

Biscovey Nursery and Infant Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111903
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310722
Inspection dates	22–23 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Bull
Headteacher	R Hope-Pears
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Lamellyn Road Par PL24 2DB
Telephone number	01726 812006
Fax number	01726 813436

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Biscovey Nursery and Infant School is larger than the average school of this type and serves an area where there is some significant social disadvantage. The school has a unit for pupils with hearing impairment. Pupils from the unit receive individual support in the unit but are integrated into classes whenever possible.

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. It provides an effective education for its pupils in a stimulating and lively learning environment. The school is successful because the headteacher provides strong leadership and the commitment and dedication of the whole-staff team ensure that the school continues to improve. Parents are very supportive of the school and their comments frequently refer to how much their children enjoy school, the sense of community, and the willingness of staff to help resolve any problems that may arise.

Children's skills and experiences on entry into the Nursery are very limited, particularly in relation to communication, language and literacy. They get a good start in the Nursery where there is a range of stimulating activities and a strong focus on the development of their social and communication skills so that they learn to listen, share and take turns. This carries on in Reception where children continue to make good progress in an exciting and lively environment. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress, including those who attend the hearing-impaired unit. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2, and pupils achieve well from their low starting points. There have been good improvements in mathematics and writing in recent years. The school has done well to identify topics and strategies that enthuse and interest boys in particular, in order to raise their performance. These are beginning to have a positive impact but are not yet fully established within the school's curriculum, teaching and planning.

The enthusiastic responses and excitement generated in lessons illustrate how much pupils enjoy their education. Parents' comments endorse this and one said that her son had 'a hunger for learning' as a result of the good teaching, whilst others said their children enjoyed school because learning was made fun for them. Teachers plan thoroughly and they ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn. A particular strength is the way in which tasks are matched to the differing abilities of pupils, ensuring that all make good progress. The school is always striving to improve the provision made for its pupils. The inspiring curriculum is based around creative and practical themes. Innovations such as the mini gym and the teaching kitchen provide learning opportunities across a wide range of subjects. All adults take very good care of the pupils, who receive good support for their personal and academic development.

Pupils are lively and responsive in class, and thoughtful and reflective in assembly. They are learning to look after each other and the playground is a happy place. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to stay safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They chat eagerly about the importance of having healthy food in their lunch boxes, although this does not always occur in practice. They enjoy taking on responsibilities in school and eagerly raise funds for national and international charities. Rates of attendance are below average. Although the school is working hard with parents to improve this, more could be done to involve the pupils in encouraging their good attendance. Pupils' sound skills in numeracy and literacy and in collaborative working provide a satisfactory preparation for their future.

The headteacher provides clear direction for the school. Staff are involved in checking how well the school is doing and their self-evaluation is accurate. Information from data are used well to identify specific areas for improvement so that all pupils can perform to their potential. For example, good action has been taken to improve standards in mathematics and writing, although there is still more to be done to enable boys to achieve as well as girls. There is a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress and the majority join Year 1 having reached average standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their personal, creative and physical development. However, most are still below average in their language, literacy and mathematical development. Teaching is lively and interesting and focuses strongly on language development. There is a good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. The curriculum is good. However, the expansion of this to the outside areas to develop children's independence is still at an early stage. The care and attention to children's welfare are good and children with specific difficulties are particularly well provided for. Leadership and management show a very good understanding of the needs of young children and their progress is carefully monitored, allowing activities to be planned at the right level to help them develop and learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that strategies for raising the performance of boys are fully established within whole-school planning, and used consistently.
- Develop strategies and incentives to encourage regular attendance by pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are broadly average. Pupils make particularly good progress in mathematics and writing. In mathematics, the focus on problem solving and practical activities is leading to good improvement. Pupils' writing is getting better because the concentration on story telling is motivating pupils and enabling them to expand their vocabulary and basic skills. They are enjoying experimenting with new and unusual words. In addition, they are encouraged to write at length in subjects across the curriculum. Reading and comprehension are improving because texts are being used which interest pupils and appeal to boys as well as girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because they receive good support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop good social and moral attitudes. Assemblies and lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to be quiet and reflect. They explore the faiths and traditions of other cultures, as well as their own Cornish culture, which considerably enhances their understanding of growing up in a multi-ethnic society. Attendance is below average overall because of the poor attendance of a few pupils as well as the fact that much work is seasonal and consequently some families take holidays during term time. Behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils are polite and courteous and play harmoniously at break times.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are imaginative in their planning and make learning relevant and fun for pupils. Good subject knowledge gives them the confidence to be adventurous. Strong relationships and high

expectations ensure that pupils behave well and work hard. They are eager to learn because they find the teaching inspiring and exciting. Pupils respond to questions thoughtfully and are encouraged to explore and share ideas with their groups or partners. Younger pupils enjoyed working together to formulate new rules for a game. Tasks are very well matched to the abilities of all pupils. Teachers keep the pace of learning brisk. However, sometimes, in an effort to ensure pupils are not kept sitting too long, explanations of tasks are not always clear enough. This means some pupils are not sure what they are supposed to be doing. Marking is good, and teachers usually give pupils opportunities to assess their own learning. Teaching assistants offer good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so they make the same progress as their classmates.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is designed well to promote enjoyment of learning in all areas, including the main priority of developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The school has worked particularly hard to develop ideas and strategies to motivate boys and improve their performance, although these are not yet fully established within whole-school planning. The curriculum makes good use of the school's resources and the school site. Particular strengths are the provision for cookery teaching and the mini gym, which help to promote healthy lifestyles. There is a good programme to promote pupils' personal and social education and the wide variety of visits and visitors enables pupils to improve their understanding and skills. There are few extra-curricular activities available at lunchtime and after school, although the school has plans to extend these.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All staff who work in the school have a clear commitment to the care and support of every pupil. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified early. They, and those in the hearing-impaired unit, are supported well. There are good links with outside agencies to further support pupils when needed. Rigorous arrangements for risk assessments and secure procedures for safeguarding children ensure their safety. The monitoring of pupils' progress is good and they understand and discuss their targets knowledgeably. The school works hard with appropriate agencies and with parents to improve attendance. However, the pupils themselves are not sufficiently involved in these initiatives.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's good leadership and management are characterised by shared values and a clear vision for further improvement. Staff and governors know how well the school is doing, and their self-evaluation is accurate. The good understanding of what the school needs to do to move forward is demonstrated by improvements made in pupils' writing and mathematics, although there is still more to do to raise the performance of boys. There is a good capacity for further improvement and meeting the challenging targets set. Assessment information is used well to check performance and a robust monitoring system is in place to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. There is very good delegation of responsibilities and the system of working in unit teams ensures continuity and consistency of approach across the

school. The governors provide good support and challenge and are fully involved in the strategic development of the school. The school has the confidence of the community it serves and parents are enthusiastic in their support of the school.

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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	3
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?	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	2
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?	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**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all the activities in which you are involved. We think your school gives you a good education and is working hard to make it even better.

These are the things we liked best.

- You are making good progress with your reading, writing and mathematics.
- You behave well and are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning.
- You understand how important it is to eat healthily, and take physical exercise. We thought your kitchen and mini gym were really exciting.
- Teachers make learning interesting for you, and you know how to improve your work from marking and target setting.
- You have a varied curriculum and your learning themes are really exciting and interesting for you.
- The teachers and staff take good care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher and governors lead the school well and are very keen to make it even better.

- We think that a very few things could be even better.
- The school has lots of ideas to interest boys and help them with their work, but they have not all been put into the school's planning yet. We would like to see that happen, so that boys are always as interested as the girls in their work.
- We think that some of you have too many days off school. You can help with this by ensuring that you attend school regularly and are only away when you are too ill to attend.

I am glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard.



24 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Biscovey Nursery and Infant School, Lamellyn Road, Par, Cornwall PL24 2DB

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Very best wishes

Mrs Christine Huard
Lead inspector