



Upton Cross Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111956
Local Authority Cornwall
Inspection number 289116
Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007
Reporting inspector Robert Pyner HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Upton Cross
School category	Community		Liskeard
Age range of pupils	4–11		PL14 5AX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01579 362519
Number on roll (school)	84	Fax number	01579 363785
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Debbie Coburn
		Headteacher	Mark Clutsom
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007	Inspection number 289116
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Upton Cross Primary is a small school serving a rural area. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are very mixed, but broadly average. The school has a falling roll which necessitated a reduction from four classes to three at the beginning of the current school year. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities and of those with statements of special educational need are in line with the averages for Cornwall. Pupil mobility is higher than the national average.

The school hosts a public library for the community and is the base for care facilities both before and after school and for holiday play schemes. A parent and toddler group has recently been established within the building. The school has been awarded Eco School and Football Association Charter status. It is a Healthy School and has gained the Active Mark Gold Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Upton Cross Primary is a satisfactory and improving school that has some good features. Strengths include the leadership and management of the school and the personal development of the pupils.

Children are given a sound start to their education in the Reception class which they share with pupils from Year 1 and Year 2. Starting points for the children are mixed and vary from year to year but are broadly average. The parent and toddler group which shares some facilities is helping to improve induction. Progress is satisfactory, with most children reaching the expected levels by Year 1.

Pupils' achievement and standards are satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, displaying an improving trend. They make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and, by the end of Year 2, standards are broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. From Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress and, by the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English and science, but are below average in mathematics. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good practice evident. Teachers have been successful in raising standards in English by focusing on improving their skills and developing the curriculum. This has yet to be replicated in mathematics, explaining the lower level of performance in this subject.

Parents are very supportive of the school and the inspector received many positive comments, of which this one is typical: 'My children are very happy at Upton Cross School. The staff are always helpful and friendly.'

Pupils' personal development is good throughout the school. Behaviour is good and pupils with responsibilities take them very seriously. The 'Playground Squad' helps to make playtimes an enjoyable social occasion, with the older pupils caring for the younger ones. Pupils have a good appreciation of the need to live a healthy lifestyle. They feel safe and enjoy school. As one pupil said, 'I like school because we learn lots of new things. The teachers are polite and listen to you.'

The curriculum generally offers a good range of learning activities but it is not enabling some pupils to reach high enough standards in mathematics. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are good. Teachers and assistants have good relationships with pupils. Systems to track pupils' academic progress are developing and are beginning to contribute to the improvement in achievement.

The headteacher has moved the school forward over the last two years. In particular, he has created a team of staff and governors who work well together. He has successfully promoted a very clear vision for the school's future educational direction. Staff and governors accurately monitor and evaluate the school's performance and play a full part in developing effective plans for improvement. Consequently, the school has a good capacity to succeed in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement across the school, particularly in mathematics.

- Embed the use of the individual tracking system to target under-achievement and improve teaching.
- Develop links with the recently established parent and toddler group in order to support induction into the Reception class.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Children make a sound start in the Foundation Stage, given their mixed starting points. This generally satisfactory progress continues across the school. Analysis of pupils' performance over recent years and the school's assessment information show an improving trend. Pupils reach broadly average standards in Year 2 and Year 6, except in mathematics. In 2006, the test results bear out this generally improving trend. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils gained broadly average standards but with good results in Year 6 at the higher Level 5 in English. Achievement remains weaker in mathematics. This is because teachers do not target and support pupils who are under-achieving in this subject well enough.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support and make satisfactory progress. Standards of presentation and handwriting, which required improvement at the time of the last inspection, are now satisfactory.

Despite improvement, the school correctly lays strong emphasis on the need to raise achievement and standards generally, and particularly in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and their positive attitudes are reflected in lessons where the atmosphere is purposeful and pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour is good around the school and pupils help each other in and out of the classroom, creating a real 'family' feeling to the school. Pupils feel safe in school and have no concerns about seeking help from an adult if they have any worries. The school's strong focus on healthy eating, daily exercise and a good range of sports activities ensures pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and fit. Pupils' contributions to the school council, fundraising for charities, events in the village and links with schools overseas lead them to be reflective about local and world issues. Pupils develop a sound range of basic skills to help them secure their well-being in the future, although their skill levels in numeracy are too low. Procedures to monitor attendance are satisfactory but rates of absence have been high over the last few years.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good features. The enthusiasm of the teachers and the good management of behaviour in classes and around the school help the children to learn. Teachers are skilled at making lessons interesting and relevant for classes with pupils from more than one year group. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils in lessons contributing well to their progress. However, sometimes lessons lack pace or offer a limited range of activities, particularly for the more able. Information from assessments is not used well enough to plan lessons and focus teaching. As a result, some work can provide insufficient challenge, particularly in mathematics. Marking of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The school provides a broad curriculum that caters well for pupils' interests but planning in mathematics does not always meet all pupils' needs. Activities focus successfully on boosting pupils' personal development with, for example, lots of opportunities for them to learn how to stay fit and healthy. Information and communication technology is used well to reinforce learning and there is a good range of out-of-school activities. The school works on a number of projects which broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world. For example, the 'Gardens for Life' project involves close links with a school in Kenya and another in India whereby the pupils learn about farming and how it affects the lives of children their own age. Visits by teachers from these schools have increased the pupils' understanding of cultural differences and similarities.

Since the last inspection, greater investment has been made in the Foundation Stage classroom and outside areas, offering children greater opportunities to follow their interests and practise basic skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils. There is a vigilant approach to ensuring pupils' safety and all the required protocols are in place. Child protection procedures are rigorously applied and effective health and safety arrangements are regularly reviewed. Throughout the school, relationships are good and pupils have confidence in their teachers and other adults. This strong pastoral guidance effectively boosts pupils' personal development, especially in terms of raising their confidence and self-esteem.

Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are developing but are too recent to have made any significant difference to achievement and standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has set about improving many aspects of the school in a systematic manner. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of standards, progress and teaching introduced over the last two years have supported the drive to improve pupils' achievement. Teachers have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of most subject areas and there are good examples of plans for improvement. Although mathematics lags behind, the school's focused approach gives strong potential for similar development.

Governors are fully involved in the work of the school and provide very good support and challenge for the headteacher and staff. The school's capacity to improve is good.

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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 quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	3

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	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	3

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?	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.

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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited Upton Cross. I was impressed by the confident way that you talked to me and told me about your school. I really enjoyed joining your lessons and looking at your work. I found everything you said very interesting and it helped me to make decisions about how well your school is doing. I thought that you would like to know what I found out about you and your school.

I think that your school is doing a satisfactory job, is improving and has some good features. Teaching is satisfactory and all adults in the school work hard to make sure that you are safe, healthy, supported and make progress in your learning. The standards you reach in your work are satisfactory although, in mathematics, these could be better. Your behaviour is good and I found that you are well mannered and prepared to help others. You like your lessons and are proud of being an Eco School and working on the Gardens for Life project. All the staff and governors work well together to ensure that you have many opportunities to learn about lots of interesting things.

I have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to work on some things to make your school even better. Your teachers generally know how well you are doing in your lessons but I have asked them to work on this so that they have a better idea of how to help you make even more progress and increase what you know and understand. I have also asked your teachers to work with the new parent and toddlers' group at your school so the children can enjoy being at Upton Cross as much as you do.

I am sure that you will want to help to make your school even better than it is.

Thank you again for helping me to find out about your school.