



Biscovey Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111981
Local Authority Cornwall
Inspection number 289128
Inspection dates 2–3 November 2006
Reporting inspector Eira Gill

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Lamellyn Road
School category	Community		Par
Age range of pupils	7–11		PL24 2DB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01726 812949
Number on roll (school)	313	Fax number	01726 812850
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Tony Sleeman
		Headteacher	Roger Green
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2001		

Age group 7–11	Inspection dates 2–3 November 2006	Inspection number 289128
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average junior school. Pupils start at age seven in Year 3. An above average number of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. The school hosts a unit for five children with a hearing impairment managed by the local authority. The school offers additional services of community provision for adult education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and steadily improving school because of the good leadership of the headteacher, increasingly effective leadership at all levels and increasingly effective methods of self-evaluation. As a result, the school now has a good capacity to improve further. The school's vision statement is 'to achieve a secure, caring and welcoming environment in which every member is treated as an individual enjoying the opportunity to develop to their full potential'. The leaders of the school certainly ensure that the pupils are cared for well and are given good support and guidance. The school provides an inclusive environment where pupils feel safe and healthy and enjoy their education. This is very evident during the lunch break when pupils happily play self-organised games of basketball or football. Pupils in the hearing impaired unit and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well and make good progress. Personal development is good and pupils enjoy their work, behave well and show good attitudes to their learning.

The leadership team has worked hard and with good success on tackling the very significant number of weaknesses following the last inspection. Nevertheless, achievement in English does not yet match the good achievement in mathematics and science. Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory overall, although in mathematics and science achievement is good and much improved from the last inspection. By the end of Year 6, standards are average in reading and below average in writing with satisfactory achievement overall. This is because the quality of teaching and learning in English, although sound, is inconsistent and not as good as it is in mathematics and science. The new and improved strategies for teaching writing have been slow to filter through the school and are not always evident in lessons.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Strengths in teaching include the warm relationships between all staff and pupils, teachers' good management of behaviour and well qualified teaching assistants who contribute effectively to pupils' learning. However, planning does not always ensure that all pupils are challenged sufficiently and, particularly in writing lessons, the pace is sometimes too slow. Improved curriculum planning to ensure that pupils have opportunities to write in other subjects as well as English is beginning to raise the achievement of the present Year 6 pupils. The curriculum is good and improved from the last inspection with plenty of opportunities for sport, including regular swimming, and a wide variety of clubs after school. Good links with other providers bring additional expertise that is geared towards raising achievement.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The good leadership of the headteacher has won the confidence and support of parents who are very happy with the 'all-round education and wonderful atmosphere'. Subject leaders have been effective in raising pupils' achievement in mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and special educational needs. Governance is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' standards and achievement in writing by ensuring that the improved teaching strategies are used more consistently to match the needs of the pupils.
- Ensure that all teaching is well paced and expectations are high for all groups of pupils, particularly in writing lessons, so that learning is as good as it is in the best lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards at the end of Year 6 are average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils join the school with below average ability overall but this can vary from year to year. Pupils' achievement is good in mathematics and science and they attain average standards in these subjects. Standards in English are not as good, particularly in writing, and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and pupils in the hearing impaired unit, make good progress overall because they benefit from such good quality support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their improving attendance and their keenness to learn. Pupils say the school is 'like one big family'. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Pupils feel valued and secure, and know that staff have their best interests at heart. They work together amicably, behave well and are very polite. The school council fulfils its role effectively and other pupils run clubs and organise school events. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils relish raising funds for charities such as Red Nose Day and providing shoe boxes filled with gifts for children in Romania. They have a well developed appreciation of their own local culture but less awareness of growing up in the multicultural society that is Britain today. Pupils respond well when given responsibility and those in Year 6 are proud of their prefect status. They have a good understanding of the need for healthy eating and exercise. They are safety conscious, and the school council has helped to increase playground harmony by buying a wide range of equipment for playground games. Pupils have sound literacy and good numeracy skills and are developing effective interpersonal skills which means they are being appropriately prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers and their skilled assistants promote warm relationships and value pupils and their responses. Good use of interactive whiteboards is raising pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Teaching is improving and some effective lessons were seen during the inspection, particularly in mathematics and science, where teaching is good. Well planned learning opportunities that match the pupils' differing capabilities, high expectations, good pace and effective use of specific technical language contribute to pupils' good achievement in these subjects. However, these strategies are not always applied as consistently in other subjects and this limits pupils' progress on occasions, for example, in developing writing skills in English. Assessment is used well to plan work for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those pupils with hearing impairment, enabling them to meet the targets that are set for them. Its use to inform planning for other pupils is an improving feature and teachers' marking is generally good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and the needs of all pupils are met well. There is a clear focus on developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Standards in ICT have improved considerably since the last inspection when pupils were underachieving. The school is making good progress in developing writing opportunities across a range of subjects but these are not yet fully in place. Innovative projects and links with other providers such as 'Creative Partnerships' provide pupils with a wide variety of enriching experiences, as do a range of visits and visitors to the school, which further enhance learning. Pupils lead healthy lives and stay safe through an effective curriculum for personal, social and health education, which incorporates drugs and sex education. There is good provision for pupils with hearing impairment and learning difficulties and disabilities, who make good progress. The school provides a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. Sport has a high priority in the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all its pupils and this contributes well to their enjoyment of school. Procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure are well established. Systems for checking pupils' academic progress are improving and, as a result, the provision for pupils with learning difficulties, disabilities and hearing impairment is good. Pupils know and understand their targets. Teachers' marking tells pupils how they can improve and make progress, although marking could be even more consistent. Support given to all groups of pupils effectively meets their needs. Parents of these

pupils are involved well in making decisions about their children's targets and supporting their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership. He has ensured that the Every Child Matters agenda, which values pupils' personal qualities and enjoyment of school, has been embraced fully. This is reflected in the school's good educational direction. With effective support from governors and senior staff, all members of the school community are involved in self-evaluation and development planning. Self-evaluation is satisfactory but continues to improve. The school consults widely with parents and pupils about all aspects of its work and is effective at evaluating the school's provision for personal development, curriculum and care of the pupils. Performance data is used with greater precision than previously to show, for example, how improvements are to be made in pupils' writing but this does not yet have a sufficiently tight focus. Subject leadership is satisfactory but improving with increasingly effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. This has contributed significantly to pupils' improved achievement in mathematics, science, ICT and special educational needs. It is beginning to strengthen the focus on raising standards in English and pupils are now making better progress in their writing and in other subjects. An enthusiastic team approach to management and an open sharing of good practice plus evident enthusiasm are driving the school forward.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	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	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	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	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?	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	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 all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school by showing us the way around. One of you told us 'It's a brilliant school!'

Your headteacher and other members of staff have made many improvements to the school since the last inspection and it is now satisfactory with good aspects. However, there are still one or two things that need to be done to make the school even better. We are asking the staff and governors to make a few improvements.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- The changes made by your headteacher have really helped to improve the school.
- The school council has changed things in the school to make it more enjoyable.
- Most of you make good progress in mathematics and science by the time you leave school.
- Those of you who find it difficult to learn quickly are making good progress.
- Best of all, you seem to really enjoy school; you are well behaved and usually work hard in lessons.

These are the things that we think the school could do better:

- Sometimes, in writing lessons, the work needs to be more interesting.
- Some lessons need to be better planned by your teachers so that you have to work harder. Some of you are capable of getting more done in lessons.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.