

Calstock Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111951
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310739
Inspection date	9 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Davies
Headteacher	Jo Shelton
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2003
School address	Back Road Calstock PL18 9QL
Telephone number	01822 832646
Fax number	01822 832646

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, including independent learning in the Foundation Stage and investigative learning in science in Years 1 and 2; and how effectively leaders and managers bring about improvement by setting and using targets. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and school assembly and observations of pupils at lunch and play. It was also gathered from teachers' assessments, pupils' work and discussions with pupils, staff, 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

Children's attainment on entry broadly matches that expected for their age, but it can vary substantially from year to year. Several children, especially boys, start school with poor communication and language skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally, but is much higher than this in some year groups. The school holds the following quality marks: Investor in People, Healthy School Status, Quality Mark Basic Skills and Silver Artsmark Award.

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 has greatly improved its accommodation and resources in recent years and has significant strengths:

Outstanding leadership by the headteacher and strategic direction from the governing body that promote continued improvement

Excellent care, guidance and support which fully exemplify its commitment as an inclusive school

Excellent teaching in Years 4 to 6 that fully encourages pupils as effective learners.

These features operate in unison to ensure that pupils' academic achievement is good and that the standards reached by Year 6 are securely above average and often even higher. They also promote the pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being and underpin its good capacity to improve in the future. The school is good rather than outstanding because the progress pupils make is not as rapid in other classes as it is in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class. Parents enjoy good links with the school and one wrote, 'Calstock is a lovely school with a great sense of community amongst the children. On the whole the teachers adapt their teaching well to suit the range of ages in each class and children benefit from this.'

Children make a good start in the Reception Year where they make good progress, currently, for example, in response to the strong teaching of phonics. However, their independent learning is constrained, on occasion, by their having too few opportunities to initiate learning for themselves, especially outdoors. Good progress generally continues in Years 1 and 2. It is noticeably improving in reading and writing where initiatives such as guided reading, often supported by parents, is extending pupils' understanding. Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are closer to average in science, where investigative learning skills are a relative weakness. Standards have been mostly well above average in national tests in Year 6 in recent years. Currently, standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. They show that, helped by good teaching, all pupils, including an increased number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make at least good progress through the school. Higher attaining pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 often make excellent progress, especially in mathematics, as increasingly mature learners applying themselves diligently in response to excellent teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high quality support and achieve the appropriately challenging targets set for them.

The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She receives highly effective support from governors. Together they set a clear strategic vision for the school that includes pupils equally, whatever their needs, and monitor and evaluate the school effectively. The headteacher involves all staff fully in the leadership and management of the school and promotes a good team ethic. Staff share their expertise and undertake responsibility willingly. Leadership of literacy and numeracy are established strengths that underpin consistently good teaching and learning through the school. Recent staff changes mean that some areas of leadership, for example science and the Foundation Stage, have yet to secure such consistently good performance. Targets are used successfully to promote pupils' achievement in Year 6. At times though, especially across the Reception/Year 1 and Years 2/3 classes, targets are not always informed precisely enough by accurate assessments. As a result, expectations in Year 2 have not always been sharp enough, including, for example, in science. The school has recognised this and is using targets more effectively this year.

The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. The school's awards, especially its Healthy School status and Silver Artsmark award, illustrate significant features within the broad provision. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. The development of pupils' enquiry skills is a strength in Years 4, 5 and 6, but children in Reception do not always have enough opportunities to initiate learning activities for themselves, especially outdoors. Similarly, pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not investigate enough in science, restricting their enquiry skills.

Pupils enjoy school and are very aware of how to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils say, 'We like coming to this school because we have lots of friends, people are kind to us and we like to learn'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and reflects the school's community ethos. Members of the school council offer their ideas thoughtfully and, as with other forms of responsibility, for example as 'peer mediators' who address concerns at playtimes, pupils fulfil their duties reliably. Attendance is generally good, but is reduced on occasions, despite the school's best efforts, by too many holidays taken during term time. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a mature, considerate nature, recognise the importance of working as a member of a community and are very well prepared for the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Staff promote very good relationships with the parents and their children. This ensures that children settle confidently and benefit from a good start to their education in the Reception/Year 1 class. The school has invested heavily in creating a spacious, well equipped classroom for these children. Together with good quality teaching and close adult support, this ensures that children learn effectively and make good progress. Almost all children reach or exceed early learning goals set for their age. However, as several children, mostly boys, start school with poor communication and language, these skills are relatively weaker on entry to Year 1. At times, there is too much adult led learning and children do not have enough opportunities to initiate learning for themselves. There are also too few outdoor facilities for children to use independently. As a result, their independence as learners is not always developed sufficiently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for children in Reception to learn independently, including outdoors.
- Improve pupils' investigative learning skills in science in Years 1 and 2.

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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	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?	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

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	1
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

10 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Calstock Community Primary School, Calstock, PL18 9QL

- I very much enjoyed my visit. You are so lucky to have such a wonderful setting for your school. Everyone was so friendly towards each other, making me soon realise why you enjoy coming to school. I would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to me, particularly the school council. I was very interested to hear what you had to say about your school. Like you, I think that Calstock is a good school. These are the main things I found:
- You work hard, make good progress and reach standards that are higher than those found in most schools.
- Your excellent behaviour and the outstanding way you show consideration for each other reflect the high quality of care you receive.
- Your headteacher and governors are very skilled at keeping everybody positive and making the best use of all the school's resources.
- We agree with you that your teachers and helpers are good at helping you learn. I was very impressed by the way your teacher in Class 3 encourages you to take great responsibility for your work.
- You enjoy a good range of learning activities that help you to become very clear about how to live healthily and safely and how to be a caring member of a community.

To help the school to become even better, I have asked the headteacher, governors and teachers to do these things: provide more opportunities for those of you in Reception to learn by choosing your own activities, especially outdoors; and for those of you in Years 1 and 2 to investigate more in science. You can help too by continuing to work hard and doing your best. Thank you once again, and best wishes for the future.

Alex Baxter Lead inspector



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Alex Baxter
Lead inspector