

Gunnislake Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111952
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	357010
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Barron

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	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Scoles
Headteacher	Jo Grail
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and observed three teachers. They also held meetings with the executive headteacher, assistant headteacher, members of the governing body, teaching staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school development planning, minutes of governing body meetings, school policies, including those associated with safeguarding procedures, assessment and tracking documentation, pupil records and samples of pupils' work. They also scrutinised questionnaires returned by 21 parents and carers, 12 pupils and 12 staff.

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

- The impact of the school entering into a hard federation with Delaware Primary School, especially regarding possible changes to the school's overall effectiveness.
- Pupils' present attainment, especially in Year 6, and what this signifies in terms of achievement and progress, especially that of the more-able pupils in writing.
- Provision for cultural education and its impact on building up pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultures and communities other than their own.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the school's mixed Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2 class. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The school entered into collaboration with the nearby Delaware Primary School in September 2010 following a prolonged period of changes to its leadership and management after the last inspection. The governing bodies of both schools merged in April 2011, when the school became part of the Delaware and Gunnislake Federation with a single executive headteacher. An assistant headteacher is now responsible for the day-to-day management of Gunnislake Primary School.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school, which has recovered well from a prolonged period of turbulence and changes to its leadership and management since the last inspection. It has improved its effectiveness since entering into a successful federation with a nearby primary school. Pupils say that they now enjoy school. They believe they are making good progress and feel that they are part of an extended family. One pupil commented, 'Everybody gets on well together because we all know each other', while another said, 'I just know I'm learning more now'.

The school has an inclusive ethos and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Pupils are well behaved and keen to learn and have an excellent understanding of the need to stay safe. Parents and carers are very positive about the benefits of federating with a larger school and realise how much the school has improved. They also value the effective way the school safeguards pupils. The parent that commented, 'the school supports my child's learning and emotional needs well,' summed up the positive views of the overwhelming majority of parents and carers. However, even though pupils display a realistic understanding of the immediate world in which they live, their knowledge of different cultures within the United Kingdom is limited.

The executive headteacher has built up an effective partnership with the assistant headteacher, school staff and the governing body since the federation. This has been a key factor in ensuring that the school has regularly and accurately evaluated its performance and successfully implemented improvements where needed. As a result, the school has raised its overall effectiveness from satisfactory to good in a relatively short space of time and clearly displays a good capacity for future sustained improvement.

Achievement is good. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress as they move through the school and this reflects the good quality of teaching. The school has developed effective systems to track pupils' progress and to set pupils' individual learning targets. However, there are occasions in literacy lessons when the written work set for the more-able pupils is not always well matched to their capabilities and they do not make the progress they are capable of. Although attainment in Year 6 is above average, it is better in mathematics and reading than it is in writing. While pupils comment that they usually find lessons interesting they also say that when teachers mark their written work they do not always give them ideas about how to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the spring term 2012, raise pupils' progress and attainment in writing to match their above average attainment in reading and mathematics by:

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- ensuring that the more-able pupils are always provided with work that offers them the correct level of challenge
- ensuring that teachers' marking always provides pupils of all abilities with ideas about how to improve their written work.
- Increase pupils' awareness of modern society in the United Kingdom by improving opportunities for them to develop their knowledge and understanding of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the country.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils respond very well to the caring approach taken by the school, which adds to their enjoyment of learning and is reflected in their above average attendance. They are aware of the importance of exercising regularly and are eager to point out the benefit of eating healthy foods. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is strong and this is reflected in pupils' politeness and respect for others. They say they feel safe in school at all times. Pupils know that any instances of anti-social behaviour by others will be dealt with quickly and fairly by adults. Older pupils are keen to explain how they often look after the younger ones and are proud of the way the school council gives pupils a voice in school affairs. Year 6 pupils say that they are looking forward to moving on at the end of this term because they feel well-prepared. However, they also say that they will miss the friendly atmosphere of a small school.

Children often enter the school's Early Years Foundation Stage with their skills and understanding below those typical for their age, although this can vary from year to year. They make good progress during their Reception Year and continue to make similar progress throughout the rest of the school.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons. They say that they like their teachers because they are always friendly and help them with their work. During a very well taught science lesson to a mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class, pupils made outstanding progress learning about which materials were better at absorbing sound, because tasks were well matched to their abilities. They enjoyed the practical activities, especially when trying to find the best way to muffle sound. Likewise, children in the Reception Year enjoyed developing their understanding of counting because they found the tasks they were given, about adding up strawberries and bananas, very interesting and because work was well matched to children's previous learning and to their individual abilities. However, the more-able pupils in all other year groups commented that they often found the work they were asked to complete quite easy and lacking challenge, especially writing tasks, and this limited their progress.

Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and take pleasure in talking about what they like most about school. They confidently describe how they enjoy taking part in sporting activities and local community events and believe they make a good contribution to the school community and also to the local village. They are able to explain how they support events such as the annual village fete and harvest festivals and how the school is involved in a campaign to keep the speed of traffic down on the village roads. They are far less confident when involved in discussions about the multi-cultural nature of modern society in the United Kingdom and this represents a gap in their learning. Even so, their developing skills in literacy and numeracy, coupled with their good collaborative skills and mature attitudes to learning are preparing them well for their future economic well-being.

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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	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is broad and balanced and links different subjects together well. It has been designed to make learning interesting for pupils while focusing on promoting the development of skills in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology. It is enhanced by a good range of special events, visitors and visits to places of interest, including the annual Year 6 residential trip to France. However, pupils say that they would appreciate more opportunities to attend after-school clubs on the school site. At present most take place at Delaware Primary School.

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and teaching observed in some classes was outstanding. Classrooms are well resourced, bright and colourful and teachers make good use of modern technology to enhance learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together in order to ensure that lessons move at a brisk pace and this contributes well to pupils' good progress. Pupils are able to work well independently and teachers and teaching assistants therefore have the time to support those pupils experiencing difficulties in learning. Lessons are effectively planned to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and at different stages of learning. Work is usually well matched to pupils' abilities but there are occasions when teachers do not use assessment information to best effect in their planning, especially when planning written work for the more-able pupils.

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Parents and carers appreciate the good level of care, guidance and support the school provides for pupils. They fully understand that this is the basis for their children's good personal development. Good induction and transfer arrangements help pupils quickly settle into new routines, especially when they enter the school for the first time at the start of their Reception Year. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable receive an effective level of well-targeted care and support and this enables them to take a full and active part in school life.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The executive headteacher and the assistant headteacher have worked well together to ensure that staff and members of the governing body have developed a common commitment to school improvement. This is reflected not only in the good quality of school development planning, which focuses well on important priorities, but also in the way the school has improved its effectiveness since becoming part of a federation. Staff morale has risen and teachers now have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. All staff work hard to ensure that pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed and that any very rare instances of discrimination are tackled effectively. They are well supported by the governing body, which has responsibility for both the schools in the federation and which offers this school a good level of support and also challenge when required. Members of the governing body play an active role in school life and take their statutory duties seriously.

Links with external agencies and partnerships with other bodies are used effectively to support pupils' learning and well-being, especially that of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Safeguarding procedures are good and the school has adopted recommended good practice across all areas of its work. The school site is inspected regularly to ensure it provides pupils with a safe environment. Staff and members of the governing body receive regular training about all aspects of safeguarding and are well aware of the importance of their roles in keeping pupils safe and free from harm.

The school has developed a good relationship with parents and carers who appreciate the way in which the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress and well-being. The school's work in promoting community cohesion is satisfactory. Links with the village community are used effectively to develop pupils' understanding of the local world in which they live. However, pupils' appreciation of the diversity of cultures and beliefs in the wider national community remains in need of development.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents and carers talk positively about the friendliness of the Early Years Foundation Stage staff and about how they encourage children to do well. Older pupils have good memories of their time in the Reception class. One pupil commented, 'I enjoyed my first year at school because there was always something exciting to do and I made some good friends.'

Leadership and management are good and this has been an important factor in ensuring that children make consistently good progress during their Reception Year, especially in developing their language and communication skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader ensures that effective links are formed with parents and carers through learning together sessions and home visits prior to children starting in the Reception class and this helps children to settle quickly and enjoy their first experiences of school.

The Reception Year classroom is a colourful and exciting place. It is well resourced and provides children with an imaginative learning environment. Lessons in the morning are well structured. They effectively blend opportunities for children to learn independently and with adult direction while focusing on developing skills in literacy and numeracy. Afternoon sessions often feature child-initiated activities which provide opportunities for children to practice newly acquired skills and find out how things work. The Early Years Foundation Stage teacher and her effective teaching assistants are skilled at asking questions to help children discover things for themselves. Children behave well and join in activities with enthusiasm while displaying a good understanding of how to share and take turns, for example, when working well in small groups to program a computerised roaming device to move in the correct directions.

Adults offer an effective level of support to those children experiencing difficulties in learning or requiring additional challenge. Recording of children's progress is ongoing. It is

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shared with parents and carers and also used effectively to plan future work which is well matched to children's individual needs.

The school has improved the Early Years Foundation Stage secure outdoor provision since the last inspection. However, the outdoor covered area is small and cramped and this can restrict opportunities for children to build up the skills associated with outdoor learning and play during inclement weather.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

There was an average rate of response to the parents' and carers' questionnaire returns. An overwhelming majority of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaires or who were spoken to by inspectors held positive views about the school. Few parents and carers expressed any concerns although a very small minority felt the school was not preparing their children well enough for the future. Inspectors considered their comments and judged that the school does prepare pupils well for the future.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gunnislake 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 57 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	52	10	48	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	62	8	38	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	67	7	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	67	7	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	67	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	57	8	38	0	0	1	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	52	9	43	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)	11	52	7	33	2	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	48	11	52	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	57	8	38	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	52	10	48	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	62	7	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	71	6	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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 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.



18 July 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Gunnislake Primary School, Gunnislake, PL18 9NA

Thank you for welcoming both myself and the other inspector to your school. We enjoyed talking to you about what you like the most about school and seeing you working hard in lessons. You were all very friendly and polite and we quickly realised why you like your school so much. We also enjoyed talking to Year 6 pupils about what they enjoyed the most about school and how they felt the school could improve. We agree with you when you say that you believe you attend a good school.

Here are some of the main things we found out about your school.

- Your school gives you a good start to your education and makes sure you make good progress in learning.
- Your attainment is above average in Year 6 and you achieve well.
- You have an excellent understanding of the need to stay safe.
- Your behaviour is good and you all get on well with each other.
- Your executive headteacher, assistant headteacher, members of the governing body and staff are working hard to improve the school.

We believe your teachers can make your school even better. We have asked them to:

- ensure that when teachers mark your written work they always give you ideas about how to improve which will help you to make even better progress
- make sure that the pupils who could be really good at writing are given work which they do not find too easy to complete
- help you to find out more about the customs and traditions of people living in this country who are from cultural backgrounds that are different to yours.

Thank you for making us feel welcome. We hope you continue to enjoy school and work hard. You can help your school to improve by continuing to attend as well as you do.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron
Lead Inspector

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