

Bishop Cornish Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112034
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	395388
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	Wiola Hola

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Adkins
Headteacher	Jenny Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Wiola Hola

Additional Inspector

Paul Mulligan

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 9 teachers in 16 parts of lessons. Inspectors listened to some pupils reading and looked at samples of pupils' work. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, and with staff, leaders and managers at all levels. In addition, inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and at break times and with some parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at school improvement plans, data on pupils' attainment and progress, information about how teaching is evaluated and improved, minutes of meetings of the governing body, lesson plans, and school policies, especially documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They also analysed 136 questionnaires from parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average. A much lower than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Before- and after-school care is provided in a separate building on the school site and was included in this inspection. A pre-school, run independently in the same building, was not a part of this inspection. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It promotes pupils' personal development extremely well. Pupils grow as confident, courteous, considerate young people, showing joy of learning in response to the outstanding curriculum. This vibrant school is not outstanding because inconsistencies in teaching mean that pupils' achievement is not at the highest level.
- Standards by Year 6 are above average. Pupils generally make good progress throughout the school. Outcomes in reading and writing are often better than for mathematics. Pupils produce high-quality work in art, design and technology and music because provision for these subjects is excellent.
- Teaching is good, engaging, and provides interesting activities that strongly promote pupils' growth as independent learners. Between them, teachers possess considerable expertise in a range of subjects. Most lessons are planned well, although tasks set sometimes do not match the needs of all pupils. Teaching encourages pupils' pride in the presentation of their work but pupils are not always given enough opportunities to complete it.
- Pupils show exemplary attitudes to learning and feel extremely safe in school. They work hard and with enjoyment. They are confident to ask for help when needed, and to explore their own questions. Behaviour is outstanding.
- Leaders' and managers' passionate drive and energy underpin the excellent promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and of their creativity. Checks on staff performance and work to improve teaching and learning in English and mathematics, including the tracking of pupils' progress, have led to pupils' good achievement. They have not been sharp enough to ensure it is outstanding. Opinion is divided amongst parents and carers as to the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for communication. Some concerns may be justified. Many parents and carers praise the school for the support it provides for pupils and their families.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work further to eliminate inconsistencies in pupils' progress in mathematics.
- Raise achievement by improving teaching from good to outstanding through:
 - sharing the outstanding practice that already exists in the school
 - ensuring activities are always matched well to pupils' needs
 - giving pupils opportunities to complete any unfinished tasks while maintaining the brisk pace of learning.
- Scrutinise even more closely pupils' progress term by term to spot quickly any potential underachievement, address it, and hence raise further pupils' attainment.
- Review the school's strategies for communicating with parents and carers and adjust them where necessary.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Learning is undertaken with good pace. Pupils settle quickly and work purposefully with high levels of engagement. Pupils' speaking and listening skills develop extremely well through frequent discussions or presentations of ideas in class. Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities provided in lessons and beyond them. Some writing on display is exceptionally good. Work in books is also of a generally good quality, in the Big Writing books for example. Sometimes work is left unfinished because time allowed or teachers' expectations are not clear.

Children start school with skills that are broadly in line with age-related expectations. Their progress in the Reception class is good, and especially good in language and communication, and in personal and social development. End of Year 2 assessments in recent years showed standards were above average in reading, and broadly average in writing and mathematics. National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated and have been in line with, or above, national averages. Current work shows reading is above average at the ends of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils read with fluency and expression. Older pupils can identify key features in texts of different genres. Attainment in writing is also generally above average. For mathematics it is more variable, reflecting some inconsistencies in the teaching of this subject. The progress of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs, and of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, also varies in a similar way to that of their peers.

Progress in subjects beyond English and mathematics is often good or better because learning is set in such meaningful contexts that capture pupils' interest. Pupils' topic work is wide ranging and of high quality. Fundraising and links with Africa, for example, have enriched pupils' understanding of the lives of others. Pupils' high-quality singing in assemblies and elsewhere is beautiful and promotes spirituality very well. The on-site enclosure with animals adds greatly to pupils' understanding of life cycles and the need for care. Overall, inspectors' views match

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those of parents and carers, most of whom agree that their child makes good progress.

Quality of teaching

Interaction between staff and pupils is of high quality, showing encouragement and respect for pupils' efforts and attainment. Classrooms are attractive places of calm and order. Management of behaviour is firm, but unobtrusive, so that learning is very rarely disrupted. Teaching assistants work well to enhance teaching, working effectively to support those very few pupils who have difficulty in managing their own concentration or behaviour, and in giving support to those who need extra guidance. Good additional support is given to disabled pupils or those with special educational needs.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and many have particular areas of expertise, for example information and communication technology (ICT), sport, art or music. An outstanding music lesson was seen in which pupils sang confidently in four parts, accompanied by able pupil musicians playing wind instruments or percussion, and obeying the conductor's instructions. The teaching of reading has many strengths, especially in the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. Here, phonics (linking sounds and letters) is taught systematically so that pupils can soon separate unfamiliar words into their component parts to sound and blend together. In Years 3 to 6, reading sessions feature routinely and pupils readily discuss their enjoyment of books.

Lessons are well planned and most contain activities that meet pupils' needs and abilities, and build successfully on their prior learning. Occasionally they do not and then work is either too hard or too easy for some pupils. When teaching is at its best, the teacher very skilfully assesses how well pupils are grasping new skills and concepts and adjusts explanations or questions during the lesson to take account of this. Sometimes teachers' introductions are too long or expectations of what should be achieved by the end of the lesson are not clear enough. The views about teaching of the large majority of parents and carers are positive and this is in line with inspectors' findings. However, the use of assessment is not fully developed. Information gathered about pupils' progress is not used consistently well, especially in mathematics, to ensure every single pupil makes good or better progress. Teachers' marking is good in many places but not universally so.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Learning is enhanced greatly by pupils' highly positive attitudes and their openness and capacity to talk honestly about what they can do and understand. Pupils willingly explore using 'What happens if?' and 'We could try' lines of enquiry. They are eager to work hard, collaborate exceptionally well in lessons, and show respect for, and listen well to, each other. Pupils rightly believe that behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent and supported by effective strategies, including awards for effort and other attributes. The very large majority of parents and carers feel that

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behaviour is at least good and lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying that children of their age may encounter. They feel very safe and show excellent understanding of how to stay safe. Virtually all parents and carers agree their child feels safe. Pupils say they turn readily to teachers if upset for any reason. Pupils are highly considerate towards each other, and show great courtesy to staff and visitors. Their awareness of differences in people is strong. This is because the school is inclusive and covers through the curriculum and school life the consideration of people's various backgrounds, abilities, faiths and circumstances. The provision of before- and after-school clubs in an inspirational setting is of high quality. It is valued by parents and carers and enjoyed greatly by the pupils who attend. Pupils' above-average attendance is a testament to their palpable enjoyment of school and all that it offers. The school works well in collaboration with external agencies to address any concerns about attendance or other matters.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers show a great commitment, energy and enthusiasm for ensuring pupils have memorable experiences of school and leave well prepared for their next steps in education. The governing body works well in many respects particularly in developing educational provision and ensuring all statutory requirements are met. Safeguarding arrangements give no cause for concern and are kept under review. With staff and senior leaders, the governing body ensures work on the promotion of equality and tackling discrimination remains paramount and highly effective. Much is done to support pupils and their families in overcoming barriers to learning or supporting them in times of difficulty. Many parents and carers spoke or wrote in praise of this work.

Within a picture of good teaching and good progress, inconsistencies exist. Staff and governors do examine and analyse pupils' achievements and take action as any problems or potential problems are discerned. The data compiled on pupils' attainment, however, are not always fully exploited to promote the best possible progress for all pupils. Nevertheless, the school has demonstrated its capacity to improve, in the successful work to boost pupils' skills in reading for example.

Arrangements to keep the quality of teaching under review and to enhance it include regular checks and suitable professional development opportunities. The checks identify clearly strengths and areas for development in teaching, but focus less on pupils' learning. Middle leaders' contribution to this work is inconsistent. Some good work is evident in English in this respect.

The curriculum is excellent because of its breadth, balance and enrichment activities. Lovely displays around the school bear witness to the many educational opportunities pupils have, and through which they flourish. The school's glorious setting overlooking the River Tamar and the attractively maintained and embellished learning environment add greatly to the joy of learning.

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A significant minority of parents and carers feel that information provided for them about their child's activities, such as clubs and homework, or planned closures, is not always timely or clear. Inspectors examined this concern and found that plenty of information is presented on paper or on school noticeboards but less via other means such as the school's website where it could be presented systematically and retrieved as necessary, but is not. For some parents and carers, therefore, the concern may be justified. On the other hand, many parents and carers praise the information provided by the school concerning their child's work and progress.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Assemblies are moving experiences for pupils and adults alike. Many opportunities exist for pupils to marvel at the world, to be inspired by the works of others, to engage in acts of creativity, to work in teams, to nurture animals, and to act in support of those in trouble or need. The school values the support of the local community whose contributions add richness to pupils' experiences in many ways.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



5 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bishop Cornish Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Saltash PL12 4PA

Thank you for your warm welcome and helpfulness when I visited your school with another inspector. We valued greatly our conversations with you and reading your responses to the questionnaire. These helped us to understand your school.

Your school is a good school in which you feel safe and happy. It enables you to make good progress and reach standards that are mostly above average. In the main you make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in reading and writing. Progress in mathematics is not quite as good. Your work in music, art, design and technology is excellent. You work hard and grow exceptionally well as confident, considerate young people.

Teaching is good but it does sometimes vary. Tasks set in lessons mostly match your needs and abilities well. Occasionally, tasks are too hard or too easy, or not finished. Some of your teachers are extremely good at seeing how well you are learning and they adjust their plans or questions taking account of that. Your behaviour is excellent.

Your headteacher, staff and governors work well to create a wonderful place for you to work in. I have asked them to boost your progress in mathematics and make sure all teaching is good and more is outstanding. You can help to speed up your progress by always telling teachers if the work set is too hard or too easy.

The large majority of your parents and carers are positive about the school. They hold differing views about some aspects, especially about the information your school provides for them. I have therefore asked staff to look into how effectively they communicate with your parents and carers so that everyone is entirely clear about what, when and how well you are learning.

I wish you all the very best in your education.

Yours sincerely

Wiola Hola
Lead inspector

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