

Cusgarne Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111845
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	325477
Inspection date	13 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

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)	60
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	Nina Cooper
Headteacher	Wendy Nicholls
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cusgarne Truro TR4 8RW
Telephone number	01872 863563

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	13 January 2009
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Fax number

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Age group 4-11

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Introduction

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

- the impact of work to raise standards of writing, including the tracking of pupils' progress and the use of targets
- the impact of the outdoor environment on the quality of the curriculum, including that for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and hence on pupils' progress
- the impact of the school's work to promote community cohesion, especially at national level.

Evidence was gathered by observing lessons, scrutinising documents and pupils' work, and from discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not evaluated 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 small school serves a number of small villages and hamlets. Almost all pupils are of White British or White Cornish ethnicity and speak English as their first language. The proportion with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average.

Pupils are taught in three classes; children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in a class with Year 1 pupils. The number of pupils in each year group ranges from three to 15 and there are also variations in gender proportions; for instance, there are no boys in Year 4.

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, as it was at the time of its last inspection. While standards fluctuate because of the small numbers, pupils leave at the end of Year 6 having attained standards in English, mathematics and science that are broadly above average. As pupils start school with knowledge and skills that are as expected, this represents good achievement, including by those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In particular, standards of writing have risen since the last inspection as a result of effective action taken by the school. More recently, leaders and managers have correctly identified some weaknesses in mathematics and have put good plans in place to tackle these. They have set themselves and their pupils challenging targets and work seen shows they are on course to achieve these. Pupils' progress is now tracked carefully using an appropriate range of methods. Emerging weaknesses are identified and effective actions are taken to improve progress.

Teaching is good throughout the school. In one lesson, pupils produced poems about tin mining. These were of an excellent standard and were read aloud with confidence and pride by pupils of all ages and abilities. The teacher and her assistants provided encouragement and support for the pupils' widely differing needs and abilities. This was done with great subtlety, enabling all to reach their full potential. Pupils enjoy their work, as when older pupils planned a party for characters from the poem Beowulf, using price lists and working to a budget. The pupils' very good skills of mental calculation were especially evident in this lesson. Pupils are given opportunities to assess their own work and progress, but marking does not always show them how to improve their work. The curriculum is good: pupils are given lots of opportunities to practice their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) in a range of subjects. There is a good range of activities, with music being a particular strength. Many pupils said how much they had enjoyed singing in Truro Cathedral. The restricted outdoor space places some limitations on activities around the school grounds, especially for children in the EYFS. An adjacent field has been purchased for the school's use, but considerable work is required to make this suitable. However, the school's excellent links with other schools and agencies offer many opportunities for sport and exercise, contributing to the pupils' excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they report no bullying. This reflects the family atmosphere that is at the heart of the school's ethos and which is greatly valued by parents. 'The warm, friendly environment has helped my child grow massively in confidence,' is a typical comment. Parents also comment on how well older pupils care for the younger ones through the 'buddy' system. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now well above average. The school council is effective and pupils are excited to be members. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. They make an excellent contribution to the local community and have a good understanding of world religions and cultures. Leaders and managers are aware that pupils have a more limited understanding of the breadth of British society; for instance, those who had visited London found it a strange place. Staff are rightly looking for ways of tackling this aspect of the school's contribution to community cohesion.

Pupils are cared for very well and the school meets the requirements to ensure children are safe. Parents report that they can discuss issues readily with staff. Pupils feel they are treated fairly; the chair of governors describes the approach as one of 'loving objectivity'. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and plans to tackle the latter are simple and effective. They are an experienced team who work well together.

Subject leadership is strong and there is a commitment to training and development of staff, including teaching assistants. Skills of all staff are used well, for instance, in teaching ICT. There has been recent major change within the governing body, and good plans exist to ensure its future effectiveness. Overall, the school has made good improvements since its last inspection and is in a good position for these to continue.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by the end of which they attain standards that are above average, especially in communication, language and literacy and in their social and emotional development. They receive excellent care, which enables them to settle in to school routines very quickly. They play a full part in school life, such as in assemblies and productions, developing their confidence. They are taught well, using a good range of activities that stimulate children's interest, especially when these activities are directed by adults. Recent changes in the classroom environment are sometimes limiting its potential to stimulate their interest more widely when choosing their own activities, and children do not have ready access to the outdoor environment. Children's progress is assessed effectively, using observation and photography to record their work, which is discussed with parents on a regular basis. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are also effective; staff keep abreast of current thinking and developments in the field of early years education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of the marking of work so that pupils are clear as to how it can be improved further.
- Develop ways of ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of British society.
- Improve opportunities, especially for children in the EYFS, to use the outdoor environment of the school to enhance learning.

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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	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
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?	2

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**

27 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Cusgarne Primary School, Truro TR4 8RW

We very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. We especially enjoyed talking to you as we found you confident, friendly and able to express your views very clearly.

We agree with you and your parents that Cusgarne is a good school. These are some of the most important things about it:

- You make good progress and pupils in Year 6 get above average results in tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science, and you also do very well in subjects such as music. Your progress in writing has improved lately.
- Teaching is good. Usually, you are given challenging work that you find really interesting. Teachers know what you do well and what you find more difficult and help all of you to learn.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, and your behaviour is also excellent. We were especially impressed with the lack of bullying and the way older pupils help the younger ones.
- You enjoy school, especially all the different activities on offer. Your attendance is excellent. You visit interesting places and are able to play sports and music with children from other schools. You obviously really enjoyed singing in Truro Cathedral.
- You are cared for very well, which is really appreciated by your parents.
- The headteacher and other staff are good at leading the school. The staff make a good team and are improving things like your progress in mathematics.

We have asked the school to make sure your work is marked in a way that helps you to improve it, to help you to learn more about life in other parts of Britain and to improve the school grounds so that everyone can use them to learn.

Yours faithfully

Paul Sadler Lead Inspector