

Weeth Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111852
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310703
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Jon Palethorpe

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	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trevor Rescorle
Headteacher	Martin Smith
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2003
School address	Holman Avenue Camborne TR14 7GA
Telephone number	01209 713934
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a medium-sized primary school for Cornwall, although smaller than the national average with 170 pupils on roll. In the Reception class and Years 1 and 2, there is one year group per class. In Years 3–6, there are three mixed-age classes. Nearly all pupils are from White British heritage. There is a higher-than-average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average, although there is a higher percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs than found nationally. Children's attainment on entry is well below the level expected for their age. Over recent years, the school has suffered from a very high level of staff absence.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and standards, the quality of teaching and learning (including the use of tracking and assessment), and the role of the senior management team.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. Although there are weaknesses, there are also some strengths. The school is already making strides forward and demonstrating a satisfactory capacity to improve further. The headteacher is fully aware of the situation and is tackling matters rigorously. The local authority is putting in regular additional help. The teaching of covering staff is good, and some even outstanding, which is already having a positive impact on standards and attitudes. Statistical evidence shows that pupils' current progress is now far better than it was, particularly in the areas of the school's focus, but it is too soon to guarantee that this is having a lasting effect. New tracking systems are starting to give a clear indication to teachers where the pupils' needs lie. The structure of the senior management team is now being successfully modified and gives extra support to the headteacher in taking the school forward.

One of the strengths of the school is the Foundation Stage. Here, with good, and occasionally outstanding teaching, many children are making very good progress. Another strength lies in the provision for pupils' personal development and well-being, and in pupils' response to this provision. Pupils are happy and feel safe, and understand how to live healthily. A great deal of time and effort goes into ensuring pupils' welfare. The learning mentor plays an important role in this by attempting to remove barriers to learning, whether social, emotional or behavioural. Until recently, this work has been 'instead of' rather than 'as well as' further developing academic opportunities. With this pastoral emphasis, the school 'took its eye off the ball' as far as academic support and guidance was concerned. The work of the senior management team was not structured adequately to enable both areas of pupils' development to be improved simultaneously.

The unsettled nature of teaching staff over the past few years has had a major impact on the quality of teaching and learning, and consequently on pupils' progress. This, together with some unsatisfactory teaching, has led to pupils' under-achievement. The school is addressing all the issues within its power, particularly aspects of unsatisfactory teaching, and improvements are evident.

The frequent changes in the teaching force have made it very difficult to apply new policies and initiatives consistently. For example, training has been given for the implementation of the numeracy strategy, but two new teachers, who account for a third of the teaching staff, have not been trained. Other initiatives have not been adequately monitored to determine how effective they have been, and some issues from the last inspection still require attention.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for the school Foundation Stage is good. Children benefit from lively and imaginative teaching and a well-planned and stimulating curriculum that meets their needs very well. They

receive good and sometimes outstanding teaching and very good, caring support from teaching assistants. This enables children to make good and sometimes very good progress. However, as they start from well below the expected level, even with this progress, they have still not caught up to the levels expected of this age by the end of their Reception year. Children enjoy school, and the encouragement to work and co-operate together is effective. Most children are showing co-operation, enthusiasm and attentiveness. There are good arrangements to ensure their safety and well-being. There are effective links with parents, with one parent commenting, 'I feel the school has given my child a great start in her school life.' Strategies to improve standards have been very effective in the Foundation Stage because of consistently good leadership and management in that area. Reception staff have a good understanding of strengths and areas for development in the provision and of how to improve it.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress rates in English and mathematics and raise standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, making better use of assessment to identify and provide for pupils' needs.
- Improve the effectiveness of the roles of the senior management team.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The school's results show that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is well below average in English and mathematics, and that pupils have not made enough progress. Pupils make inconsistent progress through the Years 3–6, and standards remain below average in English and mathematics. Particular underachievement is evident for those pupils who are capable of achieving higher levels. The progress of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is good. Across the school the quality of writing has been identified as a particular area for development, and considerable progress is being made, with standards now nearly up to the Cornwall average at the end of Year 6. In mathematics, emphasis is being placed on the identified weaker areas of shape and space, and reasoning, and this is already showing signs of improvement. The school's targets, based on internal testing, indicate further improvement in standards in English and mathematics, particularly for the pupils likely to reach above-average levels in Year 2 and in Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In particular, the school's efforts to improve moral and social development are having a very good effect, with improved behaviour and good attitudes towards learning. Much of this success is the result of the support of the learning mentor, who works to remove emotional, behavioural and social barriers to learning, with additional support from outside agencies where necessary. Although cultural development is satisfactory overall, pupils' awareness that they are living in a multicultural society is underdeveloped. Personal development starts from a very low baseline, but all children make at least good progress in the Foundation Stage, and this continues throughout the school. Pupils say that they enjoy school. They like their teachers and like working hard. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise, with many attending additional activities in physical education after school. They are aware of safety issues, for instance, road

safety. They feel safe and well cared for at school and are confident that there are adults who will help them with their problems. Behaviour is mostly satisfactory and often much better than this both in well-taught lessons and around the school. Some individuals, however, find it hard to cooperate and conform, especially if they are not sufficiently motivated by their work, and occasionally disrupt lessons. The Buddy System is working well in the playground, and is helping to avoid incidents at playtime. Pupils get involved in local and national fundraising, and in local celebrations. They develop satisfactory workplace skills despite below-average literacy and numeracy levels, in particular demonstrating how to cooperate with each other. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is typically satisfactory, although it does range from outstanding to inadequate. Good, and sometimes outstanding teaching in the Foundation Stage is now providing children with a very good start at school. Teaching is good in Year 1, but inadequate in some lessons in Year 2. In Years 3–6, teaching is variable, with some good and some inadequate. The strengths in good teaching include excellent relationships, challenging work for all ages and abilities in the class, and a good pace with plenty of enjoyment. Teachers frequently make very good use of teaching assistants, and show plenty of enthusiasm and imagination to motivate the pupils. Where this is the case, pupils make at least good progress. On occasions, standards fall short of this and pupils make inadequate progress. Here the problems arise from insufficient challenge, particularly for higher-ability pupils, failure to motivate some pupils adequately, and inadequate marking in some areas which does not indicate to pupils how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Monitoring of teaching is not sufficiently rigorous, nor is there sufficient follow-up on the identified areas for development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but there are some good and outstanding features. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good, being well planned and stimulating, and meeting the needs of the children very well. Statutory requirements for the National Curriculum are met. Provision for numeracy and literacy is satisfactory. Progress has been made since the last inspection, but provision for information and communication technology still needs further development. Physical education is developed extremely well, with good links with other schools. The linking of exercise to pupils' personal and social development is outstanding and is having a major impact on pupils' attitudes. The school has been awarded Sportsmark status in recognition of its provision. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are able to access the full curriculum. Provision for higher-attaining pupils is underdeveloped, although this is an improving area with use of external opportunities such as at the local secondary school. Education for safety, health and well-being is good. Provision for curriculum enrichment, including offsite and residential visits, visitors, and special events like Music Week and the annual production, is good. Many pupils take advantage of after-school clubs, largely for physical activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Although the combined judgement for both academic and pastoral care, guidance and support is satisfactory, elements within the provision for pastoral care and support are good or even outstanding. These include: the effectiveness of the role of the learning mentor, the support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the use of targeted physical education to support pupils' personal as well as physical development. Arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of pupils are successful and regularly reviewed. The school works closely with many outside agencies to ensure all possible help and support is given to learners at risk of any kind. Pupils with particular needs are quickly identified and given appropriate support. They have satisfactory opportunities to be involved in all activities. The academic progress of learners is well monitored in the Foundation Stage. Systems are not so well developed in the rest of the school which hinders some pupils' progress. The new initiatives need time to take full effect. Some teachers' marking is too infrequent, and does little to indicate how pupils can improve. Consequently, provision for academic support and guidance is inadequate.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Recently, the leadership and management of the school have been too heavily dependent on the headteacher. He has worked extremely conscientiously, but his efforts alone have not been sufficient to bring about the necessary improvements. The overall leadership and management have had too little effect on standards, with the majority of learners making slow progress. Some significant weaknesses have not been addressed sufficiently well. Some parents have expressed concerns about this. However, the situation is in the process of change for the better. The senior management team and co-ordinator roles are developing well, enabling them to give more effective support to the headteacher, and the head has recently received good support from the local authority to help address problems. The school's self-evaluation accurately describes the school's position. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are consistently good, enabling these pupils to make good or very good progress. The management of the way pupils' personal and social skills have been developed has been another success story. The effectiveness of some strategies for improvement has suffered, once again as a result of frequent changes of staff, and not following through sufficiently with monitoring and evaluation. Governors understand the school's strengths and weakness and are supportive, but they have not challenged the school sufficiently to bring about adequate improvement.

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Annex A

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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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?	Yes

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weeth Community Primary School, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 7GA

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. You were very friendly and helpful, and we enjoyed talking to you. We thought you looked very smart in your yellow sweatshirts.

We think that your school has a variety of strengths. However, it has been given something called a 'Notice to Improve' which means there are some important areas that are not good enough. The good points include:

- The way that children are settled into the Foundation Stage and the teaching and support they receive there. This means Reception children make good progress.
- Staff look after you well and make sure that you stay safe.
- The school gives good help to those of you who find learning difficult.
- You are successfully encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles, and helped to grow up as sensible young people.
- These are the most important things that we have asked the school to do to improve:
- Help you to make better progress and reach higher standards in English and mathematics.
- Make sure that all the teaching is of the highest standard and that teachers use the assessments they have so that you can have work that is at just the right level for you.
- Improve how senior staff help to run the school.

You can help with the improvements by working hard.

Best wishes

Jon Palethorpe Lead inspector

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Lead inspector