

Bude Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111949
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	289112
Inspection date	8 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Bond
Headteacher	Jonathon Palk
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2002
School address	Broadclose Bude EX23 8DR
Telephone number	01288 352731
Fax number	01288 359044

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bude Junior is a large school. Most pupils are of White British backgrounds and all have English as their home language. Whilst the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities in the main school is broadly average, there is also a Resource Centre (The Poppy Wing) based at the school that provides specialist provision for seven pupils with profound, multiple and severe learning difficulties and disabilities. Standards on entry to the junior school are broadly average. The school had significant difficulty in appointing a new headteacher. There have, consequently, been two acting headteachers since the previous headteacher retired. One was in post for two terms and the second, who has only been at the school for two weeks, will be in post until the substantive headteacher takes up his appointment in September.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bude Junior School provides a satisfactory education and there are several strengths in its provision. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and there is a strong focus on enabling pupils to develop the personal and interpersonal skills that will support them in the next stage of their education. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and most pupils enjoy school and want to do well. The school provides a wide range of additional activities, especially after-school clubs that extend pupils' interest and skills and enhance an otherwise satisfactory curriculum.

Standards are broadly average and pupils achieve satisfactorily because of overall satisfactory teaching. Good teaching is evident in many lessons but positive teaching strategies that have been introduced are not consistently applied through the school. Expectations for pupils' progress are also variable. When high expectations are shared with pupils and they are helped to understand how to get better at their work, as in the oldest classes, pupils achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress in the mainstream classes and in the Poppy Wing, where pupils receive good levels of support and the targets for their next stage of learning are usually well planned. As yet, insufficient use is made of assessment information to set targets for what other pupils will achieve by the end of the year; consequently, underachievement is not always effectively identified. This is being addressed by the use of more comprehensive records for tracking pupils' progress from year to year, but this form of checking is recent and has not had time to raise teachers' expectations. These aspects of academic support and guidance weaken the school's provision for care, support and guidance, which is satisfactory overall. Pupils are well cared for and most feel safe and secure. The difficult or overly boisterous behaviour of a few pupils, however, causes a few concerns for both pupils and parents.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Uncertainty over the last two years about the appointment of a new headteacher has slowed improvements and, although the school has been successfully managed during that time, there has been a lack of clear vision for the future. Most subject co-ordinators have not had the opportunity to monitor standards in their subjects or to influence whole-school improvement. Governors have shown considerable strength of purpose in deciding not to appoint until they found a candidate of sufficient quality and experience to fill the headship. The delays have caused some concern amongst parents who recognised that the school's effectiveness was being affected by the frequent attention given to recruitment. The leadership provided by the new acting headteacher is very effective, as evidenced by the enthusiasm and commitment of staff. Based on previous improvements during an unsettled period, such as the better progress of boys and rising standards in writing, the capacity for improvement is judged as good.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve teaching by ensuring teachers have consistently high expectations for what pupils are to learn
- set challenging targets for each pupil to achieve by the end of the year and assess how well they are doing through the year so that teaching is well matched to their needs

- provide co-ordinators with the opportunities to lead and manage their subjects effectively so they have a clear view of teaching and learning throughout the school and have a positive impact on raising standards and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly in line with the national average and pupils achieve satisfactorily in the main school. Their progress, however, is not consistent. It is variable in Years 3 and 4 and improves in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well because they are given good levels of support by well-trained support staff. Pupils in the Poppy Wing make good progress in their literacy, numeracy and social skills, but this progress is not easily tracked using the current individual education plans and recording procedures.

Boys' attainment when they start in Year 3 is significantly lower than the girls'. Teachers' concerted efforts to support the boys' learning is having a positive impact. By the end of Year 6, their standards are still below those of boys nationally but most have made good progress. Girls are generally attaining higher standards than the boys but their progress, especially that of the more able girls, is less than the boys', although satisfactory overall. The recent focus on pupils' writing is beginning to impact, especially in the older classes. Standards in writing in the 2006 national tests showed improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal, social moral and cultural development is good. Pupils work together amicably, but there are few opportunities for pupils in the main school to mix with those in the Poppy Wing. Pupils respect the feelings of others and most have a well-developed sense of fair play. They respond positively when given responsibility, for example as members of the active school council or as 'buddies' for those who might need support at break times. They are safety conscious and are concerned for the welfare of others. They understand the importance of staying safe and keeping healthy. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. It is good in lessons and in the Poppy Wing, but there is often some rough behaviour at playtimes. Attendance is satisfactory; much absence is due to parents taking their children on holiday during term time.

Pupils have a good social and community awareness. The school council, for example, has been influential in making improvements to the school environment. Pupils are also keen fundraisers for good causes. By the end of Year 6, pupils' sound basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology and their keen interest about the world they live in prepare them well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is good in many lessons, especially in the older classes, but it is inconsistent through the school and learning is satisfactory overall. Most lessons have clear objectives for what is to be learnt but activities do not always build on what pupils already know and can do. In mathematics lessons, for example, the range of pupils' understanding and skills within the ability groupings is not sufficiently identified or catered for. A strength of the teaching is the

use of imaginative tasks that make the natural links between subjects to promote good learning. Bookmaking by pupils to present their work in history and models to show the importance of where houses were built in early settlements are two such examples. Teaching of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is good. Support assistants in the main school are well established and well trained to meet pupils' needs. Teaching in the Poppy Wing is also good. Staff form a strong supportive team that uses praise and encouragement to motivate pupils. Planning is usually well matched to each individual's needs and is kept up to date by regular assessment meetings.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils' learning is enhanced by many additional activities, visits and visitors. They are enthusiastic about the range and number of after-school clubs, especially those focusing on sport. Pupils enjoy the specialist teaching of music, the arts and sport. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is satisfactory, both in the main school and the Poppy Wing. There are good levels of support for these pupils but the strategies used do not always enable pupils to develop independence in their own learning. Pupils in the Poppy Wing, for example, are not always provided with appropriate visual clues that support their understanding.

The pupils' personal, social and cultural development is promoted well through a varied curriculum. A good focus is made on studying the Cornish culture and traditions as well as those from around the world, but the school recognises that pupils have very few opportunities to develop their awareness of Britain as a multi-cultural society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are key strengths in the quality of pastoral care in the main school and in the Poppy Wing. Child protection procedures are sound, and regular health and safety checks are carried out. The school has forged constructive links with an impressive range of outside agencies which provide support for pupils when this is required. Pupils benefit from good support for their personal development and this is reflected in their positive attitudes and interest in helping one another. Their academic support and guidance are inconsistent. The use of targets in English and mathematics is well established, but pupils' awareness of their targets is variable, and the targets are not always matched precisely to the pupils' learning needs. In addition, pupils' involvement in evaluating their own progress is inconsistent. Pupils' work is not always marked regularly and advice to pupils on how to improve is infrequent in some classes. Older pupils are, however, very clear about how to improve their work. The comments of one parent show clearly the positive impact of this support: 'He receives encouragement in all he does which helps him feel positive and confident about himself'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The current acting headteacher has only been in the school for two weeks. The senior management team has responded very well to his questions and leadership and there is already a clear sense of direction, founded on shared expectations. An interim School Improvement Plan has given focus to the school's work and is based on accurate evaluation of the school's

strengths and weaknesses. There is already a clear view as to how the monitoring of pupils' progress needs to be developed so greater rigour can be given to the analysis of standards and achievement. The good leadership skills of subject coordinators have not been sufficiently harnessed in the past. This has resulted in many effective initiatives not being fully implemented or consolidated. There have been few opportunities to observe lessons or monitor the pupils' work. Plans to address these weaknesses are already being implemented and there is a real sense of energy in coordinators' plans for the future. Improvements since the previous inspection have been slowed by the changes in leadership, but are satisfactory overall, with strengths in improvements in boys' progress and in the standards of writing. Governors are satisfactorily involved in monitoring the quality of education provided by the school and are extending their knowledge so they are more readily able to hold the school to account.

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	3
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	3
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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

10 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Bude Junior School, Bude Cornwall, EX 23 8DR

I am writing to say thank you for making us feel welcome in your school and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we thought about your school. We think that your school is satisfactory at present.

What we liked about the school:

- standards you reach are similar to those of most children of your age and you make satisfactory progress in your work
- you enjoy school and most of you behave sensibly and are kind to each other
- teaching is satisfactory and there are many good lessons, especially in Years 5 and 6
- many of you take part in the after-school activities and find them great fun
- you get on well with your teachers and try to do well
- you enjoy working together to make the school a better place
- your headteacher and senior staff are introducing many new ideas to help teachers understand how well you are getting on.

What we have asked the school to do now:

- for teachers to share the most effective ways to help you make better progress in your work so all lessons are good
- for teachers to agree at the beginning of each year what standards you should reach so they can ensure you all have every opportunity to succeed
- for teachers who are responsible for the different subjects to check how well you are taught and the quality of your work.

Thank you again for helping us with our questions.

Best wishes

Mrs Callaghan Lead inspector