

Mary Tavy and Brentor Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113264
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	289565
Inspection date	21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Ann Debono

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	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	N Pratten
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003
School address	Mary Tavy Tavistock PL19 9PR
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Mary Tavy and Brentor is a smaller-than-average primary school. It provides for children from a wide rural area, many of whom are collected daily by the school bus. Pupils are taught in three classes, with two or more age groups in each class. Most children are White British and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than usual. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is low.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school rightly judges that it provides its pupils with a good standard of education. Parents agree. They say that their children really enjoy coming to school because the children are well looked after. One parent reports that 'the staff always go the extra mile to make learning fun. Fantastic stuff!' The pupils agree and say their school is really good; one said, 'It's a friendly place and caring for everyone'.

Children achieve well in the Reception and infant class and continue to do well as they move through the school. The school has effectively raised achievement over time, despite fluctuations on a year-to-year basis that reflect the different attainment levels of each group of pupils who join the school. By Year 6, standards are average and overall achievement is good. Pupils are now achieving well in English. The school's priority for improved spelling and the very good emphasis upon reading, supported by parents at home, has supported this. Achievement in science is also good, as a result of the new practical approach to the curriculum and an appropriate challenge for higher-attaining pupils.

Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers plan well. Adults have excellent relationships with all pupils. This, together with their expectations for excellent behaviour, means that pupils feel secure enough to take risks in their learning and so lessons are interesting and effective. Pupils work together confidently and are eager to learn.

Pupils have an exceptionally clear understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, which they use in making choices about participating in the wide range of sports available to them. They understand about healthy exercising and eating. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It meets pupils' different ages and abilities well. A highly effective decision was taken by the school to adopt the approach to the Foundation Stage curriculum throughout the school, and themes are planned in ways to involve pupils, for example, using the local environment for nature study. Pastoral care and guidance are very good throughout the school. Whilst pupils receive good individual verbal feedback on their work, the planning, marking and assessment of it does not always refer to their personal targets for further improvement.

Leadership and management are good and the headteacher's leadership is excellent. She has proven success in her priorities for school improvement so far, which she has achieved alongside a substantial teaching commitment. Exceptionally good links with local organisations are used very well to extend the range of curricular opportunities and to promote pupils' well-being. All staff confidently share the challenge to improve the quality of teaching and review the curriculum to ensure it continues to motivate and excite pupils in their learning. A detailed analysis of pupils' performance data and the use of this information in setting targets for pupils are in their early stages. The school's self-evaluation and development planning are satisfactory but staff and governors need to focus more rigorously on these aspects of their work. The development of the school involves the effective governing body fully. Together with staff, governors have helped the school to improve well since the last inspection. The school's capacity for continued improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use pupils' performance data to set and check that challenging targets for school improvement are met.
- Use assessment, marking and target setting to involve pupils more in improving their work.

- Work with parents to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most pupils attend a variety of pre-school settings before starting school. This, together with the small numbers in each year group, means that children's attainment on entry varies considerably from year to year.

Pupils' achievement across the school is good. Children in the Reception make good progress in all areas of learning because of skilful teaching. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 fluctuate enormously because of the small numbers of pupils. For example, during the past five years, standards in Year 2 and in Year 6 have ranged from well below average to well above average.

In 2006, standards at the end of Year 2 were broadly average. Standards in writing were significantly below average but current pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 shows that progress in writing is improving as a result of the school's focus on spelling. Standards in 2006 at the end of Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Results for more-able pupils were above those found nationally in English and science. Overall pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD), make good progress whatever their starting points on entry to the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The close and supportive environment that is offered by all staff ensures that pupils are happy. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils of different ages work together well. They are very caring of each other. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assembly provides a strong sense of self-worth and includes time for quiet reflection. The school is aware of the restricted cultural background of its pupils and addresses this effectively for example, by studying Japanese art and learning about other civilizations.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in the wide range of sporting activities offered. They know exceptionally well how to keep themselves safe. The school offers hot, nutritional food and a varied menu, which the majority of pupils enjoy. Pupils, therefore, have an outstandingly good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. There are excellent links with the local community and pupils' responsibility within this is a very strong feature. The youngest pupils take money to the post office to buy stamps, and pupils themselves decided to organise fundraising events for national charities. Their very good social skills, together with the good progress made in the core skills, contribute very well to their future economic well-being. Attendance is monitored well but it is only satisfactory overall because of holidays taken in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are well planned and organised, which is particularly effective in meeting the needs of pupils' differing ages and abilities. Teachers know

their pupils very well and have an expectation that they will work hard and behave well, and they do. There is strong teamwork between teachers and the effective teaching assistants and volunteers; as a result, all pupils are provided with well-focused support. Pupils are engaged in interesting practical learning experiences and work together well. Resources, including the interactive whiteboard, are used to support learning effectively. Pupils feel secure in class and know that their ideas and views will be valued. This creates a purposeful and positive climate for learning.

Teachers give clear explanations and use questions very effectively to draw out what pupils know and to challenge them further. Teachers have worked very hard to significantly improve standards in reading. Home-school reading diaries are kept exceptionally well, with daily comments from parents. Teachers are aware that they now need to focus their attention on spelling and mathematics to include a challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Some pupils are clear about targets to improve the quality of their work further but this is not consistent. The written marking of pupils' work does not always state why a pupil's work is good or refer to their personal targets for further improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets statutory requirements. The school has taken advantage of its small size to be creative and flexible. The curriculum is taught with clear links to the Foundation Stage curriculum across the three classes. Planned topics make learning more relevant with, for example, regular nature walks to take advantage of the local area. The use of investigations and problem solving by pupils, however, is underdeveloped and there is an overemphasis on worksheets in some areas of the curriculum. Generally, though, the curriculum is enriched well through a wide range of additional activities, such as cross-country running, chess and music. The school extends its provision by useful visits and visitors from colleges and neighbouring schools. These all make a good contribution to the pupils' enjoyment and achievement. The richness of the curriculum ensures that all pupils make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides pupils with good care, support and guidance. Parents are overwhelmingly confident that their children are safe and well cared for. Children say that they feel able to talk to staff if they have a problem and confirm that the rare incidences of unkindness are dealt with quickly. Older pupils support younger children on the playground as 'Play Leaders'. The school is particularly successful at welcoming new children. A display about pupils' views states: 'We work together when someone needs help'. The school has good procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and all staff and volunteers are fully checked for their suitability to work with children.

The small size of the school means that staff know pupils very well. This enables them to keep a close watch on pupils' individual learning, and to provide targeted support when and where it is needed. Support provided for pupils with LDD is good.

However, the process of tracking and monitoring pupils' achievement more formally is still being developed. Some pupils are clear about targets to improve the quality of their work but this is not consistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher has shown excellent leadership, with a clear plan to improve the school. Together with the governors, she has succeeded in her priorities so far. The school environment has been upgraded to improve health and safety. There is very good organisation of resources for learning, and the newly improved facilities have had a very positive impact upon staff and pupil morale. The quality of teaching has been appropriately challenged so that it is now at least consistently good. The review of the curriculum enables pupils' needs to be met more fully. New behaviour management systems are effective and create a positive ethos. The school has the full support of the local community.

The headteacher's very clear vision is shared by all staff in their successful management of the school's priorities. The renewed emphasis and shared practice in providing a good quality of teaching is now consistent throughout the school. This has been particularly evident in the very good induction for a newly qualified teacher. All staff have agreed leadership responsibilities and focus effectively upon improvement for key curriculum areas. Analysis of test results and using this information in setting targets for pupils is in its early days. School self-evaluation and development planning are satisfactory but the school needs to focus more rigorously on the available data to review its performance.

Governance is good. Governors are supportive and make a positive contribution to the school. There are informed discussions about current and future aspects of school development. The key area for improvement since the last inspection was to ensure that the Foundation Stage curriculum was provided for pupils under the age of five. This has been most successfully achieved. In fact, this creative approach to the curriculum has underpinned the improvement in teaching and learning throughout the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	3
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	1
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	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	1
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**

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. This letter is to tell you what I thought of your school.

I liked the way you get on so well together and enjoy your lessons. You are keen to learn and work with each other. You take care of your school and show responsibility for your school and your local area. You have chosen which charities you want your school to support and have done some good fund-raising activities for other people. I agreed with you and your parents that your school is a good one. These are the things that are particularly good:

- You make good progress in your work in school from the time you start in the Reception class until you leave.
- You behave extremely well, get on well with each other and help each other out.
- Teachers work hard to plan interesting lessons so that you enjoy coming to school.
- You keep very healthy by eating sensibly and by using the good opportunities for sport. You also know very well how to keep safe in and out of school.
- The adults in your school take great care of all of you.
- Your headteacher, other staff and the governors lead the school well.

To make your school even better, we have asked the teachers to:

- Use information about your test results to improve your results further.
- Write into your books ways you can improve your work further as well as talking to you about this individually
- Check that you are not taking too many holidays in term time.

You can help teachers by telling them if you are unsure about the things mentioned in this letter.