

Bude Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111945
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	289109
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Way HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Leonard Tozer
Headteacher	J L Greatbatch
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2002
School address	Broadclose Hill Bude EX23 8EA
Telephone number	01288 353798
Fax number	01288 353798

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Bude Infant School is smaller than average size and serves an area of mixed housing on the edge of a Cornish seaside town. The majority of pupils are from a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average, as is the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. There are three pupils whose first language is not English.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which has some significant strengths. Pupils make good progress and the standards of attainment are at least satisfactory. School leadership knows that standards are in need of improvement and recent strategies for this appear to be effective. The quality of both teaching and learning is good. Pupils are encouraged to develop a responsible attitude towards work and their application to tasks is very good, even when not closely supervised. All aspects of care, guidance and support are outstanding. Adults in the school have a shared understanding of the care and support which these young children need and do their very best to ensure that none fall behind. The school is now demonstrating success with both higher achievers and with those who find learning more difficult. This commitment to care, and the ethos of community spirit, is a result of strong leadership by the headteacher and the excellent partnership which is fostered with parents and governors in the development of the school.

The Foundation Stage is well run and managed. The organization of these two classes allows the pupils to develop their enthusiasm for learning. Most of the pupils engage freely in conversation about what they are doing and learning. In this respect the school is particularly successful in encouraging good speaking and listening skills which are so important for younger pupils.

A high priority is given to all aspects of pupils' personal development and there is good attention given to health and safety. For an infant school the contribution to the local community and the interaction with their environment is excellent. Work with the District and Town Councils and the local Tourist Board are examples of this. Standards in art and history are particularly good and emphasise the school's approach to a broad and enriching curriculum. School self-evaluation is intuitively accurate but the presentation of development plans lacks measurable success criteria. This makes it difficult to quantify success and for this reason the school often underplays its achievements. There is good capacity for further improvement through strong leadership and the committed staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school is currently working on the correct priorities to raise standards of attainment and knows that this is the next important goal. The one area, linked to this, which could be improved immediately, is the interactive engagement of the learning environment to ensure that displays play a greater part in the excitement of learning, convey consistent models of good writing and good captioning, and give more prominence generally to the use of mathematics and language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The standards that pupils attain are satisfactory and their progress is good. When pupils enter the school many are behind in some areas of learning but by the time they leave the Reception Year their standards are often above the local authority averages. By the time they start Year 1 most pupils will have reached standards that are expected nationally. Systems for tracking progress and attainment have improved since the last inspection, but school targets do not fully reflect teachers' improving expectations of what pupils may achieve.

There has been a slightly downward trend in standards measured by national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1. There have also been differences in the performance of boys and girls. These issues are being successfully tackled by the school due to improvements in the grouping of pupils and more accurate assessment of standards. In all areas, more pupils are now reaching the higher Level 3 and fewer are falling below the expected Level 2. Standards in other areas of the curriculum are improving and are especially good in art and history.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy coming to school, behave very well and work hard. As one pupil put it, 'I like school because it is fun and you make friends.' The attendance of most pupils is good, but holidays taken during term-time and the poor attendance of some mean that overall it is no better than satisfactory. This is however an improvement on previous years. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. Pupils' concern for one another is evident as they work well together and are quick to offer each other support. In lessons they show a high level of individual responsibility. There are good relationships throughout the school. Pupils know how to keep safe, for example what they must do in the event of a fire and why too much exposure to sun can be harmful. Their eager participation in physical activity shows that they know the importance of fitness and the value of exercise. The school has a National Healthy Schools award and as one pupil said, 'If you eat too much junk food, it makes you sick!'

All pupils try hard to make a contribution to school life through sharing ideas and helping each other. For an infant school, the contribution to the local community is outstanding. They engage in many activities in their neighbourhood. At present the school is involved in the regeneration of Bude canal; pupils are designing banners and a family resource pack for the tourist board. Their support for charities demonstrates awareness of the needs of others beyond their own community. Many of these experiences provide a good basis for their future education and economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching throughout the school is good and pupils make good progress as a result. Lessons are carefully planned and the purpose of the lesson is often explained to the pupils so they know what they are learning about. The teachers are careful to make links between the topics being taught so that pupils understand the connections between activities. They are given opportunities in all subjects to practise their basic skills in English and mathematics. A strength of the teaching is that good questions are asked, forcing pupils to think about their answers and not just to make a quick response. Lessons are well organized and carefully managed; pupils are given good opportunities to develop independence and use the freedom sensibly. Classrooms and corridors contain displays and labelled resources but some make little contribution to the learning environment because the captions are too high, not in language that engages pupils' attention and have little interactive aspect. Pupils' work is marked regularly and their progress is recorded, but the teachers' comments in pupils' books do not often explain how they could improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good, varied curriculum that promotes enjoyment of learning. Pupils benefit from a wide and well planned range of activities. In Year 2 especially, the links between subjects help to sustain pupils' interest and provide opportunities for them to practise and consolidate their numeracy, literacy, and information and communication technology skills. Adaptations to the curriculum meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. Personal, social and health education is a part of many lessons and provides good reinforcement for personal development. A series of exciting weeks which focus on one subject provides good curriculum enrichment. For a geography focus, interesting visits are made into the local community so pupils can learn about their home town in a lively and interactive way through first-hand experiences. Activities in the arts week gave pupils chance to see local artists at work and to try out some of their techniques. The school has recently received the prestigious Artsmark silver award for its creative work. Many pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular activities; boys particularly mentioned how they enjoyed the choir, and the girls the newly begun science club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is an area of strength throughout the school. The provision for all aspects of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The school works closely with parents and other external agencies to ensure that pupils are well cared for, develop very positive attitudes towards learning and make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides. Health and safety are given a high priority and the pupils say that they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. The school's success with pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is due to the commitment of all the adults who work in the school. The teaching assistants play an important part in providing encouragement and guidance to individual pupils and small groups. There are many parent helpers in school during the day and they also contribute to the general care and guidance available to pupils. There has been notable success in working with some families to raise pupils' standards of behaviour away from school. A high proportion of parents responded to the questionnaire and all were supportive of the school, some expressing strong appreciation of the care and support their children receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are both good. The headteacher provides very strong leadership, sets a clear direction for the school and promotes the high quality of care and support. Subject co-ordinators are developing their roles particularly well and working together to develop links between different subjects. Leadership in all aspects of support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is effective in ensuring that needs are regularly reviewed and adequate support provided. The governors are knowledgeable and good at challenging the school while also providing support through regular visits and through the governing body's involvement with development planning. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and the school improvement plan has focused on sensible priorities, especially for example the work on transition from Foundation Stage into Year 1. There are few measurable goals against which to evaluate actions

because there is a lack of detail in the analysis of data. Nevertheless there is a strong focus on school improvement and good capacity to continue developing. The rate of improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

There is excellent liaison with external agencies, with parents and with the Nursery and neighbouring junior school. Through its inclusive ethos the school enables all pupils to make good progress and it is unusual in that the more able pupils are achieving the standards of which they are capable, as well as the success of the concentrated effort being put into pupils needing extra support. Budgetary constraints are tight for a small infant school and resources are used well to achieve the outcomes.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Bude Infant School, Broadclose Hill, Bude EX23 8EA

I do hope someone is reading this to you if you cannot read it for yourselves, because this letter is about your school. You may remember two visitors recently came into your lessons, looked at your work and talked to you about your school. I want to say thank you to you all for talking so sensibly to us and for being so cheery and well behaved during that horrible weather - nothing but wind and rain.

What a lovely school you go to! It is a good school. We know that all the adults work very hard to give you the care and attention which helps you to make good progress in your lessons and learn new things. The teachers are doing a good job and help you to improve your skills, not only in reading, writing and mathematics but also in things like art and history through the exciting projects that they plan for you. You are lucky to be in such a caring and friendly school where you all know that you must behave well and look after each other to make everybody happy. You do this very well. We were especially impressed with the way you stick to your work even when there is not an adult right beside you. Well done!

When teachers look at your work, they often tell you about something you could do better. Well, we have told your teachers one thing they could do better. We would like you to check up on this for us. It is about the displays around the school (that means pictures, posters, your work, things on the walls and things hanging from the ceiling). Look around your classrooms and your corridors at these displays. Have you got any work on the wall and has your work got your name on it? Can you read the captions (labels) and has everything got a caption? Have all the captions got capital letters and full stops in the right places? Are there questions on the displays? Do you know where to find the answers to the questions; are they hidden somewhere on the display? Is there anything to touch, anything to wonder about and puzzle over? When you can answer 'Yes' to all these questions, you will have completed this task! Talk it over with your teachers; I think you will have some interesting discussions.

With my very best wishes

Peter Way Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools