

Blisland Community Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 111909 |
| Local Authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 325491 |
| Inspection date | 27 January 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | John Laver |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 25 |
| 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 | Dominic Fairman |
| Headteacher | John Ratcliffe |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 November 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Waterloo Blisland Bodmin PL30 4JX |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection date | 27 January 2009 |
| Inspection number | 325491 |

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

All the pupils in this very small village school are from a White British background. The number of pupils on roll is increasing, although there are only two classes in the school. One of these classes includes the very few children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is very low. Recently there have been major changes in staffing, including at senior leadership level, where there has been an acting headteacher in place since the beginning of the current school year.

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

Blisland provides a good education for its pupils. It is an improving school, and has some outstanding features, notably the provision for children in the EYFS and the quality of pupils' personal development throughout the school. The school has successfully met the challenge of staff changes and is now experiencing an increase in pupil numbers. Parents are universal in their praise for all aspects of the school. Two comments were typical: 'This is an excellent school with real community atmosphere and big ambitions for its pupils'; and 'I cannot imagine how any child could get a better education than this.' The acting headteacher, fully supported by the very small number of staff, has quickly imposed his vision on the school: one of raising academic standards whilst at the same time ensuring that pupils develop as confident, caring and fully rounded individuals.

The numbers taking national tests each year are so few that there are no meaningful trends in standards. Nevertheless, results do show that pupils up to the age of seven consistently make good progress, reaching above average standards in all subjects. This is due to imaginative and sometimes inspirational teaching. As pupils move up through the school, they continue to make good progress, although this slows slightly as they move into the second class. The standards of older pupils in reading, speaking, listening, mathematics and science are above average. Standards in writing, which has been a school focus for improvement, are closer to average. Whilst all pupils, including the very few with learning difficulties, make good progress, a small minority of the most able pupils could achieve even more. This is because the teaching does not consistently challenge the learning of the most able older pupils. Also opportunities are sometimes missed to extend writing skills in subjects other than English.

Pupils' personal development is a great strength of the school. Their contribution to the school and local community is particularly outstanding, seen in activities such as the vibrant school council and the organisation of events such as litter picking and charity collections. Pupils of all ages interact extremely well both in lessons and play activities, whilst pupils' enjoyment, sense of security and confidence permeate the school. These qualities are also reflected in excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils also enjoy the curriculum. Teachers manage the mixed-age classes well, and the school skilfully compensates for the limitations of pupil numbers and space to provide a good range of enrichment activities. All pupils take part in these, often in conjunction with other local schools. The school gives a high priority to the care of pupils, in terms of their well-being and in supporting their learning through the use of targets. However, teachers do not use the targets consistently in everyday teaching.

In this very small school there is no middle management structure. However, the acting headteacher monitors performance well and is supported constructively by enthusiastic and knowledgeable governors. The school plans for improvement rigorously and realistically. Plans include a commitment to developing community cohesion, which is currently satisfactory. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community. However, they have a quite limited understanding of their place in the wider British and international community. Overall, the record of improvement since the previous inspection, combined with good achievement, the strengths in leadership, good teaching and outstanding pupil development, mean that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The small number of children joining Reception do so with a range of skills close to expectations for their age. Children then make outstanding progress in all areas of skills, knowledge and personal development, so that the EYFS is a major strength of the school. Parents certainly think so. As one noted, 'My child's learning is rich, exploratory, collaborative and often determined by her own interests. We could not think of any more we could ask.' The EYFS teacher provides outstanding leadership. She quickly identifies children's individual needs, building on strong parental support, so that children settle quickly alongside older pupils. Excellent assessment procedures and imaginative planning ensure a good balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. The small outdoor play area is well resourced and skilfully organised so that all children learn in a stimulating environment. The school prepares children excellently in the skills, confidence and motivation necessary for them to benefit from the next stage of their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of a small minority of more able older pupils by ensuring a more consistent level of challenge in lessons and further opportunities to develop their skills across all subjects.
- Give pupils more opportunities to understand, and contribute to, the diverse community of Britain and the world beyond.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above the national average and pupils achieve well. All pupils, whatever their level of ability, achieve well, although progress in writing is less pronounced than in the other language and literacy skills. A small number of more able older pupils get additional opportunities, for example in booster classes, but could do even better with more challenge in everyday teaching. The very few pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and achieve in line with classmates. A significant factor in good learning is teachers' thorough and constructive marking, which gives pupils a clear understanding of how well they have done and how they can further improve. This contributes well to the good achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. As a result, pupils behave brilliantly in lessons and around the school and pupils really enjoy all of their activities. Pupils show a great sense of responsibility, and the school has responded to their request for more opportunities to organise events such as sports days. Pupils also have an excellent understanding of why it is important to have a healthy lifestyle, and they participate fully in activities such as golf and tennis both inside and outside lessons. They grow their own vegetables and are enthusiastic about the multiskills sessions held before school each morning. The good standards achieved by pupils, combined with their maturity, confidence and articulateness, stand them in good stead for the next phase of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Classes are small, and teachers know their pupils very well. The high quality of care and support contributes to the good learning. Teaching is good, and is usually characterised by a good match of work to the needs of pupils of different abilities and ages. Teachers also encourage pupils to learn actively and collaboratively. This was observed in a well-paced numeracy lesson. Learning objectives are clear, whilst the very good marking also helps pupils make good progress. Pupils help to assess their work and discuss it with partners, sometimes from a different age group. This is one of the strengths in their development as independent learners. In less effective teaching, opportunities are sometimes missed to set more challenging tasks which would help the most able older pupils achieve even better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Given the very small size of the school, it provides an imaginative curriculum, which pupils greatly enjoy. French, Spanish and Cornish are taught, and there are good opportunities for all pupils to learn a musical instrument. Pupils enjoy participating in community projects such as the 'Forest School' scheme, and benefit from visits to, and from, local businesses and other representatives of the community. The school is making some good links between subjects, although some of these are insufficiently challenging. The local schools cluster enables the pupils to take part in events such as sports days, which it would otherwise find difficult to sustain.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has rigorous procedures to protect pupils and, combined with clearly understood procedures for ensuring pupils' safety, they help pupils feel very secure. The few vulnerable pupils are identified early and well supported. The school has developed regular assessment and tracking procedures to monitor pupils' progress. Not all pupils are knowledgeable about their personal targets, but they are relevant and are helping most pupils to make good progress. There are good procedures in place to boost attendance. The quality of care and support is very successful in raising pupils' self-esteem and contributes to their enjoyment and outstanding personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has done very well in a short time to further embed and build upon the improvements already made since the previous inspection, notably those in information and communications technology provision, the use of assessment, and the consistency of teaching. There are very good links with parents and good relationships with other local schools. These help in the sharing of resources and expertise, such as teaching modern foreign languages. Particularly impressive is the dual focus on raising academic standards whilst at the same time helping to produce well-rounded young citizens, who have helped to give the school a very

positive profile in the local community. Overall community cohesion is satisfactory: the pupils' links with the wider community, despite some links as with a French school, are relatively underdeveloped and have left gaps in pupils' understanding of different cultures.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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/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? | 1 |
| 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 | 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 | 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

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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blisland Community Primary School, Waterloo, Blisland, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 4JX

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We appreciated your keenness in wanting to tell us about your school, and we were impressed by your politeness and enthusiasm and your obvious enjoyment at being in school.

Your parents believe that you do very well at school, and we agree with them. Many of you do better in your work than children of the same age in other schools, particularly in the skills of reading, speaking and mathematics. Your behaviour is excellent and you work very well for your teachers. You also work very well with other pupils of different ages. You told us that you feel very safe in school, and all the staff work very hard to support you, so that you make good progress in your work. We particularly liked the way you take on responsibility, for example on the school council and helping with environmental projects.

For such a small school, you get good opportunities to do lots of activities, such as the after-school clubs and the visits, for example to the residential camp. Your headteacher and other staff work very hard to give you these opportunities. The headteacher leads the school well, and your teachers teach you well.

Although you all make good progress, we have asked the school to improve two things. Firstly, those of you particularly good at lessons sometimes find the work quite easy, and we have asked that your teachers give you work which is more challenging. That way you can do even better. Secondly, although you do a lot of activities in and around the school, we have asked the school to give you more knowledge about what it is like to live in other parts of Britain and the world beyond.

Once again, thank you for welcoming us into your school, and good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

John Laver

Lead inspector