

Truro Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111790
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	356980
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Saunders

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Douce
Headteacher	Helen Sills
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Observations included parts of four morning and afternoon sessions during which inspectors observed all the teachers and support staff as well as activities the children chose for themselves. Inspectors also observed parts of 'stay and play together' and 'family learning' sessions run by staff from the Nursery, both at the Nursery and at one of the partner children's centres. Meetings were held with staff and children and inspectors spoke to parents and carers informally. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school development plan, safeguarding documents, curriculum planning, and information about children's progress, as well as children's individual 'learning journey' books, where children, staff, parents and carers collate the work children have done. Questionnaires from 31 parents and carers as well as from staff were analysed.

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

- How well does the Nursery's evaluation of recent data support the view of good progress, particularly in linking sounds and letters?
- How effectively are monitoring and recording systems used to identify the learning needs of individual children?
- Is the curriculum provision outdoors as effective as it is indoors, in supporting all areas of learning?
- Does the evidence support the views of the school leadership regarding aspects felt to be outstanding, including safeguarding, contribution to community cohesion, and the development and sustainability of strategic partnerships?

Information about the school

Located in an urban area of Truro, this 35-place nursery is one of two maintained nursery schools in Cornwall and is a designated rural Early Excellence centre. As such, it provides a range of services across the Truro and Roseland district at a number of locations and children's centres. Services include 'stay and play together' sessions for parents, carers and childminders, delivering family learning programmes, a weekly childminder drop-in service and a range of training opportunities for other providers. The nursery provision is set to increase to 40 places. Almost all children are of White British heritage. A very few children speak English as an additional language. About 16% of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities which is lower than in most schools. These pupils include those with moderate learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties, and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has a number of awards, including accreditation as an ICAN school (Early Talk programme).

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

2

Main findings

This is an outstanding school, because the adults ensure that the care, guidance and support for children are exceptional. The curriculum provides exciting opportunities to learn and as a result, children are confident to try out new things and develop excellent skills as learners. By the time they leave the Nursery, they are exceptionally well prepared for school.

- The strong leadership of the headteacher and great dedication of the staff and members of the governing body mean that the vision for excellence is widely shared. Adults work well together to bring this about.
- Teaching is good. Systems to record and evaluate what teachers observe about children's learning are now embedded and being refined so that they provide useful insight into what children need to do next. These observations are increasingly focused on the impact of activities and events on the children's learning.
- While teachers encourage children to ask questions, on occasions they too readily provide children with an answer, or fetch a particular resource for them, rather than first encouraging the children to find their own solution. Most children exceed the attainment expected for their age in all the areas of learning, and considerably so in communication, language and literacy, and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy.
- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. One commented, 'Truro Nursery School is a wonderful learning environment.' Another wrote, 'My daughter has been well prepared for starting school in September.'
- The children thoroughly enjoy coming to school and look forward to each day, because there is always something interesting to do. They know a great deal about how to keep safe, and are able to enjoy doing physically challenging activities safely.
- The outdoor area is a wonderfully rich, natural environment which provides extensive opportunities to fire up children's imaginations.
- The school has recognised that opportunities to write and explore numbers have not been as well developed outdoors as those provided indoors, and are addressing this successfully.
- Sessions organised for parents and carers of young children and babies, both at the Nursery and at a range of other locations, are very highly regarded and appreciated by those who attend. These sessions are valued by the other partners the school has built up, and together they are finding ways to ensure that these can continue, as funding becomes more difficult.

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- Self-evaluation is rigorous and has led to appropriate developments to sustain and improve outcomes for children. Together with the high levels of support and challenge provided by members of the governing body, this means that the school has good capacity to bring about further, sustained improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Allow children more time to think for themselves and respond to the learning situations they face, before providing support, direction or resources.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

The outcomes for children are excellent. They love being at the Nursery and are keen to learn. They settle into the routines quickly, because of the warm, sensitive and calm approach of the staff. They enthusiastically participate in group activities, make friends easily, and listen well when adults are leading group sessions. When they join the Nursery, children have levels of skills and knowledge which are broadly similar to those expected for their age. Their good progress and high attainment mean that their achievement is outstanding. Their communication, language and literacy skills are exceptional. They use a wide range of ambitious vocabulary, enjoy learning to write words, and have a great love of books. Their ability with numbers and shapes is also impressive. For example, children enjoyed exploring how to make 'number sentences', writing their own sums and calculating the correct answers. The teacher had to quickly increase the difficulty of the task to ensure some of the children were challenged. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported so that they make similar progress to their peers. Children who speak English as an additional language are also well supported by adults and other children, so that they often make excellent progress. Children who need support with their speech and language development benefit from excellent partnerships to receive expert support, so that they make good progress as well. However, there are missed opportunities to make the most of learning to form sounds, for example when they are playing outdoors. Well-focused support is provided for individual children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, so that they play a positive role within the groups and make good progress.

Children love playing in the outdoor area, which provides them with highly engaging areas and activities to choose from. The well-designed water and sand feature is a tremendous focus for much imaginative play and exploration such as making a river. Children get equipment out for themselves, and particularly enjoy the physical challenge of the woodland area with its monkey bars. Children have good opportunities to weigh up risks and learn how to stay safe in a wide range of situations. However, adults occasionally provide directions about this too readily, so that children are told what is safe or not before they have had the chance to reason it out for themselves, within a safe environment. Children are very confident that they can talk to an appropriate adult if they are worried about anything, and that the adult will help them sort it out. They know about eating healthily and the importance of taking exercise. They enjoy the fruit and healthy snacks provided by the Nursery, and occasionally have the opportunity to help with the preparation of this, so that they develop familiarity and further skills in keeping themselves healthy. Children's excellent moral and social development is evident from the way they work and play together harmoniously. There is a great sense of being part of a happy

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community. Although there are only a few children from different heritages, the Nursery makes the most of opportunities to explore other cultures. For example, children enjoyed learning about festivals celebrated by some families, or looking at how birthdays are celebrated in other countries, led by families within the Nursery. The adults and children are enjoying learning Spanish together. They also enjoy using the computers for a range of learning programs, and the new interactive whiteboard is a huge success. Children treat this equipment with respect and take turns well. Behaviour is excellent, because of the high expectations of the staff and the fact that the children are so fully engaged in doing things they enjoy. Along with their exceptional skills and knowledge, this means they are very well prepared for learning at school.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹	1
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's 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?

In the well-organised, safe and secure environment children's welfare is given the highest priority. The excellent relationships between children and adults mean that children feel confident that they are well cared for. Parents and carers spoke highly of the school's support for the whole family, for example by encouraging parents and carers to help children put interesting work from home into their 'learning journey' books. Along with the regular information they receive about their child's progress, this helps them to feel well

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informed. The curriculum is exciting, relevant and highly stimulating because the starting point is the children's interests. It has been thoughtfully developed to provide a broad range of experiences. Children had an exciting time talking to police and paramedic visitors, for example. There are lots of appropriate books based on the topics children have shown interest in, as well as excellent opportunities to develop information and communication technology skills through the use of computers, digital cameras and programmable toys. There are also helpful resources and support for children who speak English as an additional language. During sessions seen, teaching was never less than good. For example, sessions led by the teachers are particularly well planned and engaging. The systems to record what the teachers observe about children's learning and capabilities have been developed and are increasingly well used to develop the next activities. When there is not an adult immediately available, children demonstrate considerable independence and resourcefulness.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The well-focused leadership of the headteacher has brought about suitable improvements since the last inspection to maintain the exceptional achievement of the children. For example, data and analysis about the progress of children are used well to identify where the school needs to focus its efforts. Evaluation of the school's work is self-critical and perceptive, although slightly modest at times. Monitoring of teaching and learning is increasingly widely shared so that all staff are keen to enhance the day-to-day practice. Partnerships with a wide range of appropriate organisations are extensive and highly beneficial to the children and families. The outreach sessions, through the 'family learning' and 'stay and play together', are very highly regarded within a wide area; those who attend are very positive about how much they have been helped to understand children's learning and access other opportunities. Strong partnerships with the local schools mean that children are well prepared for this transition and look forward to the next stage of their learning with great anticipation. Other partnerships mean that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and are well supported. The staff ensure that all children have equal opportunity to learn and succeed, and do much to develop children's awareness of equality, for example for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Members of the governing body are highly dedicated and very well informed about their role and responsibilities. They are knowledgeable about the learning needs of the children

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and are quick to explore any emerging trends from their analysis of the data available. Their expertise is particularly well used to support and challenge the school where needed, and they listen and respond to the concerns of staff, parents, carers and children. Members of the governing body ensure that policies and risk assessments are regularly reviewed, and take particular care to ensure that all the requirements for the safeguarding of children are robustly implemented. Safeguarding is exemplary. The school is seen as a model of good practice and regularly hosts visits by teachers from other settings. Community cohesion is another example where the school has proved highly effective. Cultural diversity is celebrated and promoted within the school. For example, a teacher's visit to India provided interesting resources and led to fun activities around dance. Links with an orphanage and school in Kenya have been established and the children are keen to help raise money to support this link.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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	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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed strong support for all aspects of the school's work. There were almost none who indicated they felt negative about any aspect. Comments which were made almost always expressed very positive views. One comment reflected many others when a parent wrote, 'We have been delighted with the excellent start to education the Nursery has given them.' Further praise was focused on all the staff, who provide such a calm atmosphere and who listen to parents' and carers' views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Truro 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 70 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	84	5	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	87	4	13	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	39	18	58	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	68	9	29	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	84	5	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	65	10	32	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	81	6	19	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)	21	68	10	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	68	10	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	65	9	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	48	16	52	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	90	3	10	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 children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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 child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
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 children 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 children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

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.



26 June 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Truro Nursery School, Truro TR1 3RJ

Thank you for showing us the lovely work you were doing when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you play and learn. We were impressed with how well you get on with each other and listen when you need to. You told us you feel very safe, and we could see that the adults care for you very well.

The school provides you with an outstanding education. You really enjoy learning because the teachers make sure you have got interesting things to do, both inside and outdoors. It was great to see you working together to make a river, and practising on the monkey bars. We were also really impressed with the number sentences you were making, adding up on your own; well done! By the time you leave the Nursery, you have got excellent skills and are ready to be effective learners at school.

Those in charge of the school are working really well to make it even better. They give parents and carers the chance to learn about the work you are doing, and help mums and dads and carers to be confident parents. There is one thing we have asked the adults to do in order to make Truro Nursery even better.

- Give you more time to think about the questions you have, or to find the things you need to do an activity, before they give you the answers.

You can help by doing as much as you can for yourselves. We saw that you can do this when you get the chance. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Saunders

Lead inspector

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