

Lostwithiel School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111916
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337777
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Neech

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Erwin
Headteacher	Carolyn Huxley
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and held meetings with governors, pupils, staff and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, the school development plan, safeguarding policies, the minutes of the governing body, records of the school's monitoring of teaching and learning, the school's assessment data and questionnaires returned by staff, pupils and parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of pupils in English and mathematics to determine whether progress in these subjects is as good as it could be
- the impact of assessment and target setting on raising standards
- the impact of the monitoring of the quality of teaching on improvement and standards
- the global community aspect of the school's work and the impact this is having on achievement.

Information about the school

Lostwithiel School is a smaller than average primary school which serves the town and surrounding area. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national figure.

The school admits up to 25 children into the mixed-age Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 class. Children join the school from a range of pre-school settings. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are taught in mixed-age classes. The headteacher has been in post since the last inspection. The school has National Healthy Schools Status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Team spirit is at the heart of this good school and helps to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for every pupil; as a result, pupils learn and develop with confidence. The school is quite rightly proud of its strengths, such as the improvements in teaching, learning and assessment since the last inspection. Parents appreciate the school, particularly the welcoming atmosphere and the care and support it provides. As one parent put it: 'It's not getting my child to school that's the problem, but persuading him to come home from school!'

The quality of pupils' learning and the progress they make overall are good and they talk enthusiastically about their lessons. Older pupils in particular have high expectations of themselves. Children get off to a flying start in the mixed Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 class because their individual needs are well catered for. Parents praise the timely extra support put in place for the youngest children. This rate of progress continues into Key Stage 1. Pupils tackle mathematical problems with enthusiasm and confidence and achieve well. Those pupils observed could solve problems by selecting their own resources to work out the answers and were proud of their achievements.

As a result of improvements in teaching since the last inspection, standards across the school are above average. The school has successfully focused on tracking pupils' progress and using assessment during lessons and as a result, good standards are maintained. The school's monitoring of progress shows that Years 5 and 6 pupils are on track to reach their targets; some are likely to exceed them. Teaching is good overall because teachers challenge pupils and make sure they are motivated and engaged. Just occasionally, teaching lacks pace and challenge so that pupils become restless and do not achieve as well as they could. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well managed; the thoughtful planning of interesting projects, such as the renovation of the conservation area, ensures they make the same rate of progress academically and socially as their peers.

The scrutiny of pupils' books during the inspection shows that standards in English and mathematics are good and that pupils have pride in their work. Teachers' marking praises pupils' efforts and helps them develop confidence in their learning, although comments explaining what they need to do to improve are not always evident. Targets for attainment are set and older pupils have a clear understanding of what they have to do to achieve them. The school has developed effective provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils and families. Good work with outside agencies has been a factor in supporting pupils and their families. The good curriculum is well planned and enables pupils to develop skills for the future. It is strengthened by an interesting range of sporting, musical and artistic activities. Visits and visitors to school give the pupils a

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firsthand understanding of the local community and are much enjoyed. The school recognises that the pupils' understanding of the wider national and global community is less developed and has plans to remedy this.

The way that leaders and managers transfer their drive and ambition into effective action has helped to improve teaching since the last inspection. Leaders and managers are fully committed to working with parents, carers and the local community to provide the best possible preparation for pupils' next stage of education. Pupils are able to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a number of projects: a particular favourite with older pupils is business enterprise and working out profit and loss! The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses, while governors are informed and supportive, and effectively challenge the school when necessary. This school has rightly made taking actions to improve the quality of teaching and assessment a continuing priority. The impact of past actions in this area, together with the strong team spirit and the desire to succeed, reflects the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise standards for all pupils by:
 - ensuring actions arising from the rigorous monitoring of teaching are effectively followed through so that all pupils achieve as well as they can
 - ensuring that teachers' marking has a sharp focus on helping pupils improve their work
 - extending the community aspect of the school's work to the United Kingdom and global communities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Good standards have been attained by pupils in their national assessments over the past few years. Key Stage 2 results in 2008 showed pupils attaining standards above the national average in English, mathematics and science. School data for 2009 show that the upward trend has been maintained. In Key Stage 1, pupils' standards are above the national averages in mathematics and reading, and in line with them in writing. Pupils make good progress, but just occasionally, in a few lessons, interest in the task is lost as a result of a lack of challenge. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and are well supported in their work.

Pupils enjoy their learning and confidently give advice and praise. An example of this was in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class, where the teacher invited pupils to look at each other's work during a mathematics lesson. This mature approach to learning is typical of how the school involves pupils in self-assessment. In a mixed Year 5 and 6 English lesson, pupils very much enjoyed writing a biography about their teacher and their work displayed a clear understanding of how to engage the reader.

The school is a calm and orderly community where relationships are good. Pupils respect one another and work well together in lessons. Older pupils accept the responsibility

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that comes with being 'super sixes'! Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and know about the dangers of smoking, drugs and alcohol. They say they feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they have worries or concerns; they know how to keep themselves safe outside school. Pupils value friendships and older pupils enjoy the opportunity to 'chat to friends' in a designated area of the playground at lunchtime. The school council works hard to be the voice of the school and enjoys the responsibility it is given. Pupils enjoy applying their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of real life projects, such as the 'biscuit project', outside the classroom. In applying these developing skills, pupils are well prepared for the future.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They know the difference between right and wrong and, on the few occasions needed, respond quickly to reminders from teachers on how to behave in lessons. Pupils enjoy receiving team points and older pupils say it gives them a sense of community, while younger pupils are proud of the stickers they receive for trying hard. The youngest pupils show excitement at working together. For example, making a tent out of pieces of material over a structure led to exclamations of delight and much talk about who would live in the 'dark tunnel!' Older pupils engage in thoughtful ethical and moral debates in topics such as the Second World War. Pupils produce examples of outstanding artwork which are well displayed to invite questions and excite the imagination further. Pupils' achievements in sporting, musical and local cultural activities are good and the school makes the most of learning about its Cornish heritage.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers in this small school know all the pupils well and plan exciting activities which lead to high levels of enjoyment. Relationships are friendly and classrooms are calm and purposeful environments. The use of the large outside site enhances learning and provides opportunities for activities such as team building and a variety of sports clubs. Planning for the physical development of the youngest children, with activities such as climbing and riding bikes, is good.

Thoughtful questioning by teachers and teaching assistants engages pupils well. For example, in one lesson with older pupils focusing on biographies, the teacher's probing and insightful questioning led to high level responses from pupils. Objectives for learning are clearly displayed and explained to pupils, lessons are well structured and pupils are offered a mixture of challenge and support. However, occasionally, teachers fail to pitch the level of questioning accurately enough to engage groups of different abilities. Teaching assistants skilfully support pupils' learning but at times teachers miss opportunities to involve them. The assessment of pupils' progress during lessons is good, and linked to pupils' targets, but teachers' marking in books does not always show pupils what they need to do to improve.

The well-organised curriculum, which focuses on applying skills across all areas of learning, has underpinned the improvements in teaching and learning and successfully provides pupils with learning that is relevant and meaningful. The curriculum is further enhanced by a range of clubs and after-school activities, a particular favourite with pupils and parents being the surfing club.

The well-targeted care and support for pupils enable them to develop in a secure environment. All adults show a good understanding of the needs of individuals and provide an inclusive environment where pupils can learn confidently, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils in mixed-age classes work well together and the team spirit continues in the playground during breaktimes, where incidents of anti-social behaviour are minimal.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2
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How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leaders and managers provide strong educational direction and effectively involve a range of other agencies and partners. Parents and carers are appreciative of the school's work in preparing their children for the next stage of their education.

There are systems in place for monitoring the provision and these lead to appropriate action such as the observation of teaching and learning. The school realises that it must now pay more attention to ensuring that the recommendations for improvement discussed with teachers are effectively implemented. The school is good at promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination; pupils thrive in the inclusive environment. The views of parents and carers are taken into consideration and parents report feeling comfortable in approaching the school with any worries or concerns. The safeguarding arrangements are robust and satisfactorily meet national requirements. The school has effective links with local schools, is well respected in the community it serves and is actively involved in many local events, such as the Lostwithiel Carnival. Leaders and managers are beginning to develop ways of extending the opportunities for pupils to develop a better understanding of communities in other parts of Britain and the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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The quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good so that children are growing into confident, independent learners able to conduct themselves safely. Children join the school with broadly average skills for their age. They relate well to one another and enthusiastically join in with activities. During their time in the Reception Year, the progress made in all areas is good. Effective support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities means that they learn as well as their peers. The children develop levels of independence through a range of well-planned activities and tasks and have effective opportunities to make their own choices. The balance of teacher-led and independent activities encourages children to be active in their learning. The regular review of children's progress ensures that planning meets their individual needs. Parents appreciate the induction arrangements which help children settle into school. Leaders have a clear understanding of what improvements are required, such as more opportunities for physical development activities.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

From the returned questionnaires, it is clear that the school enjoys the support of parents. Responses to each of the questions were almost all positive and many added comments praising the school's work. One comment, typical of many, was: 'My child has grown in confidence as she has progressed through the school'. In particular, parents commented on the commitment and hard work of the staff, the friendly atmosphere and the timely support for children when needed. A very few parents recorded concerns about the safety of the site but the inspectors found no evidence of this during inspection. A minority of parents would like more information on their child's progress and the school has recognised this is an area for development. A very few parents felt their views were not always listened to but the inspectors found evidence to suggest that the school went the 'extra mile' to respond to parents' and pupils' concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lostwithiel School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 125 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	47	28	48	0	0	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	22	38	32	55	3	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	26	29	50	10	17	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	28	30	52	2	5	7	12
The teaching is good at this school	17	29	33	57	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	24	36	62	4	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	34	36	62	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	9	16	38	66	7	12	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	24	35	60	5	9	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	21	29	50	9	16	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	19	27	47	13	22	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	15	26	23	40	7	12	5	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	36	30	52	4	7	2	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lostwithiel School, Lostwithiel, PL22 0AJ

Thank you so much for welcoming the inspection team to your school when we visited recently. We enjoyed spending time with you and finding out about Lostwithiel School. We would like to say a special thank-you to the school council for talking to us about your school. This is a letter to tell you about what the inspection team found.

Lostwithiel School provides you with a good education. The standard of your work is above average and your achievement throughout the school is good. This is because you are well taught and the care and support you are given is effective. You enjoy learning about a range of topics and use your literacy and numeracy skills well in project work. Your artwork is very imaginative and you take part in musical and sporting activities with enthusiasm.

It is clear that you enjoy your learning and are keen to come to school. We were impressed by how well you work together and how you discuss your work maturely. You feel safe in school because the school looks after you. You know how to keep yourselves healthy and we liked the fact that you know you need plenty of exercise and plenty of sleep so that your brain can work well at school!

The leaders and managers of your school do a great job in making sure you have a good education. We have asked them to continue to make teaching even better and to make sure your teachers show you how you can improve your work when they mark your books. We have also asked them to give you more opportunities to learn about people who live in other parts of Britain and the world.

Keep doing your best and working with the adults in school to make sure Lostwithiel School gets even better.

Yours faithfully

Jane Neech

Lead Inspector

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