

Bere Alston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113246
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325780
Inspection date	30 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Rowena Onions

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)	207
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	Helen Donnellan
Headteacher	Kim Wild
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Station Road Bere Alston Yelverton PL20 7AU
Telephone number	01822 840410
Fax number	01822 840519

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following:

- progress in mathematics and writing in Years 1 and 2
- the promotion of pupils' enjoyment of learning and progress through the enrichment of the curriculum
- the use of assessment to set high expectations and to promote progress.

Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons; scrutiny of pupils' work in class; discussions with pupils, the staff and two governors; and a scrutiny of school documents and parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves its local rural area. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and speak English as their first language. An above average number of pupils have a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Bere Alston is an outstanding school. Teachers and all other staff hold very high expectations for the pupils and because relationships are strong, pupils try very hard to live up to them. Children enter the school with a wide range of prior experiences, but their overall attainment is below the level expected for their age group. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils attain high standards in English, mathematics and science. Children are given an outstanding start in their Reception Year. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. The school is very successful in promoting in these pupils the development and consolidation of basic skills. This, together with the skills they are taught in learning how to learn and the enthusiasm they gain for school and for working hard, provides Year 2 pupils with an excellent start for their education in Years 3 to 6. High quality teaching then builds upon this strong base and pupils' achievement over time is outstanding.

The pupils are delightful! They are energetic, hardworking, friendly and polite. Their behaviour is outstanding, in particular because they show great respect for each other as well as for themselves. This has a very positive impact on their learning. The high quality example set by staff and the very positive approach to helping pupils to mature enable their excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils know right from wrong, know that their actions affect others as well as themselves, and choose to make their actions positive. The outstanding curriculum provides them with opportunities to be creative and to explore values and beliefs through these means. Standards in art and design in work displayed around the school are high. The school makes the best of its links with parents and the local community in promoting this creativity. For example, the making of the exceptional felt work produced by the children is taught by a parent.

Pupils have a strong sense of community and take great responsibility around the school. Year 3, for example, ensure that waste is reduced to a minimum and that as much as possible is either composted or recycled in other ways. This type of activity also means that pupils develop an understanding of citizenship and responsibility in a global sense. Cultural development is very well addressed so that pupils are able to discuss a range of cultures. For example, they discuss similarities and differences between their own circumstances and the lives and beliefs of the pupils attending a school in inner Manchester. The curriculum also promotes pupils' ability to keep themselves happy, safe and well. A creative approach to physical education means that pupils want to be active. They understand the need to eat healthily and many make efforts to do so. The emphasis given to the teaching of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, mixed with the excellent enrichment of the curriculum, underpins pupils' outstanding progress and their enjoyment of school. They report that 'learning is fun'. Their skills and attitudes place them in a strong position to take advantage of their future education and later lives.

The outstanding care, guidance and support given to pupils means they become confident and self-assured. They report feeling safe and are aware of dangers they need to guard against. They are taught, for example, about how to stay safe on the moors surrounding the school, on the roads and when using the internet. Outstanding teaching is based on careful assessment of what pupils can do, and what they need to do next. Pupils are clear how they should improve their work. They comment very positively about how helpful teachers' marking is. They also comment on the very positive approach staff take with them. Teaching assistants are skilled

and well deployed. They make a particular contribution to the rapid progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. Senior leaders make a significant contribution to the maintenance of high quality provision and results. The headteacher is very proactive in ensuring the pupils reach the highest possible standards, both academic and personal. She is single-minded in focusing the school's efforts on maximising the potential and well-being of all the pupils and staff. Governors are supportive and are willing to hold the school to account. However, currently they are not taking full responsibility for regularly checking that the school meets its statutory duties. Instead, this checking is often carried out by the headteacher and, whilst statutory requirements are largely met, this places an extra burden on an already heavy workload. Bere Alston is a highly inclusive school that reaches out to its own community and further afield through highly successful initiatives such as family learning projects and through supporting teacher training. Its contribution to community cohesion is developing extremely well, but one area where the school does not fully meet statutory requirements is in the lack of documentation for this aspect of provision.

Parents and pupils alike are overwhelmingly positive about their school. Parental opinion can be summed up by one parent, who wrote, 'I have been delighted with my child's progress and development. She has developed a very inquiring mind and a passion for life.' The school has an excellent track record in the maintenance of high standards through its constant self-review and resulting development, and has excellent capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make outstanding progress in their first year at school. A significant number have limited experience before they enter the school and there is a particular weakness in their early language skills, which are often well below expectations for children of their age. The outstanding teaching they receive and the well-balanced curriculum ensure that they settle quickly, learn to like school and gain important skills in learning to work and play together and with adults. By the end of the year, the relative weakness in their communication, language and literacy has been addressed and overall, their attainments are only a little below expectations. Very strong leadership and management means that children in this class benefit from much of the strong provision that benefits pupils in the rest of the school, as well as ensuring their particular needs as young children are met very effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that governors help to reduce the workload of the headteacher by taking a greater role in regularly checking that the school's statutory responsibilities are met.

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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?	1
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	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

1 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bere Alston Primary School, Yelverton PL20 7AU

We really enjoyed our day at your school and would like to thank you for your help and friendly conversations. I know you will be pleased to know that we think yours is an outstanding school, and we think your headteacher deserves congratulations for everything that she has done for you all.

This is what we liked most about your school:

- the rapid progress you make in learning to read, write and do mathematics, and the high standards you reach
- that you really enjoy school and try so hard to learn
- the way you get on so well together
- the high expectations the teachers have for you and the way you try hard to live up to these
- the range of exciting and interesting activities provided for you
- that everyone in your school, including you, is working together to make it even better.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked your school to do now:

- share some of the jobs that the headteacher is doing with the school's governors.

You can help the teachers to keep your school an outstanding one by continuing to work hard and to enjoy school.

Yours faithfully

Rowena Onions Lead inspector