

Otterham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111935
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310733
Inspection date	17 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	81
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Naomi Quinn
Headteacher	Helen Ward
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Marshgate Camelford PL32 9YW
Telephone number	01840 261344

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

- How well provision meets the pupils' differing needs and develops their interest and skills in writing.
- The way teachers and their assistants assess pupils' work and involve pupils in evaluating their own and each other's work to accelerate achievement.
- How the leaders and managers work as a team to bring about improvement. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils at lunch and play. Teachers' assessment records and pupils' work were scrutinised. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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

This is a small village primary school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a combined Reception, Years 1 and 2 class. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall, but is significantly above average in some year groups. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is above that normally expected. The school holds Healthy School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Otterham is a good school. It is a rapidly improving school with several outstanding features, not least the very high quality care, support and guidance given by all the staff. In response, pupils' personal development is good and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. The school provides an exceptional range of extra-curricular activities and promotes excellent links with parents. These underpin the pupils' great enjoyment of school and are evident in their much improved and now good attendance. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher plays a key role in bringing senior leaders and governors together as an effective team. She is particularly successful in promoting a strong vision of continuing improvement. Otterham is a community where all pupils are included equally and where supportive adults share an effective commitment to helping pupils become 'well-rounded' individuals. As one parent wrote, reflecting the views of most, 'The school has a wonderful atmosphere and this assists the children in their learning and reinforces the feelings of being cared for.'

From varying starting points and across the range of abilities, pupils achieve well through the school. Standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average by the end of Year 6. They represent good achievement in relation to pupils' capabilities. This is because the current Year 6 group contains a higher than usual number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and several pupils who have joined from other schools. In response to consistently good teaching and very supportive guidance, standards are rising and are increasingly above average throughout the school. By the time they leave, most pupils have good reading, speaking and listening and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Although improving, pupils' writing, particularly their spelling and handwriting skills, remains a relative weakness. This is because increased opportunities for pupils to write imaginatively across the range of subjects have not been in place long enough to lift skills to the full.

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because they are taught well and receive very close adult support. However, whilst children in their Reception Year benefit from good quality adult-led activity, they do not always have enough opportunity to choose learning activities for themselves and this limits their independence. Pupils make good progress through Years 1 and 2 where their individual needs are also met by additional adult support. Good teaching and progress continues in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is particularly successful in the Year 5 and 6 class, where pupils are enabled to make increasingly mature and strong contributions to their own learning. Pupils' progress is being accelerated by ensuring that the planned curriculum and learning activities interest the pupils, especially boys. Topics such as 'Ocean Locomotion', for example, stimulate pupils' enthusiasm, meet their needs and involve them in evaluating their own work. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is consistently good and includes them fully. The management of the pupils' behaviour and the way teachers and their assistants work closely with parents, develop the pupils' reading and make stimulating use of ICT, particularly interactive whiteboards, are especially good features. Teachers assess pupils' progress very diligently and use their findings very supportively to give high quality academic guidance. Marking is good overall, but in Years 5 and 6, it is outstanding because it is accompanied by very precise oral advice and develops pupils' skills as self-evaluative learners. These strategies

are accelerating pupils' progress. Most teachers use questioning well to extend pupils' thinking and to encourage and build on their ideas.

The school provides a good curriculum for the pupils. It is enriched by an excellent range of clubs and visits and also includes a strong emphasis on personal, social and health education. In recent years, the school has benefitted from significant improvements to hall, administrative and outdoor facilities and has upgraded ICT equipment. These facilities are used well, and with increasing success, to enhance pupils' learning. The accommodation for the youngest children lacks space, but has been improved by providing secure partially covered outdoor areas. At times, however, these areas are not used to best effect to provide 'free-flow' learning choices for the children.

In response to excellent care, pupils feel safe and their relationships are outstanding. Pupils' ideas are valued and acted upon and the diligent commitment of the school council reflects the pupils' maturing skills and good contributions to their school and community. Pupils say, 'We like coming to school because teachers make lessons fun and we have lots of friends.' Pupils adopt healthy, safe lifestyles and show good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These personal skills, in combination with their good academic achievement, prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. Monitoring and self-evaluation are thorough and effective. As a result, the school knows itself well. Targets are used effectively to address pupils' needs and to accelerate their progress. The school promotes community cohesion well. There is a strong commitment to the school, and to local and wider international aspects of community. These give rise to enthusiastic contributions from the pupils and their parents to local events and to the 'Shelterbox' charity, for example. However, the promotion of Britain as a community is less strong. This is now being developed further through cross-curricular studies and by inviting visitors from a range of cultural backgrounds. In recent years, increased extra-curricular activities, effective use of ICT, including the electronic collection of attendance data and strengthened assessment, represent significantly improved provision that has lifted pupils' achievements. Other actions, for example to link subjects together as topics to connect with pupils' interests and develop skills such as writing, although not fully implemented to best effect in all parts of the school, are already enriching pupils' learning. These developments represent good improvement since the last inspection and show the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills on entry to the school vary widely from year to year. In recent years, they have been mostly below average. However, children in the current Reception Year started with skills that matched those expected for their age. They are making good progress in response to good teaching and learning, which is enriched by a very beneficial adult-to-child ratio. Aided by excellent links with parents, children develop very positive attitudes which give them an important foundation for learning. Good leadership and management and a good range of activities ensure that children have a happy and safe place to learn. Staff assess children's needs accurately and promote the children's exemplary behaviour. All children, but particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, respond positively to the well-matched and close support they receive from sensitive adults. The children's welfare is safeguarded extremely well. However, whilst children make good progress and are on course to reach above average standards in most areas of learning, their independent learning skills are not developed to the

full. This is because, at times, there is too much adult-led activity and too little opportunity for the children to choose learning activities for themselves.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing, especially their spelling and handwriting skills, by giving pupils more opportunities to write imaginatively across the range of subjects.
- Provide more opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn and develop greater independence by choosing activities for themselves.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	1

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

17 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Otterham Community Primary School, Camelford PL32 9YW

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome, especially to the members of the school council who told my colleague all about your school. We agree with you and with most of your parents that yours is a good school. We especially liked the way you all get on so happily together and behave exceptionally well.

These are the other main things we found:

- You make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, generally reach standards that match those found in most schools. Many of you are doing even better in speaking and listening and in reading and using computers.
- Your good and much improved attendance reflects your great enjoyment of school.
- We were very impressed by the exemplary care provided for you by the staff of the school and by your excellent attitudes to learning.
- Teaching and learning are good. It is even better at times, for example in Years 5 and 6, where you are encouraged to contribute as independent learners and can explore your own ideas.
- The curriculum is good and you enjoy the excellent range of clubs and visits that are provided for you.
- Your headteacher gives a strong lead in encouraging staff and governors to work well as a team to make sure that you learn well and enjoy school.

To assist the school in becoming even better we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to help you to improve your writing, especially your spelling and handwriting, by giving you more opportunities to write in different subjects. We have also asked them to give children in Reception more opportunities to choose learning activities for themselves.

Keep giving of your best. That way you will help yourselves and the school to become even better.

Thank you again, and good wishes for the future.

Alex Baxter

Lead Inspector