



Dobwalls Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111957
Local Authority Cornwall
Inspection number 289117
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Faysal Mikdadi

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Dobwalls
School category	Community		Liskeard
Age range of pupils	4–11		PL14 4LU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01579 320527
Number on roll (school)	194	Fax number	01579 321268
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Nigel Slater-Bishop
		Headteacher	Jason Holland
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Dobwalls is an average sized school. Almost all pupils are White British and there are a very few from other minority ethnic backgrounds. Attainment on entry is as expected. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is in line with the national average. Almost one third of the pupils in the school join it at some point other than the beginning of the Reception Year. The senior management team members are relatively new to the school having been appointed in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Dobwalls Community Primary is a good school with some outstanding features within the leadership and management of the school. It has successfully established a happy, caring, safe, supportive and effective learning environment. Good Foundation Stage provision ensures that children progress well. Most reception children achieve the expected levels and a significant number exceed these, especially in personal and social skills. Amongst the many reasons for Dobwalls' success are the school's good leadership and management. The headteacher gives excellent leadership and he is well supported by governors, senior and other staff. The result is that all work as a strong team with clearly agreed priorities for raising standards. These priorities are based on good self-evaluation. Pupils appreciate opportunities to improve their good personal development and the good care, guidance and support provided. They behave well. This is because of the relationships that they are encouraged to develop between themselves and with the adults caring for them. There is a good curriculum. Pupils are happy with the enrichment activities and a large number participate, especially in the many sporting activities. The good assessment means that pupils' weaknesses are quickly identified and successfully addressed. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers offer well targeted advice to pupils on how to improve their work during lessons although occasionally marking does not offer helpful comments. Effective monitoring and evaluation drive improvements forward. This has led the school to accurately identify the need to improve the standards of higher attaining pupils in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and for all staff to train in the use of the new information and communication technology (ICT) suite. Standards are above those expected nationally. The rising trend in the pupils' achievement in the end of Year 6 test results shows the impact of the school's successful improvement strategies. These ensure that all pupils achieve well and demonstrate that the school is in a good position to make further improvements. Current standards indicate that the ambitious targets for 2007 and 2008 are likely to be achieved.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more able pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve higher standards consistently in mathematics and writing.
- Ensure that all staff are trained in the use of the new ICT suite.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils achieve well because teaching is consistently good. Because of this and other effective strategies, standards in the current Year 2 are now above average. Pupils continue to make good progress after Year 2 and achievement in Key Stage 2 has improved over the last three years so that standards in the current Year 6 are also above average. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. By the time they enter Year 1, most attain the expected levels for their age, with a significant minority

exceeding these, especially in their personal and social skills. Parents speak highly of their children's achievement within this group. One typically says, 'We are pleased with the progress that our daughter has made in her first year at the school.' This good progress made in Reception continues into Key Stage 1 so that pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics improve well and consequently, national assessment results at Year 2 are above the national average. Writing and mathematics results for the higher attaining pupils fluctuate from year to year. The school has recognised this relative weakness in the achievement of more able pupils and has put effective strategies in place to address it. Boys have tended to do less well than girls in reading and writing at Key Stage 1. Nevertheless, the school has tackled this successfully so that this disparity is no longer in evidence over the course of Key Stage 2. The 2006 test results show pupils' achievement in Year 6 continuing to rise. The ambitious targets set for the current year look likely to be attained given the current above average standards. The work of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is regularly monitored and evaluated so that they receive effective support. Consequently, they too make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well. Attitudes and relationships are good. Pupils are keen to learn and respect one another and they say that they really enjoy school. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils are punctual. The school has set in place all the strategies necessary to ensure continued improvements in attendance. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils understand and successfully work towards the six Golden Rules that underpin the school's aims and ethos. This good effort results in pupils being self-disciplined, polite and courteous. There is an active school council making a positive contribution to school life, such as improving playground resources. Pupils feel safe and secure and know where to turn if they need help. Children settle well in the Foundation Stage and are confident and keen to share their experiences. By the time that they start in Year 1, they work and play very well together. Pupils understand the importance of regular exercise and leading a healthy lifestyle; both are promoted through a large number of pupils taking up sporting activities and through healthy eating. Pupils gain valuable insights into managing money and develop a strong social awareness through their fund raising activities. Pupils develop good skills, which will help them in the future. They contribute to the community effectively and are keen to voice their views regarding opportunities for children in their locality, such as campaigning for the local bypass and a cinema in Liskeard.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and occasionally outstanding. An example of this was seen in an outstanding Year 2 lesson following an interesting visit to Looe Lifeboat Station. Pupils shared thoughts and feelings about the visit facilitated by outstanding use of questioning by the teacher. Teachers plan effectively and make good use of resources. Because of this good planning the difference in performance between boys and girls has been removed and the focus on the performance of more able pupils has begun to be tackled. They ensure that pupils know the aims of lessons and match work well to ability. There is very skilful use of questioning to ensure that pupils have understood their work. Pupils make good progress when working individually or in groups and enjoy their work. Teachers set challenging learning targets, assess pupils' work regularly and keep detailed records. They mostly provide constructive comments to show how the work could be improved and are becoming more consistent in using assessment to show pupils the next steps in learning. Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well by, amongst other things, encouraging those with learning difficulties and disabilities to work collaboratively with others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it meets pupils' needs. The experiences are enhanced by a good range of school clubs, visitors and activities, as well as well planned visits to Liskeard Museum, the Egyptian Centre and the Eden Project. A typical parent's comment is, 'We really appreciate all the hard work put in by staff during the school day and also their commitment to after school clubs. They seem to give up lots of their time for the children.' The Foundation Stage curriculum is good, with interesting activities and an appropriate balance of adult-led activities and activities that the children have chosen themselves. A good programme for personal, social and health education provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about personal relationships, safety and healthy living. The school is particularly proud of the successful way in which sporting and musical experiences enrich pupils' lives. Information and communication technology has been increasingly used to support independent learning although some staff lack expertise in using the new ICT suite.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils, parents and staff speak highly of the caring, happy and warm learning environment. Every single pupil, when responding to the school's annual survey of opinions, says that they like coming to school. One parent's comment exemplifies the general feeling when she says, 'My child likes coming to school even on dark winter days.' Children settle quickly in the Foundation Stage because of the effective induction

programme. Parents are kept well informed of their progress. They consider that their children get a good start to their education. Child protection procedures and all checks to safeguard pupils are properly in place. Because the school keeps close contact with parents and carers, any issue they raise is quickly dealt with. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are looked after and cared for well. Assessment is effective in diagnosing needs and, consequently, in helping to set up appropriate strategies to deal with them. However, written comments in exercise books occasionally do not provide helpful advice.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The new headteacher's leadership is outstanding because it has led to high expectations of pupils' achievement, which are now being realised in improved standards. Parents and staff describe him as 'inspirational and visionary'. One pupil reflects the general view when he says, 'The headteacher helps us to appreciate the golden time we have in school and on trips and visits.' Communication with teachers and governors is good. The good links with parents and carers are confirmed in the parental survey returns. Subject leaders run their subject areas well and several are currently receiving effective support to improve their overall performance. Effective monitoring and evaluation strategies have been successful in diagnosing strengths and weaknesses in many areas of the school's work and in setting clear and agreed goals for improvements. The process is such that staff work closely as a team in an open and warm environment. Governors are involved in the school's life and have very productive working relationships with staff. Governors often offer constructive challenges, which help the school move forward.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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	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	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.

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

- Thank you so much for making us feel so welcome during our visit to your school. You told us that you liked coming to school and that you thought that yours was a good school. We agree with your views. The following are some of the things that make your school as good as it is:
- The hard work of staff has succeeded in giving you a safe, healthy, happy and caring environment in which to study.
- You make good progress and the standards of your work are now above average.
- You behave well and you have good relationships with each other and with the adults who look after you.
- Your teachers always teach you well and the curriculum that you study is good.
- Your parents have said that they are happy with the school and with your good progress. We asked your school to improve the following two things:
- Make sure that those of you in Years 1 and 2 who find your work easy do even better in writing and mathematics.
- To train all teachers in helping you to use the new ICT suite as well as possible. Once more, thank you very much for our enjoyable visit. Also thanks to Year 6 for their excellent performance of Romeo and Juliet in the school assembly. We wish you the very best for the future.