

Veryan CofE School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 112011 |
| Local Authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 310762 |
| Inspection date | 16 January 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Stephen Lake |

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

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|---|----------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 67 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Helen Couch |
| Headteacher | Simon Welch |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 May 2003 |
| School address | Veryan Truro TR2 5QA |
| Telephone number | 01872 501431 |
| Fax number | 01872 501431 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who investigated the following issues: attainment and achievement, especially current standards at Key Stage 2, the quality of academic support and guidance, and the impact of changes to the senior leadership and governors. Discussions took place with the headteacher, subject leaders, governors and pupils. Evidence was also gathered from observation of lessons and study of documents. 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

This is a very small school that serves several small villages with some pupils who come from further away. All of the teaching staff, including the headteacher, have changed since the last inspection and many governors are recently in post. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Many more pupils than average enter or leave the school part way through their school career, especially in Key Stage 2, where in some years almost the whole year group has changed. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is high, but overall attainment on entry to the school is in line with that normally expected of children of this age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school because of the strong leadership of the headteacher and the way in which all adults in the school work together to support the children. The headteacher has worked closely with other staff to identify strengths in the provision of the school and areas requiring development. Governors are supportive of the school and manage the budget well. Some parents are concerned about the impact of the recent redundancy upon the quality of teaching and the time available for the headteacher to manage the school. Inspection findings do not support these concerns. Nevertheless, many of the new governors are still developing their role and procedures to enable them to monitor and challenge the school are not robust enough.

After the last inspection, standards at age 11 declined a little, especially in English. This was partly due to different groups of pupils but the school also identified ways to improve standards. Challenging targets are now set for pupils based upon a secure knowledge of individuals and rigorous assessment of how well they are doing. Progress throughout the school is consistently good. Children get a good start in Reception and maintain this progress as they move through the school. By the time they move to secondary school, standards are above average and pupils are achieving well, particularly in English, where standards at age 11 are now significantly above average. Pupils are achieving exceptionally well in this subject. This is particularly impressive when set against the large proportion of pupils with LDD and the large proportion of pupils who have moved into and out of the school. The needs of these pupils are identified well and suitable intervention strategies put in place to support them and enable them to achieve well. Nevertheless, the school has correctly identified that achievement in mathematics at Key Stage 2, although satisfactory, is not as good as English and it is now seeking to improve this.

The good achievement reflects the good provision in the school. Pupils are taught well and enjoy positive relationships with staff. As one parent put it, 'They are shown respect by all staff and, in turn, the children respect the staff.' Teachers have good subject expertise and most lessons are planned well so that the needs of different age groups and abilities are all successfully met. This is a key reason why standards in English have improved, but this same rigour in the use of information from the good quality tracking records is not present in mathematics. A particularly strong feature of the school is the way in which the competent teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they achieve as well as other pupils. Good use is also made of external agencies to support pupils with specific learning needs.

The successful personal development of pupils is a reflection of the good care, guidance and support given to each pupil and the high quality provision for this area within the curriculum. The pastoral care of pupils is outstanding - as one parent said, 'Children are very much cared for by staff and pupils.' Pupils say they feel safe because of the way they are looked after. In this school, close to the sea, the guidance from the Coast Guard on how to stay safe on beaches is appreciated and understood by the older pupils. The good quality provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is key to the way in which pupils support individuals who have different needs and abilities. Older pupils take care of younger ones on the playground and also visit the local play group to help there. Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility and make a good contribution to the school community through the school council and the Year 6 committee, where their views are heard and acted upon. For example, they suggested that they should sponsor a child in Uganda when they learnt about Uganda orphans after the

visit of the Pearl of Africa choir. Pupils say that they really enjoy school. They are enthusiastic learners and work well together in groups. They are well prepared for the future.

The good quality curriculum is brought alive by a wide range of topics, visits to places of interest and visitors to the school. These opportunities are used particularly well to stimulate pupils to write through the 'exciting writing' project. Very strong links with a nearby secondary school enable pupils to benefit from specialist teaching of physical education and give them access to good quality facilities. This has enabled the school to acquire the 'Activemark' award. As a result, pupils are very clear about the link between keeping fit and staying healthy. Pupils also have a very good understanding of healthy eating through their school organic garden that supplies some vegetables to the school kitchen.

The recent improvements that have taken place, for example, in English, and the school's accurate self-evaluation demonstrate that it has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The weakness identified in the last inspection has been addressed well and activities are now well organised. Reception is part of the Year 1 and 2 classroom but the children are taught as a discrete group with a higher level teaching assistant and another teaching assistant to support. This gives a very good adult to child ratio that ensures that each child gets a lot of individual attention. As a result, children feel secure and confident. They make good progress in their learning to start Year 1 with skills that are above those normally seen at this age. The classroom environment is stimulating and there are good opportunities for structured play. Parents praise the good links with the local play group that eases the transition into the school. As part of these links, equipment and books are shared. This has resulted in improvements in children's communication and language skills, which are now better than their other skills when they enter school. Nevertheless, the school has identified the need to strengthen these links further to enable similar improvements in children's social development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in mathematics at Key Stage 2 to match that in English.
- Make more effective use of the good quality assessment information to plan lessons in mathematics at Key Stage 2 that extend and challenge all pupils to do as well as they can.
- The governing body should develop more robust procedures for acting as a critical friend and checking on the work of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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|---|-----|
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| 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

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| 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 | 3 |
| 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

17 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Veryan C of E School, Veryan, TR2 5QA

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to you, even at playtime when we all got so wet! You told me a lot about your school.

I agree with you that Veryan C of E is a good school and that you really enjoy learning. Some of the things that I liked about the school are:

- You are making good progress throughout your time at the school and by the time you leave at age 11 your standards are above average. In particular, your standards in English have improved a lot and are well above average.
- You behave well and show respect for adults and one another.
- You are learning well because the teaching is good and your teachers make learning interesting.
- The school looks after you well and you all told me that you feel safe and secure.
- Your understanding of how to stay fit and healthy is outstanding. I was impressed by your 'Activemark' and how well you understand what healthy foods are.
- The headteacher, helped by other staff, leads and manages the school well.
- I have asked the school to do just a few things to help make it even better. These are:
 - To help you improve your mathematics so that you achieve as well as you do in English by age 11.
 - To use the information teachers have on what you already know to plan lessons in mathematics at Key Stage 2 that challenge you to do your very best. You can help by telling teachers when the work is too easy.
 - To develop better ways of helping the governors check on the work of the school.

Thank you again for your help. Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake

Lead inspector

Annex B



17 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Veryan C of E School, Veryan, TR2 5QA

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to you, even at playtime when we all got so wet! You told me a lot about your school.

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- To develop better ways of helping the governors check on the work of the school.

Thank you again for your help.
Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake

Lead inspector