

Harrowbarrow School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111953
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	289114
Inspection date	28 June 2007
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	P A J Lee
Headteacher	G M Tamblyn
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2002
School address	School Road Harrowbarrow Callington PL17 8BQ
Telephone number	01579 350576
Fax number	01579 351562

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	28 June 2007
Inspection number	289114

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school draws its pupils from Harrowbarrow and the surrounding rural area. It has an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Harrowbarrow is a good school with some outstanding features. It remains the happy school with high expectations that it was reported as being at the previous inspection. Pupils love the caring atmosphere, one summing up their views by saying, 'Everyone gets on well together and the teachers are kind'. Pupils' standards are above average and they achieve well. The significant factors that promote this good achievement are:

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are often excellent and contribute much to their good learning.

Teaching is consistently good. Teachers know pupils very well and maintain a strong focus on each individual's learning needs.

Pupils make a good start to learning in the Foundation Stage and this sets the pattern for continuing good achievement.

Outstanding links with nearby schools contribute to a good and stimulating curriculum and the smooth transfer of pupils to secondary education.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their understanding of how to keep fit and healthy is outstanding, as is their awareness of how to keep safe. Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported. The school treats each pupil as an individual and gives all pupils unflagging support in both their personal and academic development. Good help is provided for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are, nevertheless, some weaknesses in terms of the feedback given to pupils in marking and, in particular, the way comments link to pupils' targets for improvement.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides rigour and continuity and is well supported by a close-knit team of staff. All staff share the same vision for the school and they work well together in implementing it and in planning for the school's further development, both in the short and longer term. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and, based on this track record, the school has good capacity for continuing improvement. Nevertheless, the school recognises that the role of each member of the senior leadership team is not yet sufficiently focused to move this school on at an even better pace. Governors know the school well and offer both support and challenge.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking provides pupils with clear guidance about how to improve their performance.
- Develop the roles of the senior leadership team so that the drive for improvement is even more sharply focused.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Children usually start at school with the expected level of skills for their age although there is some variation, as is often the case in small schools. They leave at the end of Year 6 with above average standards. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), a concern at the last inspection, are now above average.

The youngest children are well supported and taught in the Foundation Stage, and this helps them make a fine start to their education. They develop good learning habits and make good progress. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, many pupils' skills are better than expected. Good teaching and learning ensure that pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2. While test results at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated year by year, reflecting the variations in attainment on entry, standards are above average in most years. There are no significant variations between reading, writing and mathematics standards.

Standards at the end of Year 6 have been subject to the same fluctuations as those of younger pupils but are also above average in most years. Good teaching ensures that there is little variation between pupils' performance in English, science and mathematics and their achievement is good in relation to their starting points in Year 3. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils in all year groups are progressing well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils really enjoy their lessons and the wide range of activities available for them after school. As one pupil in Year 2 said, 'I cannot think of a thing I don't like about the school.' Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils are well prepared for life in a multicultural society. Attendance is above average.

Pupils enjoy taking part in regular 'wake-up and shake-up' sessions and feel that the wide range of sporting activities provides them with plenty of exercise. The school has gained Healthy Schools status and lunches are tasty and nutritious. The members of the school council are active in monitoring and modifying the lunchtime menu, putting their very good awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet into practice.

Many older pupils have specific responsibilities which they undertake diligently, such as acting as 'play pals' in the playground. Younger pupils have fewer opportunities to take on responsibilities. The school council, although in its first year, has already been active in decision-making. For example, it has helped to organise the sports day and changed the colour of the tee shirts for one of the teams. Many pupils are involved in local events and competitions. Pupils are well prepared for the future, developing good basic and workplace skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good in all parts of the school, including the Foundation Stage. There are a number of reasons for this:

The regular monitoring of classroom practice ensures that weaknesses are eradicated.

Pupils' behaviour is often exemplary and this permits teachers to focus closely on how best to promote learning without distractions.

Lessons are well planned and organised so they are both interesting and purposeful.

The school has heeded the criticisms of ICT teaching made in the previous inspection. The subject is now well taught and, as a result, pupils have the skills to take advantage of opportunities to use ICT to support their learning across all subjects. Interactive whiteboards, which are used in almost all lessons, provide further opportunities for pupils to have 'hands-on'

experiences of ICT. Teaching assistants know what they should do in all parts of lessons and offer good support and encouragement to pupils, making a strong contribution to their learning. Work is regularly marked and pupils receive some encouraging feedback but they are not always told clearly enough how to improve their performance. At times, for example, marking is not clearly linked to pupils' learning targets. As a result, there are some missed opportunities to move pupils' learning on more rapidly and to give them more responsibility for improving their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school works successfully to overcome limitations posed by its size. The school teaches all the required subjects but has difficulty in covering the gymnastics aspect of physical education because there is no hall. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is well planned and organised and gives the youngest children good opportunities for independent work and play.

The school plans its curriculum flexibly to respond to pupils' needs and interests. Membership of the Callington Learning Community has brought considerable advantages. The school has tapped into the expertise in the nearby secondary college to improve its provision in ICT, music and sport and all of these areas are strong as a result. There are good opportunities for pupils to study two modern foreign languages.

For such a small school, there is a good range of after school clubs and about half of the pupils attend at least one club. There are good opportunities for pupils to experience the wider world through an interesting range of educational trips, such as to an outdoor activity centre.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All staff know the pupils well and provide good role models. There are effective arrangements that enable pupils to share concerns or worries with an adult. Pupils say that the high number of adults working in the school helps them feel safe. Effective monitoring of attendance and punctuality has seen these aspects improve further this year.

Teaching assistants and learning support assistants provide good support for pupils to help them to achieve well. There are good links with outside agencies to support pupils' learning and physical needs. Constructive links with the local secondary college, through a local federation, ensure a very smooth transition to the next stage of education.

Tracking systems are good and are used well to ensure that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, progress well. Pupils and teachers use the target sheets well to assess whether pupils have achieved as well as they should. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to reach the next level and this has a positive impact on their achievement. Even so, some weaknesses in the guidance given in marking prevent the use of targets from being even more effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides rigorous and effective leadership. Monitoring by the headteacher and subject leaders is good and is effective in developing teaching. The good teaching promotes

good achievement and ensures equal opportunities for all. The senior management team meets regularly and, in this small school, all staff work well together as a team. The school recognises that the leadership role of the senior management team is not yet fully effective in driving improvement.

A significant strength of leadership and management is the way the school seeks and acts on the views of parents and pupils. The 'Vision Plan' is comprehensive and fully involves staff and governors. It clearly identifies the school's strengths and areas for development, while maintaining a rolling programme of review for each subject. The lack of a hall prevents assemblies being held for the whole school together. Resources are used well to support pupils' learning, including the good use of staff expertise to teach to their strengths. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Procedures for safeguarding pupils fully meet requirements.

Governance is good. Governors are focused on continuing to raise standards and are effective in both supporting and challenging the work of the school. They clearly know the strengths of the school and have worked hard to address issues posed by the lack of a school hall.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?	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?	2

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harrowbarrow School, Harrowbarrow, PL17 8BQ

Thank you all very much for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. We thought you were polite and charming. You told us how much you enjoy school and said that there was very little that you would like to change. The inspectors agree with you that Harrowbarrow is a good school and some things are outstanding.

The school cares for you well. Teaching and the curriculum are good and you learn well. You help teachers a lot because you behave very well. You are very mature and sensible young people by the time you reach Year 6. You have an interesting range of subjects and topics to study and we know you are keen on the good mixture of after-school clubs on offer. The headteacher leads the school well and your teachers and other adults work very well as a team to make sure that your achievement is good.

Even good schools, like yours, have some things they should improve on. In Harrowbarrow, there are two important weaknesses:

- You get encouraging feedback when your work is marked but we felt sometimes you could have been helped with more specific advice on how it could be improved.
- Some teachers whose job it is to lead and manage parts of the school need to develop their skills more.

You can help by seeking advice on how to improve your work. Once again, many thanks for your help during the inspection day. It was a pleasure meeting you.

With all good wishes,

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector