

Boscastle Community Primary School

Fore Street, Boscastle, Cornwall PL35 0AU

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2018

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and governors provide effective leadership. They have taken decisive action since the previous inspection to improve leadership, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- Leaders know the school well. They have identified the right priorities for development and taken effective action to bring about improvement.
- The strong pastoral support provided for pupils across the school secures their welfare and keeps them safe.
- Recent developments in middle leadership roles have not yet had time to have a full impact in areas of responsibility across the school.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They value the wide curriculum and stimulating learning experiences which promote their children's confidence.
- Pupils behave well and relate extremely well to each other and to staff. The pupils' strong social awareness and enjoyment of school are clearly evident during breaktimes. They exchange ideas and aid each other's learning during lessons.
- Current pupils are making good progress in response to effective teaching. Increasingly, pupils make progress which enables them to think deeply about their work. This is reflected in their writing and reasoning in mathematics.
- A small number of previously middle-attaining pupils have yet to reach the higher standard in mathematics of which they are capable.
- Pupils are keen and enthusiastic readers. They acquire phonic skills well. All pupils, especially the most able, make strong progress in reading.
- Pupils are enthusiastic writers. However, a legacy of weakness in handwriting and spelling skills limits the ability of some previously middle-attaining pupils, particularly boys, to reach the higher standard.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. They are well supported in lessons and in additional learning programmes.
- Children make a successful start in the early years in response to good teaching, support and stimulating experiences.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress and attainment and build on the best practice already in the school, by teachers:
 - improving pupils' handwriting and spelling skills so that more pupils, including middle-attaining pupils and particularly boys, attain the higher standards of which they are capable
 - sustaining the drive to improve pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics, particularly of some previously middle-attaining pupils, so that more reach the higher standard.
- Embed the developing roles of middle leaders so they have a greater influence on raising standards in their areas of responsibility across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The experienced executive headteacher's purposeful response to the findings of the previous inspection has been fully supported by governors and staff. Their well-focused teamwork has secured good leadership, teaching and pupils' achievement.
- School leaders have acted upon guidance from the local authority and have supplemented this with detailed advice from a school improvement specialist. They also use experiences derived from their work in support of their federated partner school to improve their self-evaluation skills. As a result, leaders have strengthened the way they check the work of the school. In particular, they now pay close attention to the academic outcomes of pupils. This enables them to identify and tackle the right areas for improvement.
- Over the past year, leaders' continuing well-planned action has sustained an effective momentum of improvement. For example, leaders have secured consistently good teaching and continued to improve pupils' learning in writing and mathematics, and persistent absence has almost been eliminated.
- Leaders have strengthened the way they plan and implement actions to bring about improvement. This is evident in the effective use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Focused leadership sustains the strong development of pupils' personal qualities. Support given to pupils with SEND has secured their good achievement.
- Most of the staff's actions to bring improvement are undertaken as a team. More specific leadership roles, for example of mathematics, are still being developed. They are having a positive effect, but have not yet had time to have full impact in raising standards across the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, pupils study assembly themes such as respect, which deepen their understanding of British values. Pupils enjoy the interesting curriculum, which includes regular lessons in French and opportunities to learn and achieve well in playing a musical instrument.
- Physical education is a strength of the school and develops pupils' love of physical activity. Leaders make good use of the sport premium. For example, funds have been used to purchase a wealth of resources, which are used innovatively to enhance pupils' participation in sport at breaktime.
- Parents are very positive about the school and particularly value the school's caring community atmosphere. They appreciate the way staff treat pupils equally and are especially pleased at the way pupils care about each other.

Governance of the school

- Governors support and challenge school leaders well. They fulfil their statutory duties effectively.
- The governors have received training and responded well to the findings of reviews of

their governance and use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.

- Governors make regular visits to the school to check the progress of the school improvement plan. Governors' minutes show that they question leaders and hold them to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors support staff well in heeding external guidance, tackling the right priorities and bringing about improvement. Governors play an effective role in improving teaching and raising pupils' achievements. They also play a valued role in sustaining good links with parents and the local community in support of pupils' learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff work well as a team and share a strong commitment to keeping pupils safe.
- Records on the suitability of staff and others supervising pupils are fully completed, kept up to date and securely meet the statutory requirements. Staff implement the agreed health, safety and welfare procedures consistently across the school. They maintain close links with parents and outside agencies to meet pupils' needs. Members of staff diligently supervise pupils during innovative activities, such as building dens at breaktimes to boost pupils' health, fitness and well-being.
- The school is the specific choice of a significant number of parents who travel from outlying areas. They say that they do this because of the high level of individual care that staff provide for their children. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire expressed the view that the school keeps their children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants set consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They place a strong and consistent emphasis on pupils helping each other to learn. Positive relationships in all classes underpin the good teaching and pupils' learning across the school.
- Teachers promote pupils' interest in learning by providing a thought-provoking range of learning activities. For example, during the inspection, pupils in the Years 4, 5 and 6 classes showed real commitment in learning as they reasoned in mathematics. Teachers choose specific topics to gain pupils' attention. For example, in the Years 2 and 3 class pupils were enthralled to write about how a Stone-Age man might react if he entered their home.
- Teachers' effective use of assessment to identify and target pupils' learning needs at an early stage is used consistently well in all classes. Teachers plan relevant learning activities which support and advance the learning of pupils from different starting points, including disadvantaged pupils. Their well-planned additional help for pupils with SEND is also effective because it is specifically focused on pupils' needs.
- Adults in all classes extend pupils' speaking skills productively. They skilfully challenge pupils to think through probing questions. This was seen, for example, in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class where the teacher challenged the pupils to use personification to portray

characters in their stories. The pupils are encouraged by the way adults value their ideas. They eagerly respond to the teachers' follow-up questions to deepen their understanding. This was a strong feature of the additional teaching provided for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

- Teachers and teaching assistants give caring, individual assistance that boosts pupils' self-confidence and enables them to develop well both academically and personally. One parent of a child with complex needs typically reflected the views of others by writing, 'The school has done everything they can to support our child. We are incredibly grateful for this support.'
- The most able pupils in all classes relish the raised expectations and high level of challenge presented to them by the teachers. These are increasingly helping them to learn well and attain higher standards for their age.
- Teachers and teaching assistants show good subject knowledge in how to teach phonics and reading. They teach these skills consistently well and are especially successful in cultivating the pupils' love of reading. Parents have supported the homework programme for reading and this has further strengthened pupils' achievement. As a result, many pupils make rapid progress and read frequently and independently.
- Teachers are successfully focusing on widening pupils' vocabulary. This is having a good impact in deepening pupils' understanding of how to construct and write more meaningful, descriptive and imaginative sentences. Teachers provide good guidance in how more complex, increasingly technical terms should be correctly used to enrich pupils' writing. Teaching is less effective in ensuring pupils' accurate spelling of more common words. This, together with an inconsistent focus on developing pupils' handwriting, is constraining the progress of some pupils of previous middle ability, especially boys.
- Stronger teaching of mathematics since the previous inspection continues to help pupils to improve their reasoning skills. For example, pupils' explanations of their thinking and work in books show deepened understanding. This focus is enabling an increasing number of the most able pupils to achieve the higher standards. Currently, teachers are not yet as effective in ensuring that pupils previously assessed as having a middle level of ability also reach their full potential in solving problems.
- Teachers make good links between subjects. For instance, Year 2 and 3 pupils wrote meaningfully about the Stone Age in English lessons. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 used their widening range of technical language to describe how the human brain works.
- There are positive features in the teaching of other subjects, such as French and music. Teachers stimulate pupils' interest in learning practically to sustain their good engagement. These aspects and the teachers' emphasis on promoting teamwork also lie at the heart of the successful teaching of physical education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Staff know the pupils well and provide high levels of pastoral care to cultivate and sustain confidence-boosting relationships with them. As a result, the pupils respect and follow the guidance they are given, knowing that their opinions and efforts are valued.
- Parents, especially some whose children are very new to the school, also acknowledge the school as a community that helps each other to learn happily. This shared commitment is helping to develop the pupils' effective engagement in learning which now forms the foundation of their increasingly rapid progress.
- Most pupils show good and at times excellent attitudes to learning. On occasion, a small number of pupils are over-reliant on adult help and have difficulty sustaining concentration and their learning falters.
- All adults who work in the school implement safeguarding and welfare policies and procedures diligently and supportively to keep pupils safe. Pupils say they feel safe, 'Because we know if we have a problem then teachers would help us.' Pupils know how to stay safe, for example when using computers. Their awareness and consideration of each other were especially impressive during 'skate and scoot day', when they skilfully avoided collisions riding their skate boards and scooters at breaktime.
- When questioned, pupils clearly expressed their appreciation of the school's supportive family atmosphere. They said, 'We have fun, follow the school rules and help each other.' Pupils undertake various responsibilities diligently. These include organising fundraising events such as 'duck race day'.
- All the parents expressed agreement that children are very well looked after at school and would recommend the school to others. Parents' typical comments in the Ofsted questionnaire included, 'Boscastle is a happy, caring, nurturing school.' These comments also reflect the views of all parents who talked with the inspector.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils move carefully and considerately around the school. At times, their behaviour was impeccable, as, for example, when reading in groups, during phonics lessons and especially when enthused by stimulating work. The vast majority of pupils concentrate well and show a real love of learning. They appreciate the guidance they receive and willingly help each other with their learning. At times, a small minority of pupils become over-excited during lessons and need and receive timely adult reminders to behave more sensibly and focus on their work.
- Pupils are confident that there is no bullying and that if it did take place then, 'The teachers would quickly stop it.' The school's own records confirm this and show no exclusions.
- Pupils clearly enjoy school and this is seen in the improved rate of attendance, which now matches that found nationally. The executive headteacher's drive to eliminate persistent absence, with good support from parents, has proved successful so far this academic year. These improvements are contributing to pupils' good progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders and teachers have focused successfully on improving pupils' achievements since the previous inspection. Over time, across year groups, pupils' developing skills show good progress in reading and continued improvement in mathematics. Pupils' progress in writing has fluctuated more widely. This reflects weaker learning in the past and significant variation in their complex and emotional needs.
- Observations of pupils' current learning in class and analysis of their work in books show that pupils are making good progress in mathematics and are deepening their understanding. This is because pupils are developing their basic numeracy and reasoning skills effectively. Most-able pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6, are increasingly demonstrating deeper levels of understanding and ability to solve problems than those expected for their age. However, some pupils previously assessed as middle attainers in Year 2 are not yet progressing well enough to reach higher standards in solving problems.
- Pupils' progress in writing has strengthened this academic year. In particular, pupils' vocabulary continues to support their good ability to write expressively. Pupils' increased and now good expressive writing skills have been promoted by the teachers' skilful use of stimulating texts to enthuse pupils. Pupils across the school now learn to construct sentences which contain increasingly rich vocabulary to create interest for the reader. Currently, pupils in Year 1 and some across Years 4, 5 and 6 present their work neatly and show good handwriting skills for their age. A majority of other pupils, however, have yet to fully develop their handwriting and spelling skills and this constrains their ability to write more fluently and confidently.
- Pupils' reading skills are developed well and continue to be boosted by the effective teaching of phonics. This is evident in the year-on-year increase in the proportion of pupils achieving and exceeding expected standards in the Year 1 and Year 2 phonics screening check. Pupils' improving outcomes in reading and increasingly rapid progress are evident across the school. This is because pupils of all abilities benefit from frequent opportunities to read books and use computers, both at home and at school, to support their learning and enjoyment.
- As there are only a very small number of disadvantaged pupils across the school it is not meaningful to compare their progress and achievements with the performance of pupils nationally. Even so, school assessments, pupils' responses in class and work in books show that these pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress. They benefit from close adult support and bespoke learning activities relevant to their needs.
- Pupils demonstrate strong speaking and listening skills, which support their good learning across the range of subjects. For example, pupils respond enthusiastically during French and music lessons, and develop impressive skills such as controlling movement and sustaining balance during physical activity.

Early years provision

Good

- The two teachers who share the leadership and teaching responsibilities in the combined early years and Year 1 class work effectively as a team. They provide good leadership that includes a strong focus on safeguarding children and ensuring their welfare needs are fully met.
- Leaders' well-planned teaching and support ensure that all children make good progress during their time in Reception. The teachers and teaching assistant have a good understanding of the early years. They assess the children's needs accurately, contribute effectively to planning relevant next steps in learning activities and keep good records of children's progress.
- Most children join early years with the development typically found for their age. A majority of the children demonstrate stronger speaking skills, but some show less development of early writing skills when they begin school. Teachers are now targeting the development of early writing skills more effectively than in the past. However, there are occasions when these skills are not given enough emphasis, including when children undertake activities they have chosen for themselves.
- Over time, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has fluctuated. More recently, in response to strengthened teaching, it has matched that found nationally. The proportion of children reaching higher standards, particularly in personal development, has also risen. This shows that children, including the most able, are well prepared for the transition to Year 1.
- Staff promote encouraging relationships alongside effective levels of challenge. This enables children to feel secure and sustain interest in their learning. All children, including the disadvantaged and those with SEND, make especially good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Consequently, children behave well, are considerate towards each other, and show good levels of independence.
- Teaching is effective, especially when adults provide clear guidance and deepen children's learning through skilfully crafted and probing questioning. The children respond eagerly, quickly develop confidence, and engage well in their learning. This was seen, for example, in the good development of the children's phonic understanding and early reading skills. Effective learning was also evident in the outdoor 'mud kitchen' as children proudly exclaimed, 'We are doing "dangerous science!"' They then confidently explained how they made their 'potions'.
- Staff sustain very beneficial relationships with parents and work closely with them to boost children's confidence in learning. Staff also work supportively with the pre-school to ensure that children make a positive transition to full-time schooling.

School details

Unique reference number	111929
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10058296

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Jollye
Executive headteacher	Sarah Duffy
Telephone number	01840 250329
Website	www.boscastle.cornwall.sch.uk
Email address	secretary@boscastle.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 September 2016

Information about this school

- Boscastle is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is federated with Port Isaac School. An executive headteacher leads both schools and a single governing body also serves both of them.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average and varies significantly from year to year.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. The number of disadvantaged pupils varies from year to year within the very small year groups.
- On occasion, a well-above-average proportion of pupils either enter or leave the school other than at the normal time.
- Children experience early years provision in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector, accompanied by the executive headteacher, observed teaching and learning during 14 visits to classes and other areas around the school.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance and safeguarding procedures. The school's self-evaluation and local authority and external specialist evaluations of the work of the school were also examined.
- The inspector examined the school's systems for checking progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspector talked to individual pupils during lessons and breaktimes about the school and their work. He listened to individual pupils reading to a teaching assistant. The inspector also listened to a selected sample of pupils reading, again gathering their views about the school.
- Mostly with the executive headteacher and other teachers, the inspector looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- The inspector met with the chair of the governing body and held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and with an independent school improvement partner.
- The inspector gathered the views of several parents as they brought their children to the school. He also examined the views expressed in 40 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and in 34 parents' additional written comments.

Inspection team

Alexander Baxter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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