Well done for taking part in so many clubs and activities.

You told us that you felt that your school was a very special place and I agree with you. Yours is an outstanding school. Even outstanding schools can carry on improving and I know that everyone wants the school to do just that. I have asked your headteacher and the staff to help you to improve your reading and writing further and to help you to work better in groups to learn even more quickly.

You could help too, by making sure that you attend school well and always being careful to consider other people's feelings at all times, especially when you are asked to work together in groups.

Yours sincerely

Paul Garvey

Lead inspector

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