

Connor Downs Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111847
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310701
Inspection date	5 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

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	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeremy Ridge
Headteacher	A Lawrence
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2004
School address	Mutton Hill Connor Downs Hayle TR27 5DH
Telephone number	01736 753135
Fax number	01736 759068

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality and effectiveness of the Foundation Stage, the impact of work done to raise standards in writing, the quality of monitoring by subject leaders and other middle managers, and the impact of revised target setting procedures on the quality of teaching and academic guidance for pupils. Evidence was gathered by observing lessons, scrutinising documents and pupils' work, and from discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not evaluated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves a village and surrounding rural area in West Cornwall. All current pupils are of White British ethnicity and speak English at home. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. Parents rightly have a very high opinion of the school and feel very well informed about their child's progress and school life. Children start school with the skills and knowledge expected of those of their age. They make sound progress in the Foundation Stage (Reception class) where their social skills develop well. In Years 1 to 6, they make good progress, especially so in mathematics and science. At the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards in national tests that are above average in these subjects. In English, they attain average standards and the school has identified that progress in writing is slower than in other areas. Staff have done a great deal to correct this, and evidence from current pupils' work shows that they are now making more rapid progress. Older pupils are producing a wide range of interesting, sophisticated work. Their progress is helped by the high quality of marking by teachers, showing pupils how to improve their work. Pupils are set long-term targets which help them to understand what they need to learn, but which do not always enable them to recognise the progress they have made. Pupils' outstanding personal development is a strength of the school. Parents recognise that all staff treat the pupils with care and respect, and the pupils respond in kind. They behave very well and greatly enjoy school. They take full advantage of the many opportunities to exercise responsibility, for example as members of the school council, or by reading with younger pupils. They enjoy giving performances to family and other members of the community. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for instance when using the internet or when visiting the local beaches. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, as the family ethos of the school encourages care for others and understanding of differences, for example of faith or culture. The school has very good systems to ensure that pupils are protected, meeting all current requirements. Attendance is generally above average, although fluctuates due to family holidays taken during the school term. The school does all it can to ensure regular attendance. The strengths of the good teaching include the very good relationships between staff and pupils and interesting activities conducted at a good pace, which are well matched to pupils' abilities and needs. Teaching assistants give very good support, which enables all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to make equally good progress. In a particularly interesting lesson, a very recent archaeological discovery was used as a stimulus for pupils to play the role of Romulus or Remus, being questioned by other pupils. The activity was carried out in small groups led by the teacher or a teaching assistant, and enabled all pupils to play a full part and to make very good progress. The curriculum is broad and well organised. Pupils greatly enjoy the excellent range of additional activities, which are available to all, including the younger pupils. Classes are well organised to ensure that pupils at a similar stage of development are taught together. In the Foundation Stage, children experience the full range of expected activities, but these are not always organised in such a way as to ensure that their interest is maintained. For example, some more formal teaching continues for too long, and children lose interest and become restless. Leaders and managers have complementary strengths that have led to good recent improvements. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have taken effective action to remedy the latter, for instance in improving writing. Data is thoroughly analysed and used to set demanding targets that are usually met. Teachers make good use of data in planning the curriculum and in tracking pupils' progress, but the lack of computerisation of data adds to their workload. The good work of subject leaders and other middle managers supports staff well in developing the curriculum and in ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support.

Governors, under the able leadership of the chair, are effective both in supporting the school and in monitoring its work. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are sound. Much work has been done to develop this aspect of the school's work, but the range of expertise available in the school to support this area is limited. The school has excellent partnerships with parents, other schools and with external agencies and is in a good position to use these links, together with its own resources, to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Parents greatly value the very good induction procedures and communication between school and home, which enables their children to start school with confidence and anticipation. They have access to a good range of resources and activities, which enables them to make satisfactory progress in developing their skills and knowledge, so that most attain the expected standards by the end of the Reception year. Expertise among staff in planning and teaching the curriculum for this age group is limited. For instance, senior leaders and managers have recognised that assessments are not yet aligned accurately with those made in other schools. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good knowledge of the social and emotional needs of each child. Some teaching activities continue for too long, hence children lose interest and become restless.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that planning of the Foundation Stage curriculum is based on accurate assessments of children's skills and knowledge, and that the teaching recognises the attention span of children of this age
- in order to motivate and encourage pupils, ensure that they are set achievable targets that enable them to recognise the progress they are making.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

- 19 December 2007 Dear Pupils Connor Downs Primary School, Hayle TR27 5DH I very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when I visited your school recently. I especially enjoyed talking to the school council and others of you, as I found you confident, friendly and able to express your views very clearly. I agree with you and your parents that yours is a good school. These are some of the most important things about it:
 - most of you make good progress, and pupils in Year 6 get above average results in tests and assessments, especially in mathematics and science
 - the school is working hard to improve your writing and you are now producing some very good work in this area
 - teaching is good, lessons are interesting and fun and you find the way teachers mark your work very helpful
 - you have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and of how to keep safe.
 - you behave very well
 - you enjoy school a lot, especially all the different activities on offer. There are lots of clubs, some of which are open to younger pupils
 - you are cared for very well and teachers tell you how to improve your work
 - the headteacher, other staff and governors lead the school well
 - the school has excellent links with other schools and with your parents. I have asked the school to improve two things. I have asked that work for the Reception class is planned so that the children do not lose interest in their work. I have also asked that all of you are given targets that you can achieve fairly quickly, so that you can see what good progress you are making. Yours sincerely Paul Sadler Lead Inspector

19 December 2007



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Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler
Lead Inspector