

# Whitstone Community Primary School

Oak Lane, Whitstone, Holsworthy, EX22 6PH

**Inspection dates** 8–9 October 2013

|                                |                      |             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good        | 2        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good        | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement in reading is excellent. They read widely for their age and make very good progress. Their achievement in many other subjects including mathematics, science and physical education is also good.
- The achievement of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is equal to that of other pupils, both in the school and nationally.
- Teaching is consistently good and motivates pupils to learn. Teachers use questioning very well to develop the skills of all their pupils. Assessment is used well to enable pupils to improve their work.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They say there is very little bullying and this is supported by the school's records.
- The curriculum is a notable strength. It is very successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because of the wide range of experiences it gives them.
- The school is well led by the headteacher and governing body. There is a good analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses, for example, both aspects noted below have been identified and are being tackled. Governors are effective in monitoring both pupils' achievement and teaching quality.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While most pupils make at least the expected progress in writing, their achievement in this aspect is not as good as in reading. This is because they have too few opportunities to write about their own interests and there are weaknesses in the spelling and handwriting of a few pupils.
- Attendance is below average and persistent absence, including among pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, is too high.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons taught by four teachers. He made briefer observations of groups of pupils learning letters and their sounds (phonics). He reviewed documents, including those relating to pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and safeguarding. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and with members of the governing body. Most inspection activities were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The views of 15 parents who submitted them on the Parent View website, and of staff who completed a questionnaire, were analysed and taken into account. A small number of written comments from parents were also considered.

## Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average primary school and serves a rural part of north Cornwall.
- The number of pupils supported through school action is average, as is the proportion who are supported through school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs. Most of these students have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of families in the armed services. However, the number of such pupils in each year group is very small; for example, there was none in the Year 6 who left in 2013.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is very high.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school is a member of the Bude Community Schools Trust which comprises a secondary school and seven other local primary schools.
- The school shares its site with a privately run pre-school which was not inspected on this occasion.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' writing by:
  - widening opportunities for pupils to use their personal interests and experience in their work
  - tackling the weaknesses exhibited by some pupils in their spelling and in the presentation of their work.
- Improve attendance by:
  - ensuring that parents are fully conversant with new local policies concerning the authorisation of leave for holidays and other social and personal events
  - tackling persistent absence, including among pupils who qualify for the pupil premium.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- While data must be treated with caution due to the small number of pupils in each year, over time their attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics is consistently above the national average. The proportions making or exceeding the progress expected of them is also above average.
- Pupils learn to read quickly. For example, after one month in Year 1, all pupils could read every one of the 44 sounds derived from letters or combinations of letters. By Year 6, they read widely. A discussion about their reading led to debate about the discovery of the Higgs boson, and as to whether the extinction of the dinosaurs arose from climate change or an asteroid collision.
- Pupils' achievement in writing, while generally at least in line with national benchmarks, is less good than in reading. School leaders recognise this and have introduced new approaches to teaching writing in Reception to Year 3. In Years 4 to 6, pupils have insufficient opportunities to write about their own interests and experiences. A minority of pupils have particular difficulties with spelling and with the presentation of work, including handwriting, that have yet to be addressed.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics, where they learn to solve problems and identify patterns and sequences of numbers. In science, pupils in Years 4 to 6 can identify evidence that air is a substance with mass. The quality of work in art and design displayed around the school is high.
- Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their opportunities in physical education (PE) and sport. They succeed in dance and gymnastics and in team games such as football and netball. They also enjoy music, with opportunities to learn to play a wide range of instruments.
- There are too few pupils in receipt of the pupil premium to make statistical comparisons of their progress, but evidence shows that their achievement is at least in line with that of other pupils in the school, and also compares favourably with national data.
- School leaders have identified correctly that the progress of a few of the small number of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is slower than it should be, and that this is mainly due to the weaknesses in writing identified above.
- Children in the Reception year start school with skills below those found nationally, especially in their literacy and numeracy. They make good progress so that by the end of the year their achievement is in line with that found nationally.
- The high proportion of pupils who join the school after Reception achieve well during their time at the school.
- In spite of their isolated location, pupils have a good understanding of people of other faiths and cultures. They talk excitedly of visits made to places of worship of the Christian, Islamic and Sikh faiths in Exeter and Bristol. This is a good example of the pupils' very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and of the way the school fosters tolerance of others and tackles discrimination.

### The quality of teaching is good

- In all three classes, there are consistent approaches to aspects such as the management of behaviour and the marking of work that help pupils to feel secure and confident when learning.
- Because teachers know their pupils well, they design tasks that meet their needs. Pupils get good opportunities to use and develop their skills of literacy, numeracy and of working independently and in groups. Teachers direct carefully planned questions at individuals that enable them to learn quickly and gain in confidence.
- Lessons are conducted at a good pace that generates great enthusiasm in pupils. This is

especially true in Reception to Year 3 when learning the letters and their sounds, and in retelling stories as part of the new approach to the teaching of writing.

- Work is marked thoroughly and pupils value the high quality of feedback that helps them to improve their work. They are given appropriate targets for the next steps in their learning. However pupils, including those in Years 5 and 6, have little idea of how the quality of their work compares with that of others nationally.
- Teachers use resources effectively, especially when teaching reading. There is a wide range of books and other reading material in classrooms and the well-equipped library. They are also effective in using information and communication technology (ICT) in the classroom. However the ICT security system, while appropriately barring pupils from unsuitable websites, also limits teachers' access to useful teaching resources.
- Teaching assistants have a range of skills and diverse experience, but are not always used to best effect when supporting learning in the whole class because they are not always sufficiently well briefed by the class teacher.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils behave very well. They are polite and considerate towards each other and to adults. They play well together and are punctual when returning to lessons. It is notable that even the youngest children play and learn well together. This demonstrates the school's commitment to developing good relationships among its pupils.
- Pupils say there is very little bullying and that they feel safe in school. The school's records show that there have been no serious incidents for a number of years. Pupils are taught about the dangers of different forms of bullying such as cyber-bullying and of how to avoid them. They are also taught how to be safe, for example, when cycling or playing near water.
- School leaders are aware that attendance has been below average for several years and have put in place a number of strategies to improve it. The Bude Community Schools Trust has recently adopted a policy where absence for activities such as family holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. However, some parents are as yet unaware of the application of this policy.
- A small but significant number of pupils are persistently absent. This includes some pupils in receipt of the pupil premium and affects their potential to benefit from this funding. Reasons given for their absence are sometimes inappropriate, such as to attend local agricultural shows.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- School leaders, including governors, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have taken action to improve the latter. Recent action to improve the teaching of writing is an example of this, although the impact of this, and of actions taken to improve attendance, have yet to be seen.
- Pupils' progress is tracked effectively and action is taken to remedy any slow progress. Staff are alert to pupils' disabilities or special educational needs and the progress of those in receipt of the pupil premium is monitored with similar rigour.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively. The headteacher has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and all staff, including teaching assistants, receive necessary training. Staff morale is good and teachers are supportive of school leaders.
- The curriculum is a particular strength and excites pupils. For such a small school, the range of sporting opportunities, educational visits and artistic experiences is exceptional, and is enhanced by the school's membership of the Bude Community Schools Trust. The breadth of the curriculum demonstrates the school's commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity.

The very good variety of extra-curricular activities is a further strength valued by pupils.

- While the school has yet to receive the new funding to enhance sport in primary schools, appropriate and varied plans for its use are at an advanced stage. These include further collaboration with the other schools in the Trust, employment of coaches in a wider range of sports and work to teach pupils how to adopt a healthier lifestyle.
- Parents rightly have a positive view of the school and value the staff's good knowledge of their children as individuals. A parent wrote with particular warmth of the support her children had received and of the approachability of the headteacher and other staff.
- In recent years, the local authority's support for the school has been light, although support has been received from the education welfare service in order to improve attendance. Overall, the level of support for this good school is appropriate.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors monitor the school's work effectively and are well informed by the headteacher about pupils' achievement, including that of those in receipt of the pupil premium. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and of how this links to pupils' progress and the responsibilities undertaken by staff for additional salary. They have a good understanding of the challenges that small schools are likely to face in the future and have appropriately undertaken research into different models of leadership and governance. Governors are aware of the plans for the use of additional sports funding and rightly intend to monitor its impact. Governors are well trained and make a good contribution to the school's undoubted capacity to improve further. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities, such as to ensure that children are safe.
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## What inspection judgements mean

| School  |                      |  |
|---------|----------------------|--|
| Grade   | Judgement            | Description  |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding          | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 2 | Good                 | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.   |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate           | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

## School details

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 111941   |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Cornwall |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 426801   |

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

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                             |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                           |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                                |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                               |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 68                                  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                  |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Clare Horn                          |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Paul Woolner                        |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 25 November 2008                    |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01288 341241                        |
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