

# The Beacon Infant and Nursery School, Bodmin

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111910
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	310723
<b>Inspection date</b>	5 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Laurie Lewin

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	164
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Dixon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sally Buts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	38 Robartes Road Bodmin PL31 1JQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01208 72773
<b>Fax number</b>	01208 72773

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school. Pupils are drawn from the immediate town area, but with a few also coming from the surrounding district. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Around three quarters of the pupils in the current Year 2 cohort have specific learning difficulties. Most pupils are White British. A few pupils come from other cultural backgrounds. The school has a child development centre that caters for eight pre-school pupils who attend on a part time basis. When they join the Nursery, children generally show attainment that is well below that expected for their age, with their communication, language and literacy and their personal, social and emotional development skills being especially weak. The school has received the national Healthy School award and has the Investor in People accreditation.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a satisfactory, but rapidly improving, school. In just over a year since its last inspection, the headteacher has provided excellent leadership so that all staff and governors have thrown themselves into the task of improving things with much motivation and enthusiasm. Good communication, teamwork and support for one another are the hallmarks of the way staff work. With the very effective support of the local authority, they have put good quality initiatives in place to improve teaching. In particular, the special educational needs coordinator has provided high quality support for staff. She has helped them align teaching provision more closely with the needs of the school's high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff have also worked hard to revitalise the curriculum to make it exciting and more interesting for the pupils. These, and many other improvements made, mean that although standards are still well below where they should be, they have improved significantly over the last year and the school is on course to achieve much better results in this year's national tests. As a result of the good teaching now firmly established across the school, pupils' achievement has moved from an inadequate position 12 months ago to a satisfactory level now. The good progress pupils now make in lessons means there is much momentum to keep standards and achievement improving at a good pace. This improving picture also applies in the Foundation Stage. Children's attainment is still well below the expected levels by the start of Year 1 and their achievement is satisfactory. However, tracking information and work seen in lessons show that good progress in children's work is becoming increasingly apparent.

A key area that has underpinned the improved standards and achievement is the implementation of clear systems for tracking pupils' progress. Teachers have worked hard to analyse results and make the best use of the information gained about pupils' progress to plan their lessons and give individuals sound academic support and guidance. However, there remains scope for improving this area further, with occasions still evident where work set does not always challenge pupils sufficiently.

The pastoral care for children in the school is excellent. Staff know the pupils exceedingly well and cater for their individual needs in a sensitive way. In particular, teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in helping pupils learn to concentrate, engage in their work and behave well. They do a good job of supporting all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As with other areas, provision has strengthened here so that the individuals concerned are increasingly making good progress in lessons. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves fit and healthy. Through the active voice of their school council, pupils have a positive influence on change in the school. This, along with the charity fundraising work they do, ensures pupils make a good contribution to both the immediate and wider community. The school's child development centre does outstanding work. Top quality provision helps the children who attend gain the personal, social and learning skills they need to be able to cope confidently when they start school.

The school's leadership and management have worked well to ensure that action plans for improvement are clear, sharply focused, and constantly refined and updated as things change. All members of staff are involved in accurately evaluating current performance and they have a clear understanding of what works well and where further improvement is needed. They are

well supported by governors. The track record of recent rapid improvement, revitalised provision, clear planning and strong commitment of the staff and governors mean that the school has a good capacity to keep improving.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Very effective provision ensures that children get off to a good start in the Nursery. In particular, staff are skilled at working with parents and carers to ensure that all individuals settle quickly in to the routines of the day. The school has strengthened its leadership and management in the Foundation Stage and this now ensures that provision in the Reception classes is also good. In all three classes, teachers and teaching assistants work as a strong team. They provide a very rich range of interesting activities, which give children lots of practical opportunities to explore and develop confidence with learning. The school is rightly focused on upgrading the currently inadequate outdoor provision for children in the Reception classes. Although the best use is made of the outdoor working area, the lack of proper facilities restricts the extent to which staff can boost children's learning in this situation.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase the precision with which teachers use assessment information to set tasks that challenge all groups of pupils and thereby drive up standards and pupils' achievement.
- Provide more outside resources for the Reception classes to enrich children's experiences in all areas of 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 their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children start school with a very low level of attainment. By the end of the Foundation Stage, and by the time they leave at Year 2, attainment is still well below where it should be. Nonetheless, because the school has improved teaching and curriculum provision to a good level, good progress is now apparent in classes and achievement that was judged inadequate one year ago is now satisfactory and improving all of the time.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

'I like school' ... 'we do good fun things in class' .... 'teachers always help you'. These were just a few of the comments from pupils that confirm that they enjoy their time in school. They feel safe and say they would always talk to someone if they had a worry or were upset about anything. Through the well organised personal, social and health education programme, pupils have good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They have a good understanding of the school's 'five rules' and develop a good level of respect for each other and the adults with whom they work. Many of the pupils on the school's register of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities struggle with concentration. However, all of them respond well to the skilled support and guidance of the staff so that their learning stays on track. Despite good progress made with improving standards, pupils' low levels of attainment mean that pupils do not

currently possess good enough skills to ensure their future success. Attendance is below average. The school is doing all it can to continually improve this. However, the poor attendance of a minority of pupils has a detrimental affect on their progress.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers organise lessons well. They provide activities that interest pupils. In all classes there is a purposeful atmosphere and strategies adopted, such as the use of 'learning walls', mean that pupils have an increasingly interactive role in building on current learning. A major breakthrough in boosting pupils' progress over the last year has been the development of strategies to ensure that work caters specifically for the needs of all individuals. For instance, teachers now readily modify their lesson planning so that activities vary and move at the right pace to engage pupils' attention and keep them motivated. This approach ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities now make much better progress than was previously the case. Across the school, teachers and teaching assistants do a very good job of encouraging pupils so that individuals gain an increasingly confident approach to learning. Teachers have worked hard over the last year to implement good systems to record and track pupils' progress. Due to this, much better information is now available to help them plan lessons. As a result, tasks often match closely to pupils' needs. However, this is not always the case. The school rightly identifies that increasing the precision with which assessment is used to inform planning and target setting remains a crucial part of measures to drive up standards further.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Over the last year, the school has put a lot of energy into remodelling the curriculum to make it more meaningful and 'alive' for the pupils. Good attention has been paid to providing the kind of work that interests boys as well as girls. As a result, a previous difficulty of boys achieving far less well than girls is no longer evident. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra activities, trips, and visitors to the school. Planning encompasses a good range of opportunities to cover personal, social and health education and this boosts pupils' personal development significantly. Alongside the good improvement made to the curriculum, staff now correctly identify the need to ensure there is a whole school approach to planning work to ensure that the continuity in pupils' learning is secure. Although the overall curriculum provision for the Foundation Stage is good, a lack of outdoor facilities for the Reception classes restricts the ability of staff to boost children's learning fully.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The pastoral care provided for pupils throughout the school is exemplary. This results in pupils behaving well and becoming confident in all aspects of school life. Parents rightly have a high regard for the work of staff in this respect. Staff respond very quickly to pupils' needs. Good relationships flourish with a caring atmosphere evident throughout the school. The school is vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety and all procedures, including those to ensure child protection, are fully in place. Staff provide sound academic support and guidance for pupils. They ensure all pupils have clear targets. Much good work has been done to upgrade assessment systems.

However, the information about pupils' progress is not always used as precisely as it could be to ensure the targets for work match the needs of individuals as well as they could do. Teachers have good systems for marking pupils' work and give pupils clear information in their marking to show them how they can improve. Occasionally, the improvement point raised in the marking is not followed up sufficiently well.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The changes in this school and the rapid pace of improvement over the last year stem from the excellent leadership of the headteacher. She has instilled in staff a 'can do' attitude and kept their morale up and commitment strong in the face of significant difficulties. There is now a vibrant atmosphere around the school and much enthusiasm amongst staff to keep things improving at a good pace. Their enthusiasm and commitment have grown on the back of the success they are now experiencing with the strategies implemented to improve standards and achievement. The senior leadership team works well together in overseeing the smooth implementation of improvement initiatives. The roles of teachers coordinating the foundation subjects are not sufficiently developed and provision in these subject areas is therefore not as advanced as it could be. Given the school's recent priorities, this is understandable. Nonetheless, staff rightly see this as an important next step in further upgrading learning opportunities for pupils. Governors have made good improvements to the way they carry out their roles so that they now monitor the work of the school carefully and provide good support for the staff and headteacher. They are, however, not yet as involved as they could be in working together with staff with the overall self-evaluation process. The school has good links with all of its partner organisations and uses these in the best possible way to boost pupils' learning and aid the programme of school 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?	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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
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	4
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	4

### 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?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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**

6 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of The Beacon Infant and Nursery School, Bodmin PL31 1JQ

- It was good fun coming to see you at your school! Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us, and helping us during the school's inspection. I especially enjoyed the good discussion I had with some of you from Year 2. You will be pleased to hear that the school has got a better inspection report this time than it did just over a year ago. Here are some of some of the most important bits of the report that we thought you might like to know about.
- You work hard in lessons and your achievement as you move through the school is satisfactory.
- Your personal development is good and you told us that you feel safe and enjoy your time at school.
- You have a good curriculum and your teachers work hard to make it interesting for you.
- Your teachers have been busy working hard to improve things and they provide good quality lessons. The school does a good job of making sure you are safe and that there is always someone available to help with any problems.
- Your headteacher works really well to get all of the staff working at their best. This has helped the school make lots of improvements and ensured that things keep improving.
- To improve further the school should now:
  - make the best possible use of all information about your progress to plan activities that always make you work at your best. This will help to make the standards of your work even better. You can help by continuing to work as hard as possible in your lessons
  - provide more outside resources for the Reception classes to give the children even more exciting opportunities to improve their learning.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Lewin Lead inspector

6 March 2008

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Lead inspector