

Gorran School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111882
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310713
Inspection date	20 November 2007
Reporting inspector	David Shears

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	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Whatty
Headteacher	Matthew Oakley
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2002
School address	Gorran St Austell PL26 6LH
Telephone number	01726 842595
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Gorran School serves a rural community on the south coast of Cornwall. Most of the pupils live either in Gorran or three other local villages. There is a small number of minority ethnic pupils but currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Gorran is a good school with many outstanding features. Pupils at the school are given every opportunity to develop as individual people within the ethos of the school which puts them firmly at the heart of all that it does. Children get a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage, where they make good progress. Following a period when progress slowed down in Key Stage 1, so that standards were below average by the end of Year 2, the headteacher reorganised the teaching arrangements and progress is now good. The pupils' learning accelerates markedly from Year 3 onwards and by the end of Year 6 pupils' standards are well above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress throughout the school due to the excellent care and attention they receive. More able pupils, however, are not always sufficiently challenged, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Nevertheless, all pupils make good progress by the end of Year 6, as a result of increasingly good teaching. This ensures that the provision for their economic well-being is also good.

The school cares deeply about all its pupils regardless of their abilities and aptitudes. There is a positive 'I can' culture that permeates the atmosphere and which enables pupils' personal development to thrive and flourish. They are looked after well, whether in school or on outings, and great care is taken to ensure their health and safety at all times. Pupils themselves have an extensive knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy and the older pupils readily support and play with younger ones. Both pupils and their families are able to receive pastoral support in times of need and the school efficiently makes use of outside agencies to support its work in this area.

The outstanding curriculum is rich and varied. Pupils have many opportunities to go out of school and these experiences stimulate their learning and increase their enjoyment. Indeed, the work given to them in school is similarly engaging and pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. Teachers plan a variety of activities to stimulate their thinking and encourage independence. Pupils are confident and display high levels of self-esteem. Nevertheless, they are also aware of the needs of others, not just locally but also on a global scale. They have ample opportunities to reflect on their lives and how they can improve the lives of others through a variety of initiatives. Children's personal, social and emotional development in the Foundation Stage is good, preparing them well for future experiences.

Leadership of the school is good because staff know their pupils well. The headteacher and governors are able to correctly evaluate the school, and bring about improvements to the areas that need extra support. This is demonstrated by their work on writing, which was an area that needed further development. This was acknowledged and effective strategies used that improved pupils' writing. The strong skills in managing improvement at the senior level of the school are less well developed among members of staff who lead particular subjects. This limits the extent to which their undoubted commitment to the school can have its full impact on its development.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The good provision for children in the Foundation Stage begins with the effective links made with the pre-school provider, who occupies the same site. This helps the school to get to know the children well, and they feel safe and happy to come to school. Parents feel welcomed into the school and encouraged to be an active part of their child's education. Children generally

arrive with skills and understanding in line with national expectations for their age, although due to the small cohorts involved this does vary from year to year. By the end of the year they have made good progress, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. Children develop well within a safe and caring environment. They enjoy the practical opportunities they are given to learn through play. The activities are well planned so that the needs of each individual can be met. However, the children could be made more responsible for their own learning by giving them more opportunities to make choices. They thrive on the positive relationships that they have with their teacher and the teaching assistant. They like to please the adults around them and their behaviour is outstanding. They start to make a good contribution to the school community, for example acting as monitors to collect the numbers for lunch. There is an inviting indoor environment, although the outdoor area is less supportive.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that there is sufficient challenge for the more able pupils, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Develop the role of the subject leaders to support further school development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with a variety of starting points, although generally these are in line with age-related expectations. They make good progress during the Foundation Stage and most achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Historically, pupils have not made enough progress in Years 1 and 2 but, due to the good management of the headteacher in reorganising the class structure, pupils have begun to make good progress. Standards fluctuate from year to year due to the very small numbers of pupils, but they were average in the summer of 2007 and are set to be at least as good next year, despite the current Year 2 having more pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 continue to demonstrate accelerated progress through the good teaching they receive. This results in standards that are well above average by the end of Year 6. The more able pupils make good progress but do not have enough challenge in their work, especially in Key Stage 1.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are openly enthusiastic about their learning and thoroughly enjoy the experiences of school life. There are so many opportunities for them to develop their sense of their own worth but at the same time develop an understanding of the needs and aspirations of others. This involves learning about people from different cultures and developing their own sense of place and community. They care about other people, as shown by the incredible efforts to support a choir of AIDs orphans through meeting them, supporting their tour and raising money. Pupils enjoy making a positive contribution both to the school community through the school council but also those beyond. They know the importance of looking after our world through recycling and using alternative energy. Pupils feel exceptionally safe in school. They generally behave well, although there are occasions when this could be more consistent. They understand extremely well how to keep healthy and safe. Attendance at school has been no more than satisfactory. However, effective strategies have been introduced to support improvement, including letters to parents and using the services of outside agencies such as the educational welfare officer. This has meant that attendance since September 2007 has improved and is now

above the national average. Pupils are well placed in terms of the skills they need for their future economic well-being. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan thoroughly for lessons and choose activities that stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm. This results in good progress. In lessons work is matched to pupils' abilities, although more able pupils are not challenged enough, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught well through play, although they could be given more opportunities to make choices. However, as they get older they increasingly become independent learners. Pupils are beginning to use self-assessment in communicating to teachers how well they have understood the lesson. They also receive useful feedback from teachers who encourage their achievements and support their progress by sharing how their work could be improved. Pupils have and know their curriculum targets. These are appropriate to each individual and give them a goal to achieve. The school's strategies to improve the teaching of writing have included 'documenting and research', which encourages development through practical experiences. This has been so successful that pupils have shown their work to other schools in the area, helping them to develop their own approaches. Work in books clearly shows that writing is improving throughout the school as a result of new initiatives.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Both pupils and parents are right in thinking that the curriculum is outstanding. Pupils are given extraordinary opportunities to participate in a wide variety of activities to enhance their whole learning experience. These range from music workshops to French lessons for all pupils, and from a partnership with 'Arctic Voice' to one with a multicultural school in Bristol. Pupils are able to swim in the school's own pool and take part in residential visits. They are National Trust guardians which involves activities including building Cornish hedges and planting trees. Pupils are developing a wide breadth of knowledge in so many areas through an integrated curricular approach that brings different parts of their learning together. They are given the opportunity to practise their writing skills through a meaningful, relevant curriculum that enriches their lives. Opportunities for personal, social and health education are interwoven into the topics, making them more relevant and significant. Information and communication technology is used well to enhance the provision. There are opportunities for all pupils regardless of ability to 'shine' as reported by one parent. This is a particular strength of the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Robust arrangements such as risk assessments are in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe both in school and when they are out on visits. The care for pupils' medical needs is excellent, with training provided to give extra support to particular individuals. Governors support the headteacher in ensuring that all health and safety checks are carried out, and safeguarding procedures are exemplary. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent. Early identification ensures that specific pupils get maximum benefit from the

appropriate range of interventions available. Good links exist with different external agencies, such as the educational psychologist, to support individuals. Individual education plans have suitable targets, which are reviewed each term in consultation with the parents. A 'learning mentor' regularly visits the school to support pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties and their families. As well as providing pastoral support, she also acts as a contact for other outside agencies such as social services. All staff are committed to the well-being of all pupils and this is appreciated by both pupils and parents alike.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher in particular demonstrates very good leadership skills. He has a distinct vision for the school, shared by staff and governors, which can be seen and felt throughout the school. The headteacher is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and these are communicated effectively to the governing body, which in turn monitors progress in improving the provision in the school. This is clearly seen in the raising of standards in writing. Governors support the headteacher well, and are currently developing their skills in using performance data to evaluate the school's effectiveness. Appropriately challenging targets are set and the majority of these were met last year. The senior management of the school is very effective in carefully monitoring the provision in the school. However, the skills of the subject leaders need to be further developed so that together the whole team of adults in the school are able to make a significant impact on the future of the school.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and how it is managed and led, many praising the friendly, welcoming staff, the excellent curriculum their children receive and how happy they are at school. The dedication of the whole staff team to want even better provision for their pupils, and their recent successes in achieving this, demonstrate a good capacity to improve.

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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?	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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	1
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	2
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?	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?	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gorran School, Gorran, PL26 6LH

Thank you for your friendly welcome that you gave us when we visited you this week. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking about all the lovely things you do in your school.

You told us that you really enjoyed coming to school because there are so many interesting lessons and fun activities to do. You certainly have a lot of exciting trips out to help you with your learning. You also told us that your teachers are really nice to you and that you feel safe with them. They help you with your work and show you how to make it even better. We think that your school is like a big, happy family who help each other to do the best they can.

We also noticed that you enjoy looking after other people too and raise money to help those who are less fortunate than you. You are also keen on looking after our world by taking part in recycling, for example. Well done!

We have asked your school to make sure that all of you have work that makes you think hard, to help you reach even higher targets. You can help by letting teachers know if you find the work easy. We have also asked some of your teachers to look hard at how they teach you, to make your work even better.

It has been a real pleasure to meet both you and your hard-working teachers. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to spend a special day with you.

Yours sincerely

David Shears Lead inspector