

Chacewater Community Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 111859 |
| Local Authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 310705 |
| Inspection date | 5 December 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Alex Baxter |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 117 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Andrew Gough |
| Headteacher | Susan Grigg |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 March 2003 |
| School address | Church Hill Chacewater Truro TR4 8PZ |
| Telephone number | 01872 560302 |
| Fax number | 01872 560302 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most other primary schools. Children's attainment on entry is broadly similar to that expected for their age. This can vary from year to year, often reflecting differing numbers of children entering with speech or emotional difficulties. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is above that found nationally. There is an above average rate of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal times. There has been substantial remodelling and improvement to the school's accommodation and facilities since the last inspection. The school holds Investors in People and Healthy School awards. An 'Executive Headship' was introduced at the beginning of this term, whereby the headteacher has shared responsibility for two primary schools.

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 but rapidly improving school. Since the last inspection, there have been several staff changes and a substantial remodelling of accommodation and facilities. For a time, these disruptions, accompanied by financial restraints and large class sizes, weakened the school's efforts to promote improvement. In recent terms, improved facilities and increased teaching assistance brought additional tools that enabled teachers to tackle underachievement with increasing success. The decision to introduce 'Executive Headship' at the beginning of this term was based on the headteacher's accurate evaluation of where improvement was necessary. This brought additional teaching staff, which enabled the school to create an extra class, reduce class sizes significantly and accelerate pupils' progress.

Leadership and management and self-evaluation are satisfactory. As with the school, the governing body is undergoing a period of change; even so, governors provide sound support for the staff of the school. Under the guidance of a capable newly designated 'Executive' headteacher, senior colleagues are included in a developing team approach to leadership and management. Together they are seeking to strengthen the satisfactory links with parents. The school is now moving forward with an increasing momentum and has a sound capacity to improve, with promising signs of much further potential. For example, although satisfactory overall, there is more good teaching through the school.

Several parents expressed concerns about large class sizes, limited progress and incidents of bullying at the school. However, another parent summed up the views of many when writing, 'We are thrilled with the new school building and excited by the much smaller class sizes this year'. Whilst inspectors observed only good behaviour during their visit, it is also evident from discussions with pupils that on occasion, not all pupils relate towards each other as well as they should. Inspectors judge that the significant improvements mentioned earlier, together with increased numbers of teaching assistants and parents helping in school, are increasingly addressing misbehaviour. Pupils' personal development and well-being and their behaviour are satisfactory.

In response to the school's sound care, support and guidance and curricular learning opportunities, pupils enjoy the activities on offer, contribute well to the community and adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social development is satisfactory, but they show a good understanding of the cultural values of others. Pupils are enthusiastic supporters of charities and participants in school performances.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and are improving. Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6, where there is more consistent challenge. However, not all teachers use assessment and targets to best effect to show pupils what they should achieve. Provision is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) and represents a good improvement since the last inspection. Consequently, children settle quickly, progress steadily and enjoy a sound start to their education. Satisfactory and increasingly good teaching and learning through the school is bridging gaps in pupils' previous learning and lifting pupils' progress. Most pupils now achieve satisfactorily in relation to their starting points. As a result, standards are rising. By the end of Year 6, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Most higher-attainers do well in Years 5 and 6. However, several other pupils, including average- and lower- attainers and pupils with learning difficulties still do not achieve well enough in mental mathematics and

writing. In addition, pupils' speaking skills and independence are not always encouraged to best effect to aid their learning and the way they relate to others.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Facilities for children in the Foundation Stage are very good and have been much improved since the last inspection. The temporary teacher and her assistant in the Reception and Year 1 class promote close relationships with parents. These help the children to experience a sound start to their education and enjoy their learning. Several parents give beneficial support to individuals and groups of children during the day, listening to readers for example. The substantive coordinator is set to return in the spring. Current leadership is satisfactory. The children make satisfactory progress overall. Most attain the early learning goals set for their age; several children do well in mathematics, but some still need support in developing appropriate social skills. The children have good opportunities to initiate learning for themselves, both indoors and outdoors, and benefit from good care and support. Teaching and learning are sound. At times, once they have settled, children are not always challenged sufficiently to make best use of role-play areas such as the 'Post Office' or to extend their speaking skills to promote better progress in writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve pupils' writing and mental mathematical standards, making more use of their speaking skills
- use assessment more effectively to identify learners at risk and to set more realistic and challenging targets to lift pupils' achievement, especially for pupils with learning difficulties
- develop a more consistent approach in encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their actions and for their learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their ability. Children make a sound start in their Reception Year and develop their physical and mathematical skills well. Satisfactory, but improving, progress continues through Years 1 to 4. Progress is good in Years 5 and 6. For some time, pupils' progress in Years 3 to 4 was constrained by weakened teaching and large class sizes. Even though good teaching was sustained in Years 5 and 6, standards and progress over time suffered, especially in mathematics. Since then, improved teaching, aided by additional teachers and teaching assistants, has raised expectations and has re-established satisfactory progress. An increasing proportion of pupils are now achieving well. However, there is still some variation in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Potentially higher-attaining pupils do well in Years 5 and 6, but higher attainers should do better in Year 2. Standards in Year 6 are currently average in English, mathematics and science, but many pupils attain higher standards. Although improving and making satisfactory progress now, pupils with learning difficulties and some lower- and average-attainers still have insufficient skills in mental mathematics and in producing longer pieces of writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They say lessons are enjoyable, particularly interactive whiteboard presentations. Pupils express their views openly and confidently, and most are proud of their contributions to the school, as members of the school council or as monitors, such as in the library and ICT suite. Pupils are pleased that their views are now being acted upon; for example, at their request, silly behaviour in the toilets is being dealt with. Behaviour is satisfactory and improving. It is mostly good in lessons, but a few parents and pupils report that some pupils behave unkindly and do not act as responsibly as they should towards others. Pupils make good contributions to the local and wider community. They demonstrate a good knowledge of the cultures of others through continued links with charities such as 'Shelter-Box' and various whole-school events. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils show good awareness of healthy living, appreciating and using their free access to water sensibly. Pupils develop sound academic skills and are adequately prepared for their future economic well being

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Sound teaching and learning in the Reception and Year 1 class reflect significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but at times potentially higher-attainers are not challenged to best effect, limiting their progress. Until this term, learning slowed in Years 3 and 4 because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The school has successfully addressed this by creating an extra class and employing more teachers and assistants. As a result, teaching is now satisfactory. It has good features and is improving. Pupils are taught well in Years 5 and 6, where a consistent level of challenge continues. Across the school, information and communication technology (ICT), including the use of interactive whiteboards, is increasingly stimulating pupils' interest in learning. Good questioning and valuing pupils' contributions are also consistent features. Other initiatives need more time to take full effect. Emphasising speaking skills as an aid to develop writing skills is not evident in all classes. Using assessment and targets to lift performance, especially in mathematics, and to raise expectations of lower- and average-attaining pupils and for pupils with learning difficulties, is not fully embedded in all classes. This means that, at times, pupils do not have high enough aspirations or know what they have to do to improve. These factors still restrict their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is good enrichment from a wide range of activities, extra-curricular clubs and links with the community. Pupils come together as a school in performances such as 'Button Box' songs and 'stories across the world'. These contribute well to the pupils' cultural awareness. The school is strengthening how the curriculum is planned to cater for the additional class in Key Stage 2, to promote more links across subjects and to make even better use of its much-improved facilities. ICT contributes well to learning in other subjects and there are good opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy lifestyles using the stimulating indoor and outdoor facilities. However, resources are not always used to best effect in helping pupils to take responsibility

for their actions and for their learning. An increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy and its encouragement across the curriculum ensures that pupils' needs are met, but has not been in place long enough to extend pupils' skills fully.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils with learning needs receive appropriate support in class and from links with outside agencies to ensure their full inclusion. Arrangements to safeguard the well-being of the pupils are sound. Increased staffing and training are improving the way in which pupils with behavioural needs are supported. Newcomers to the school are included supportively. The school works closely with parents, especially when children are new to the school or when pupils have learning needs. However, not all parents feel that the school communicates effectively with them, especially those who attend work during the school day. Inspectors find the school is promoting links appropriately and notes that it is seeking to introduce a 'Friends of the School' group in the near future. Several parents welcome the opportunity to enter the school each morning and gladly accept invitations to stay and assist supportively in children's learning. Academic guidance is satisfactory overall. Teachers' marking is good and helps pupils improve. However, the use of assessment to set realistic and challenging targets is not fully established in all classes. As a result, pupils are not always sure about next steps in learning and what should be achieved and sometimes make less progress than they are capable of.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher gives good direction and promotes school improvement. The school has been both innovative and perceptive in grasping the opportunity to introduce 'Executive Headship', not least because this has enabled the school to increase staffing, open an additional class, make better use of much improved facilities and address underachievement. Although it is at a very early stage of development, there is clear evidence of positive improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and leadership. There are good lines of communication between senior colleagues, staff and governors and an effective focus on forward planning. The governing body, which is also undergoing a period of change, gives sound support. School self-evaluation is satisfactory and is strengthening. Much has been achieved in a relatively short period of time. This is seen, for example, in the way the management of new facilities has enriched learning, especially in Reception, and the way ICT is used to enthuse pupils in their learning. Other initiatives, including reduced class sizes, additional teaching assistants and using assessments and target setting strategies to raise expectations, have not been in place long enough to ensure consistently good pupils' achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

| | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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 | 3 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 |
| 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 | 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? | 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

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| 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 | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| 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 | 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 | 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? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chacewater Community Primary School, Truro, TR4 8PZ We enjoyed our visit and would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to us, particularly members of the school council. We were very interested to hear your views. We were also very impressed by the improvements made to the accommodation and facilities at your school. These are the main things we found:

- It is a satisfactory and improving school. Senior managers and new staff are strengthening how they work together to help you make better progress.
- You enjoy school, contribute well to the community and know how to keep healthy.
- Generally, you make steady progress. Quite a few of you do well, especially in Years 5 and 6, but some of you could still do better.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and are improving well.
- Behaviour is satisfactory. Most of you behave well, especially in lessons, but some of you should treat each other in a more considerate way.
- Staff look after you carefully and work closely with your parents and other people, especially to support those who need extra help. You benefit from a sound range of learning activities.

To help the school to become better, I have asked the headteacher, governors and teachers to:

- encourage your speaking skills and improve your numeracy and writing
- give you just the right level of targets to encourage you to learn more and let you know what you should achieve
- make sure that you play your part by being considerate to other people, and in learning to be more independent. Thank you once again, and best wishes for the future.

Alex Baxter Lead Inspector

6 December 2007

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Alex Baxter
Lead Inspector