

Calstock Community Primary School

Back Road, Calstock, Cornwall PL18 9QL

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher is fervently committed to inclusion. She has created an ambitious culture in the school. Confidence is widespread. Consequently, pupils are empowered to achieve.
- The governing body holds the school firmly to account. It knows the school well and works successfully to bring about further improvement.
- Leaders work across the two schools in the federation. They provide effective support for teachers at Calstock in planning the curriculum. As a result, teachers' assessments are accurate and pupils make good progress.
- The effective leadership of special educational needs and close work with other agencies ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Parents are effusive about the support their children receive.
- Leaders have provided effective staff training so that staff have the knowledge and skills to support pupils' personal development and welfare. Consequently, pupils feel confident to share their concerns and staff are alert to their needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points and often achieve better outcomes than other pupils nationally.
- Teachers engender a love of reading. Consequently, more children achieve high standards compared with the national average.
- Pupils' vocabulary choice in writing reflects their wide reading and flair in the use of language. However, weaker technical accuracy of punctuation, grammar, spelling and handwriting impairs the quality of pupils' writing.
- Good teaching and an exciting curriculum enable children to get off to a good start in the early years. Their writing, however, is not as strong as the other areas of development.
- Leaders have been effective in improving the overall attendance of pupils. Pupils say that they enjoy school. However, although attendance is improving, leaders have more work to do to ensure that more pupils attend school on time.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Typically, the responses celebrate how well the staff know their children. Parents are particularly pleased with the strong feeling of belonging and community that leaders engender.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the teaching of writing to raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - teachers have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' punctuation, grammar and spelling
 - there is a greater consistency of high expectation in the teaching of handwriting across the school
 - pupils review and edit their work thoroughly
 - in the early years, children develop the necessary mark making and early writing skills.
- Improve pupils' punctuality to maximise learning time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher enjoys the support of staff and governors in leading this successful school. She has an unwavering commitment to providing an inclusive school where individuals are nurtured. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's ethos and values. Consequently, pupils are confident and inspired to make good progress regardless of their starting point or circumstances.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching regularly. As a result, they have an accurate view of what is working well and make timely interventions to tackle any identified weaknesses. Leaders have not shied away from difficult decisions. Staff who responded to the online questionnaire were positive about the changes since the school federated. New members of staff complement the team well.
- Subject leaders work across both schools in the federation. Their work has been effective in implementing recent curriculum changes and heightened expectations at Calstock. For example, the leaders for English and mathematics have recently introduced a system for teachers to record what pupils understand, know and can do. As a result of their advice, teachers' assessment is accurate, and they execute well-formulated plans to ensure that pupils make at least good progress.
- There is good leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and designated funds are spent wisely. Improvements since the last inspection have resulted in pupils' needs being identified earlier. Leaders listen carefully to both pupils' and parents' views and incorporate these views into individual support plans. The leader also engages the support of specialists. As a result, pupils make good progress because no stone is left unturned in tackling barriers to achievement.
- The curriculum excites pupils and develops their skills. Consequently, they make good progress. For example, the Year 5 and Year 6 books in science reflect pupils working scientifically, building models and recording information using scientific diagrams. Pupils use the correct technical vocabulary to describe the phases of the moon. Similarly, pupils were able to make links with their knowledge of history to consider the similarities and differences between democracy in Roman times and now.
- Leaders regularly review the curriculum to make sure that it meets the needs of all groups of pupils. For example, leaders had concerns that pupils were not achieving well in mathematics so they introduced a more systematic approach to the teaching of mathematics. Work in books shows that this has been effective in raising standards. Most recently, leaders identified the need for a different approach to the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling. There are encouraging signs that it is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' writing, where teachers have high expectations. Leaders are currently updating information about the curriculum on the school's website.
- Leaders make sure that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is having a positive impact on both their academic achievement and emotional well-being. As a result, current pupils in this group are making good progress over time. Similarly, leaders use the physical education and sport premium funding to good effect. The funding has led to increased participation in sport. Over three quarters of the school's

pupils now attend at least one extra-curricular sporting activity. For some pupils, the extra clubs have enabled them to excel. For example, four pupils represented south-east Cornwall in the cross-country running league.

- Leaders consulted with the school council to provide a range of extra-curricular activities that pupils particularly enjoy. These include sporting activities such as netball and cross-country. The school also provides clubs to develop pupils' musical skills, such as the harmonica club. In response to governor monitoring, leaders introduced clubs at lunchtime and purchased more play resources. This has been successful in engaging a few pupils who struggled with their behaviour at lunchtime, leading to harmonious play.
- The local authority has provided 'light-touch' support because it recognises the school's effectiveness. However, leaders and governors are proactive. They commission extra support from an independent adviser to check on the quality of the school's work.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that the school is well led and managed and would be happy to recommend it to another parent. Parents who spoke to the inspector during the inspection echoed this view. Typically, parents commented on how their child was happy in school and keen to learn.

Governance of the school

- Governors display a firm commitment to the school. They are diligent in undergoing training. Minutes of meetings and visits to school reflect their in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have, in partnership with school leaders, correctly identified the school's priorities and set effective plans in place for improvement. Recent skills audits have resulted in the appointment of governors that complement the teaching team. Consequently, the pace of improvement has quickened.
- Governors manage school finances wisely. They are effective in holding the school to account for its spending of additional funding. For example, the pupil premium is well accounted for and is making a discernible difference to the progress of eligible pupils. Similarly, governors are fastidious in ensuring that the procedures for managing staff performance are robust. Governors ensure that pay rewards are closely linked to improved outcomes for pupils.
- Governors take their responsibilities seriously. For example, as well as making regular checks to ensure that safeguarding measures are compliant, they listen to pupils' views to ensure that pupils feel happy and safe. In response to a governor check, an additional member of staff was appointed to organise games and supervise lunchtimes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff are knowledgeable about how to keep pupils safe. Training in areas such as the 'Prevent' duty has enabled leaders to tackle the key risks they may face in their community such as internet gaming and social media. Pupils talk confidently about how to keep safe when using the internet. Older pupils could explain why it is important not to reveal personal information online. Displays around the school and information on

the school's website further support pupils' understanding of the risks. Parents who spoke to the inspector praised the school for the helpful information it provides. Staff are alert in identifying and acting upon signs of risk. Records show that staff act swiftly where they have concerns. Pupils trust adults to deal with their concerns quickly.

- Leaders are vigilant in checking the suitability of any adult who is likely to work with pupils. The school effectively gives high priority to liaising with a range of agencies to ensure that the needs of pupils are met. Governors make regular checks to ensure that risks are minimised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good across the school. Teachers have a well-informed understanding of pupils' aptitudes and circumstances. Teaching assistants are briefed well and know specifically how they should promote pupils' learning in each lesson. As a result, they make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, personal development and welfare. Teachers and teaching assistants establish warm and supportive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils are confident and aim to do their best.
- The school was slow to determine a way forward when the curriculum changes took place in 2014. This slowed down the pace of progress for some pupils while teachers became familiar with the higher expectations. This is particularly the case for the teaching of phonics and spelling. Current practice reflects an improving picture. In particular, where pupils' phonic skills were weak, they are catching up rapidly. Teachers use what pupils know, can do and understand effectively to help pupils make good progress.
- The teaching of reading remains a strength of the school. Teachers promote a culture for reading and engender a love of books. Reading records show that pupils read often. Although for a small group of pupils, their phonic skills are less honed, they enjoy books. Teachers match books effectively to their needs so that their skills of decoding do not become a barrier to their enjoyment. One pupil proudly told the inspector, 'I spend half my time engrossed in books.' Other pupils eagerly shared information about their favourite authors.
- Leaders previously identified the teaching of mathematics as a weakness. It is now a strength of the school. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to develop pupils' reasoning skills. As a result, pupils demonstrate resilience and apply their number facts well. Leaders have accurately identified a small group of pupils who need additional support in mathematics. These pupils are making accelerated progress because of well-targeted support.
- Teachers provide effective support for the few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good-quality guidance and care help these pupils to develop confidence. Consequently, pupils make good progress against their individual targets. Progress is rapid in phonics and mathematics interventions, where targets are very specific. For pupils who need to catch up in writing, their progress is slower. Targets are less succinct and teachers are less rigorous in making sure that pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and pupils say that they particularly enjoy writing.

Pupils' writing reflects their well-developed vocabulary. However, outcomes in this area are not as strong as in other subjects. Despite pupils achieving well in English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests, leaders recognise that pupils' daily writing reflects weak sentence structure and punctuation. Handwriting is often poorly formed and reflects little pride. Training has led to improvement in teachers' expectations. New approaches are helping pupils to catch up quickly, particularly in Years 2 and 3 where pupils previously underachieved.

- Subject leaders provide teachers with effective support to ensure that they are skilled in teaching across all curriculum areas. For example, pupils say that they enjoy religious education because teachers inspire them to think about links between their beliefs and other's views. Pupils' understanding is enhanced when national experiences are blended with rich local topics such as in projects on Cornish history.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy the roles of responsibility they are given. They take these seriously and recognise the importance of their work. For example, pupils articulated how decisions made at the school council have improved their enjoyment of school. An example of this is the additional play equipment provided at lunchtime. Similarly, the eco group was proud to tell the inspector about the fund-raising it had carried out for the school's new solar panels.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They know how to keep safe online and know how to protect personal information. They also show a strong awareness of safety in other situations: for example, they know where to congregate in the event of a fire and can explain beach safety procedures.
- Pupils make choices and take decisions with consideration and respect for others in mind. They are helpful and cooperative. For example, the inspector observed younger pupils independently being helped by older pupils at lunchtime.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The number of incidents in the school's behaviour record has increased recently as leaders have raised their expectations even further. There are signs that this work is taking effect. The inspector saw pupils holding the door open for adults. Pupils played happily alongside each other at playtimes and lunchtimes. Lunch in the hall is orderly because of the good level of adult supervision. There is still more work to be done to ensure that good attitudes and behaviour are firmly fixed. For example, pupils do not take the same level of care with their handwriting and presentation in writing as they do in mathematics.
- Pupils confidently articulate leaders' expectations of behaviour. Pupils say that the recent initiative using house points is encouraging them to behave well. For example,

they say that they rarely run and bump into each other in the corridor now. They say that bullying used to happen but now incidents are rare and that teachers sort out problems with friendships quickly. Parents and staff agree.

- Leaders have been effective in tackling poor attendance. Levels of attendance have improved to be in line with the national average for all groups of pupils. Although improving, there are still instances where lateness is affecting pupils' progress because they miss the 'practice time' at the start of the day to secure their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current rates of progress for pupils across the school are consistently strong in reading and in mathematics, with some pupils making exceptional progress. In 2016, more middle-ability and high-ability pupils achieved a high standard by the end of Year 6 compared with others nationally. Consequently, pupils leave Calstock well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 were weaker than in previous years and were particularly weak in writing. This did not represent good progress from pupils' various starting points. Current work shows that effective teaching has helped these pupils to catch up quickly. Work in books shows that these pupils are back on track.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is broadly in line with the national average. However, this did not represent good progress from pupils' high starting points. Current work shows that these pupils are making the progress they need to catch up quickly. The progress of current pupils in Year 1 is strong. Although in previous years pupils have met the expected standard in phonics, using their phonic skills when writing is an ongoing challenge for pupils.
- Staff training has led to teachers' higher expectations of pupils' writing. Consequently, there is a sharp increase in the number of pupils writing at an age-related standard across the school. Work in books confirms that the assessment information held by leaders and teachers is accurate. However, there is more to be done to ensure that pupils' writing is not marred by inaccuracies in their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Teachers know the pupils well and carefully plan to meet their specific needs.
- At the end of the early years and at key stages 1 and 2, the numbers of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium are too small for national comparisons to be made. Over time, however, from their different starting points, the very few disadvantaged pupils in the school have all made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Many achieve the highest standards.
- The most able pupils sustain their good progress to attain the highest standards in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Teachers and leaders have accurately identified that it is handwriting, grammar, punctuation and spelling that are holding more pupils back from achieving a high standard in writing.
- Work in books supports teachers' assessment and reflects that pupils make good

progress to achieve well in science. Pupils master the investigative and practical skills necessary to test out their ideas. They apply their skills in mathematics to present tables and measurements accurately in recording their scientific investigations.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is good. The expertise of an experienced leader from the other school in the federation has supported improvements over the last two years. The new teacher to this year group has quickly established routines that have helped children to settle quickly. All staff are skilled in helping children understand how to behave and why this is important. Consequently, children respond well to the routines established and behave well.
- The early years action plan has successfully focused on establishing a vibrant place to inspire children's learning. For example, leaders recognised that the outdoor provision in the early years was not stimulating children. Leaders used expertise from the other school in the federation. Governors invested in new resources for the area. Consequently, children now have access to a stimulating outdoor learning environment where they are motivated by the range of opportunities now available. The inspector observed children eagerly engaged in role-play, cooperating to collect water and put out an imaginary fire. Some children were back at base in the 'rescue centre', making notes and directing the police and fire officers to attend the incident.
- Teachers plan carefully for children's individual learning, to develop their strengths and to tackle their areas of need. Assessments reflect that children who started school this term are making good progress. However, children's mark making and early writing skills are less well developed compared with other areas of learning. The teacher has identified the need to support a number of children with their pencil control. This is leading to improvements but there is more to be done in ensuring that all staff have consistently high expectations.
- Children learn their letters and sounds quickly. They practise their skills independently and boys and girls are equally keen to record their ideas. The language-rich environment supports children's speaking and listening skills effectively. The inspector observed an adult sharing a book with the children. They were totally absorbed in the story and were eager to talk about what might happen next.
- The strong links teachers make with families before their children join the school help children to settle quickly when they start the Reception class. A recent development in welcoming children and their families into school at the start of the day has supported the more vulnerable children through a calm start to the day.
- The information gained at transition helps to address children's needs in personal and social skills to help them get off to a good start in school. Parents also work closely with the school and contribute to their children's assessment. They say that the school helps them to support their children's learning at home. This is making a positive contribution to the good progress their children make. Parents typically commented, 'The transition from pre-school to school has been seamless. The staff know my child so well. All staff are approachable; I can't recommend the school highly enough.'
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been consistently

broadly in line with the national average. Consequently, children are well prepared for starting Year 1.

- Adults provide high-quality support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These children make good progress from their starting points, particularly with their personal and social skills. Similarly, disadvantaged children make good progress because support is tailored to their particular needs.
- Adults are vigilant. They make sure that the children feel safe and are kept safe. Well-considered risk assessments for activities reflect staff vigilance in this important work. Children move between indoor and outdoor areas and use equipment safely. They show a high level of personal and social skills, cooperating with each other to become independent learners.

School details

Unique reference number	111951
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10025145

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Whittaker
Executive headteacher	Sian Vaughan
Telephone number	01822 832646
Website	www.calstock.cornwall.sch.uk
Email address	head@calstock.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 October 2012

Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation with an executive headteacher leading across both Calstock Community Primary School and Stoke Climsland Primary School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are currently three mixed-aged classes: Reception and Year 1; Years 2, 3 and 4; and Years 5 and 6.
- There have been staff changes. A new assistant headteacher joined the school in September. None of the teachers in the school was teaching their current age groups in the school last year.
- Children in the early years (Reception class) attend full time.

- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector made visits to lessons in all classes, some of which were joint observations with the executive headteacher and the local authority representative.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, five members of the governing body, the early years teachers and the subject leaders for English and mathematics. A telephone conversation took place with a local authority representative and the member of the governing body responsible for early years and special educational needs.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of documents, including governing body meeting minutes, headteacher's reports, school improvement plans and records in relation to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector carried out work scrutiny in writing and mathematics as well as looking at topic, religious education and science workbooks.
- The inspector met with and heard a selection of pupils read. She looked at examples of pupils' work in their books and spoke to a group of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons and play- and lunchtimes.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school, in lessons and at playtime.
- The 13 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspector also considered comments provided by text message and took into account the eight responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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