

Goonhavern Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111864
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310706
Inspection date	4 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Bulford
Headteacher	Roger Arend
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
School address	Goonhavern Truro TR4 9QD
Telephone number	01872 573311
Fax number	01872 571652

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

how effectively the school's assessment systems enable staff to identify what needs to be done to raise standards in science and ensure all pupils are appropriately supported and challenged

the success and impact of the recent revisions to the curriculum in order to make learning more creative and exciting for the pupils

the effectiveness of the flexibility within the senior management team. Evidence was gathered from an examination of the school's documentation, parents' questionnaires and pupils' work, observations of pupils in classes, around the school and in the playground, as well as interviews with members of the senior management team, science and literacy leaders, pupils, governors and parents.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated 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

Goonhavern Primary School serves the village and immediate locality, although over a third of the pupils travel from further afield. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It provides an exciting and stimulating curriculum which inspires the pupils and enables them to achieve highly. Parents wholeheartedly support the school. One wrote, 'Goonhavern has many exceptional qualities', whilst others identified some of these as being 'the extremely good care', 'friendly and approachable staff', 'teaching of a high quality' and 'excellent school leadership'. This last quality is the key to the school's success. The headteacher's attitude is one of 'we can always improve'. The enthusiasm he engenders amongst staff and pupils is a tribute to his dynamism and ability to motivate and inspire those working with him. There is a highly successful system of devolved management. This means that staff join the core management team of deputy headteacher and headteacher, as and when their particular expertise is required to support a particular area of development. This has led to an excellent team spirit and a feeling of whole-school ownership of decisions made. Staff work together highly successfully as a cooperative unit. As a result all are wholeheartedly committed to the fulfilment of the school's aims and values. Everyone strives to further improve what is already an exceptional school.

Children in the Reception class get an outstanding start to their education. They have the chance to pursue a stimulating range of activities in a bright and lively learning environment. Children are supported highly effectively because staff have an intimate knowledge of each child's individual needs. In Years 1 to 6, pupils sparkle. Pupils enjoy their learning and the challenges they are faced with. They say of their teachers, 'They challenge us, but never put things totally out of reach; we find ourselves doing things we didn't think we could.' They reach standards that are well above average, not just in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but also in other subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT), history, design and technology, geography and performing arts. The achievement of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is outstanding. This is because the school constantly analyses how well it is doing and takes action to try to improve even further. To enable them to do this effectively the school has developed an excellent assessment system. It enables instant identification of pupils requiring additional support or challenge and automatically sets challenging targets for pupils, but also allows teachers to exercise professional discretion and override the system if for any reason targets set are inappropriate for a particular pupil. The system has proved to be particularly useful in monitoring and tracking pupils' progress in the physical processes strand of the science curriculum, identifying which particular areas need particular reinforcement. The whole system functions side by side with the school's planning arrangements as a central resource for teachers, and both are highly efficient.

Teachers work hard to enthuse and inspire their pupils. They ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn and use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, skilfully. Pupils enjoy the video clips and presentations that help to make explanations clearer and lessons more interesting. Teachers are skilled at planning a wide range of tasks. These are carefully devised to meet the learning needs of all pupils so that all are appropriately challenged or supported. Pupils appreciate the guidance they receive. They understand the levels they are working at, and say marking is particularly helpful. Pupils' work is beautifully presented and they take a pride in its content and appearance. Their achievements are valued and celebrated. This is evident from the magnificent artwork which adorns all areas of the school and is of extremely high quality. Displays around the school illustrate the breadth of the exciting curriculum.

Excellent links are made across a range of subjects, and this has had a particular impact on progress because pupils have many opportunities to practise their skills across many different subjects. The use of ICT is fully integrated into all topics. A wide range of visits and visitors as well as an excellent range of out-of-school activities provide pupils with many additional opportunities to enhance their learning. A visit to a local museum to study automatons prior to making their own was a real favourite with the pupils.

'We aim to turn out well-rounded individuals,' explained a governor. This is certainly being achieved. Pupils thrive; the care and support provided for them are excellent and parents are particularly happy with this. A comprehensive programme for their personal, social and health education contributes very effectively to their outstanding personal development. Pupils enjoy school. When asked what he particularly enjoyed, one pupil replied, 'There's too many things, I can't choose just one.' They are lively and energetic and have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and keep safe. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective, assertive and confident. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They played a key role in the interviews for the new headteacher. The school council works effectively and the 'Kids Counsellors' play an extremely effective role in assisting other pupils to overcome problems that they may not want to take to an adult. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Because most employment is connected with the holiday trade, families often have to take holidays in term time. However, the school enforces its attendance policy rigorously. Behaviour in and around the school is excellent and all the play spaces are happy and harmonious places. Through the development of the science garden and through projects such as recycling, pupils are learning effectively about their wider, global responsibilities. They develop enterprise skills through growing and selling their own fruit and vegetables and these, together with their very good literacy numeracy and ICT skills, ensure they are getting an excellent grounding for their future lives.

Staff and governors know how well the school is doing. Targets set for future development are demanding but achievable. Their self-evaluation is a little cautious – reflecting the school's philosophy that 'we can always get better'. There is an outstanding capacity for further improvement, as illustrated by the success of actions taken to improve science. The school uses data exceptionally well to check its performance, and the robust monitoring system ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is rigorously evaluated. Teachers share good practice and discuss strategies for helping pupils to become independent in their learning. Governors regularly visit the school. These visits are not always sufficiently focused, as the chair of governors acknowledged. This means governors are sometimes reliant on the headteacher for information as to the success and progress of new initiatives rather than judging this for themselves. The school improvement plan and subject plans are excellent, and are vital constituents in the concerted efforts to drive this school forward. One parent effectively summed up the impact of the school on its pupils as follows: 'Our children have bright futures ahead due to the fantastic start they have had at this school.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

When children enter the Reception class their attainment is generally slightly below that expected for their age. They make excellent progress to reach standards that are above average by the time they move into Year 1. Teaching is lively and interesting. There is an excellent balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. The use of the outside area is outstanding and children happily pursue activities

related to all areas of the curriculum in both environments. This ensures learning is relevant and enriches the exciting curriculum further. The care and attention given to children's welfare are outstanding and children with specific difficulties are particularly well provided for. There is an excellent understanding of the needs of young children and their progress is carefully monitored, allowing activities to be planned at the right level to help children develop and learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that governors' monitoring visits have a particular focus so that they can effectively judge the progress the school is making.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Goonhavern Primary School, Truro TR4 9QD

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you really enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. Your school gives you an excellent education, and is working hard to make it even better.

These are the things I liked best:

- Your behaviour is excellent and you are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning.
- You are all doing extremely well in English, mathematics and science and many other subjects such as art, music and design and technology as well.
- You take very seriously the importance of eating healthily at school and taking physical exercise.
- Teachers make learning interesting and fun for you, and you know how to improve your work from marking and target setting.
- You have an excellent, varied curriculum and the special activities arranged to enhance it are outstanding – your visit to the museum sounds super and I thought your automatons were great fun.
- The teachers and staff take excellent care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher leads the school extremely well and all the staff are very keen to make it even better.

There is one thing that could be even better:

- I would like your governors to have a specific area to focus on when they visit the school, so they can judge for themselves how well the school is doing with specific initiatives. I am glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard to ensure that it stays as successful as it is now.

Very best wishes

Mrs Christine Huard Lead inspector