

Launceston Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111931
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	325498
Inspection dates	23–24 June 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)	209
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	James de Ferraras
Headteacher	Carol Green
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Windmill Hill Launceston PL15 9AE
Telephone number	01566 772143

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2009
Inspection number	325498

Fax number

01566 776783

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is a little smaller than average. Almost all pupils are of White British or White Cornish ethnicity. The proportion of pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in its Foundation Year class. It provides a breakfast club for its pupils.

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 which has improved significantly since its last inspection. This is due to effective leadership by the headteacher, leading to improved teaching and hence higher standards, resulting in pupils' good achievement.

Children start school with levels of skill and knowledge that vary from year to year, but which are broadly average overall. They leave at the end of Year 6 having attained standards in national tests in English, mathematics and science that are above average. Until 2008, there was underachievement at the end of Year 2. Results of national assessments in 2009 show that this has been eradicated. National comparisons for 2009 are not yet available, but these Year 2 results, which are much higher than in previous years, are likely to represent above average standards in reading and average standards in writing and mathematics.

A number of factors have contributed to these improvements. Children are given a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Clear routines are established and expectations are high. There is some excellent practice, for example through a wall display of examples of children's writing from early mark-making to the work of an average nine-year-old. Children match their work against the samples and look at the features of the next piece. This successfully introduces them to the ideas of assessing their own work and seeing how it might be improved. 'Look, I've put a full stop!' said one child proudly. Similar approaches are being introduced throughout the school but are not consistently used, hence some pupils' knowledge of their targets and of how to improve their work is much less good. The tracking of individual pupils' progress is effective and enables teachers to plan work that meets their pupils' needs. However, teachers find it more difficult to analyse the progress of identifiable groups such as boys or girls as the information is not stored on a computer. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress due in part to very effective support by skilled teaching assistants. Staff recently identified a group of lower attaining pupils as making slower than expected progress, and put in place strategies that are now leading to improved progress by this group. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, and care for each other, for instance as 'playground buddies'. Behaviour is good, although parents and pupils rightly identify inconsistencies in the way any cases of bullying are handled. Pupils have a good awareness of the range of faiths and cultures present in Britain and the world, enhanced for instance by email and other links with schools in Hackney and Uganda. The rich curriculum extends pupils' experiences and they speak warmly of their opportunities for sport, the arts, outdoor education and to learn modern foreign languages. A weakness in the curriculum is the lack of a suitable secure outdoor area in which children in the Foundation class can work, although this is at an advanced planning stage.

Pupils are cared for well and all requirements to ensure their safety are in place. There are good links with pre-schools and other schools. For the most part, parents speak warmly of the school, although a proportion feels that communication between home and school could be improved. The way bullying incidents are resolved is not always clearly explained. Leaders and managers set challenging targets which are largely met. The school's evaluation of its work is satisfactory. Monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure consistency of practice in all areas such as marking and in extending the use of the most effective teaching strategies. In part this is due to the relative inexperience of a number of senior and middle leaders. However, their enthusiasm and willingness to learn under the guidance of the experienced headteacher shows that the

school is in a good position to continue with the good improvements that have taken place since the last inspection.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Those parents who commented on the Early Years Foundation Stage all said how quickly their children had settled in and how well they had developed. The curriculum is planned to cover all the areas the children need to experience. The themes are chosen by the adults but there is flexibility within them for children to pursue ideas and topics which particularly interest them. Information about how children are progressing is collected in a variety of informal ways and their 'Learning Journey' books provide good evidence of their progress over the last year. In this particular year, the average attainment when they arrived in the class was above that expected for their ages. Attainment now is well above average, demonstrating good progress during the year and giving the children a good start to the next stage of their education. The children's safety is a high priority but they are not over-protected. Their good attitudes and behaviour help to reduce risks because they can follow instructions and recognise some dangers for themselves. In this well-run provision, the adults work well together and support children's learning through their questioning. The children enjoy the variety of equipment and activities and learn to share and play well together. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of sounds and letters. However, because there is no secure area for outdoor learning, children have no opportunity to choose their own activities outdoors. This restricts their development of the skills they will need to learn independently. A new outside area is planned to overcome this restriction.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality and rigour of monitoring by developing the skills of senior and middle leaders, ensuring that effective strategies are identified and used consistently throughout the school.
- Improve the quality and consistency of academic guidance so that all pupils know how to improve their work.
- Ensure that the plans to develop a secure outdoor space in which children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can learn are carried out as soon as possible.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities make good progress in their work throughout the school and standards are above average. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach the challenging targets set for them, as has been the case with their recent predecessors. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows they make good progress in a range of subjects. In mathematics, pupils in Year 6 worked out for themselves how to calculate the total length of lines on the playground by measuring a line and multiplying by the number of lines of the same length, then adding the totals for the lines of different length. In Year 1, as a result of excellent teaching, pupils read their work aloud with a high standard of confidence, fluency and expression. Pupils in Year 4 could accurately measure, record and interpret temperatures to a decimal place. A scheme whereby pupils are awarded badges when they develop a new skill in using information and communication technology (ICT) is very successful in promoting standards above those expected. Inspectors also saw

evidence of good progress and higher than expected standards in music, modern foreign languages and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they enjoy school and all it has to offer. Their attendance is above average. Pupils behave well in lessons and the playground, where new markings, planned in part by the school council, offer them a variety of games and activities. When bullying occurs, pupils say it is usually dealt with, but the approach varies from class to class. Pupils know how to keep healthy through diet and exercise and older pupils are aware of the dangers of drugs, alcohol and smoking. They have a good understanding of internet safety and of safe road and cycle use. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have plenty of good opportunities to take responsibility, for example as librarians and sports captains, but such opportunities for younger pupils are more limited. There are good opportunities for pupils to contribute to the community, for example through charity collection, planting and maintaining flower beds in a local park, and by painting a mural at a new bus station in the town. The skills pupils will need in adult life are developing well, especially in literacy, numeracy, ICT and in working independently and as a member of a team.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Consistently good features of teaching and learning include the good relationships between staff and pupils, teachers' high expectations of what pupils can achieve and the very good support provided by teaching assistants to those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Work is planned well to pupils' needs, including for higher-attaining pupils and those who find the work more difficult. Pupils' skills for learning independently are developed successfully from the start of the Foundation Year. Marking to show pupils how to improve their work is an emerging strength, but the approach is not consistent throughout the school. Teachers are enabling pupils to assess their own and each other's work but, again, the approach to this is inconsistent. Teachers make good use of a range of resources, including the outdoor environment and ICT, to enhance pupils' interest and progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers its pupils a wide range of opportunities. All requirements are met, apart from the requirement for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to have unrestricted access to outdoor learning. As a leading primary school for modern foreign languages, it teaches French, Spanish and Cornish. The school is making good use of a funded curriculum change project, which has produced high-quality work on the local area. This has included ICT presentations prepared, in part, by children as young as four. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in a range of subjects and the school is ahead of most others in planning a curriculum unrestrained by the usual subject definitions. Pupils enthuse about the wide range of clubs, sport and outdoor education opportunities, all of which are very popular.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school cares well for its pupils. Its procedures for keeping them safe and for child protection meet all requirements. For the most part, parents are happy with the level of care, although a minority feel their concerns are not always taken seriously enough. Inspectors found no independent evidence to support this view. Academic guidance is satisfactory. While most pupils know their targets and how to improve their work, some do not. In part, this is due to inconsistency in the approaches used from class to class. Pupils, including those in Year 6, have too limited an understanding of how the quality of their work relates to national standards. The school has good links with local pre-schools and the secondary school, and good quality work to prepare Foundation Year pupils for Year 1 was seen by inspectors.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders and managers have shown determination in successfully correcting weaknesses identified at the last inspection. With good support from the governing body, the headteacher has fostered a positive ethos in which all staff are focused on meeting the learning needs of each pupil. There have been major recent changes among senior and middle leaders, as a result of which many are inexperienced. They have achieved much in a short space of time, for example in improving quality in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in developing systems to track pupils' progress in order to identify and meet their needs. However, monitoring and evaluation are not rigorous enough in identifying the most effective practice and developing it consistently across the school. The school has a good understanding of its responsibility to promote community cohesion, especially through its links with schools in other parts of Britain and the world, and hence pupils themselves are developing a good understanding of the implications of citizenship.

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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 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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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

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?	3

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	3
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**

08 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Launceston Community Primary School, Launceston PL15 9AE

We very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. Thank you for making us so welcome. We especially enjoyed speaking to you because you are confident and friendly and express your views very clearly.

Yours is a good school. These are some of the most important things we found out about it.

- You make good progress and pupils in Year 6 reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science tests. You also do well in subjects such as ICT, art, French, Spanish and music. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making better progress than in the past.
- You know a lot about other people in Britain and the world which helps you to understand their point of view. We liked your links with schools in Hackney and Uganda.
- Teaching is good because you are given challenging work that you find really interesting. We like the way you are starting to assess your own and each others' work, which starts in Year F with their 'writing wall'.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, and your behaviour and attendance are also good. However, you and your parents told us it is not always clear how any bullying is sorted out.
- You help each other and do things for people in Launceston, like improving the flower beds in the park.
- You enjoy school, especially all the different activities on offer. You have good opportunities to learn French, Spanish and Cornish and you really enjoy the many clubs that are offered.
- All the staff and governors are working really hard to make the school even better.

We have asked the school to do three things. They need to identify all the best things about the school and then to make sure everybody is doing things in that way. You can help with this by politely telling teachers what works best. They need to make sure all of you know your targets and how to improve your work. We would also like to see the safe outdoor area for Year F built as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

Paul Sadler

Lead inspector