

Padstow School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111918
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337778
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2010
Reporting inspector	John Laver

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	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Malkinson
Headteacher	Phil Banks
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2007
School address	Grenville Road Padstow Cornwall PL28 8EX
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, observing nine teaching staff. They also observed activities at break and lunchtimes, and held meetings with pupils, staff, governors, and parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, looking at plans, policies, reports and records of pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors analysed 40 questionnaires from parents and carers, 22 staff questionnaires and 89 pupil questionnaires.

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

- how well pupils are achieving, particularly girls and more able pupils
- how much progress pupils are making in mathematics
- how effectively assessment is being used to improve teaching and learning
- how effectively leaders and managers are monitoring progress
- how well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are progressing.

Information about the school

Almost all pupils in this smaller than average primary school are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, mostly speech and behavioural issues, or with disabilities, is close to average. The school has Healthy Schools status and holds the International School Award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Parents are very appreciative of the school's provision for their children. Typical was the comment of two parents that, 'We feel that our son has been welcomed and embraced into school life. Learning experiences are creative and positive. The school atmosphere feels very positive.' Parents and carers believe that, despite problems of underachievement in recent years, the school is on an upward curve, while its inclusive philosophy has contributed strongly to the good personal development of all pupils.

Children join the Reception class with skills that are broadly in line with typical expectations for their age. Although they make satisfactory progress by the end of Reception, some do not achieve as much as they should. This is because there is insufficient emphasis on encouraging independent, child-initiated learning, particularly for the more able children. Higher up the school, recent national test results showed underachievement, particularly in mathematics, and particularly amongst girls. Many pupils now achieve well in individual lessons, and progress is satisfactory but improving. Attainment is currently broadly average, but like progress, is also improving. The previous gap between the progress of boys and girls has been largely eliminated. The improving performance has been brought about by a combination of improvements in teaching, changes to the curriculum and more rigorous monitoring by a leadership team committed to higher standards. Several of the strategies employed have been implemented recently and are not yet fully embedded throughout the school. However, most pupils are now on track to meet appropriately challenging targets. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, due mainly to good support in lessons from teaching assistants and volunteers. A small number of more able pupils, especially higher up the school, do not achieve as well as they should. This results from teachers having insufficiently high expectations, so that these pupils are not always challenged or given enough independence. Despite a rigorous system of tracking pupils' progress, feedback to pupils, and especially marking, does not give pupils enough information on how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. Several pupils have themselves commented on this.

Pupils talk about the range of interesting lessons and the enrichment activities outside lessons. Attendance has improved considerably on recent years and is now in line with the national average. Pupils feel very safe and well supported, and behave well. The leadership is committed to improve the school further. Issues from the previous inspection have been partially addressed. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Improvement strategies are still at a relatively early stage, but the evidence of better standards and progress shows that the school has a satisfactory, and developing, capacity for sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - making more use of the children's capacity for acting independently and initiating more challenging activities.
- Improve teaching so that it all matches the quality of the best practice in the school by:
 - encouraging teachers to have higher expectations of what pupils, especially the more able, can achieve in lessons.
- Improve the quality of pupils' learning and progress by:
 - giving more consistent feedback, including marking, so that pupils understand their progress better and how they can improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Although performance in mathematics has improved more slowly than in English, overall attainment and progress are now better than in recent years. Pupils are better equipped for the next phase of education, although insufficient challenge for some more able pupils sometimes restricts their progress. Extra support for pupils in mathematics and the use of expertise both from within and outside the school has enabled less confident pupils to achieve better. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Although standards in English are improving, the quality of presentation in pupils' work is not high enough.

Pupils behave well, and they enjoy very good relationships with each other and with staff. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and social development is a particular strength. Pupils are developing a good understanding of global issues through studying a range of relevant topics and making links with schools in other countries such as the United States. Pupils are able to explain why exercise and good eating habits are important to a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy taking responsibility, whether serving on the school council or helping other pupils. They also contribute to charities and events in the local community. More able pupils in particular are given good opportunities to develop a broader range of skills and economic understanding, for example by being given responsibility for the management of the tuck shop.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There is no unsatisfactory teaching, although inconsistencies sometimes limit the quality of learning. In the best lessons, teachers engage pupils in a range of active tasks which develop their research and collaborative skills, and also good understanding. This was seen, for example, in a science lesson in which pupils investigated different types of rocks and soil, then analysed and recorded the results. In the best lessons, pupils learn well because they have a positive attitude and respond enthusiastically to good questioning and practical tasks. Teachers use other adults effectively to help pupils with particular learning needs make good progress. Where teaching is satisfactory, rather than better, teachers are too controlling, with insufficient pace or challenge. This restricts the learning of more able pupils in particular. Marking is sometimes constructive, but at other times is too generalised or given to over-praising. Pupils enjoy lessons, which now benefit from a more varied approach to the curriculum, incorporating a range of projects and themes. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about cross-curricular tasks such as the River Camel project. There is a high take-up of the several after school clubs. The school makes good use of partnerships, for example with the local secondary school, which provides extra teaching expertise for particularly gifted pupils. A developing range of strategies includes one-to-one support for pupils who were previously underachieving, resulting in improved progress. The school has good relationships with other agencies, benefiting vulnerable pupils, and effective procedures have improved attendance, which is now broadly average.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership is supported by active and knowledgeable governors, who hold the school to account. Together, leaders and governors have a sound understanding of what is needed for further improvement, and have planned appropriately. Monitoring is now more regular, focused and rigorous, and subject coordinators have begun to play a more prominent role in monitoring, evaluation, and promoting improvement. The school very successfully promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination, and this accounts for the harmonious ethos recognised by both parents and carers and pupils. There are robust procedures to ensure that all pupils are well safeguarded. Pupils are made aware of issues such as internet safety, and all staff are well trained in appropriate safety procedures. There are good links with local schools and with parents and carers, for example through the use of pupils' target books. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion and has a high profile in the local community. Pupils contribute to several local events. There are also developing links with a school in Birmingham, and several links with overseas schools; in addition, pupils benefit from their study of varied role models such as Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress overall in the various areas of learning, although they often make good progress in particular strands, particularly social development and communication skills. Children's skills and knowledge are broadly average when they leave Reception. Although leaders record and analyse children's progress, until very recently, the assessments have not been reliable. Provision is improving, although some developments are not yet fully embedded. The children have positive attitudes towards learning, but sometimes there are not enough opportunities for them to show the independence and active engagement of which most are capable. In addition, staff occasionally miss opportunities to extend pupils' learning when they are engaged in creative or play activities. Leadership is satisfactory: staff are becoming aware of the need to monitor progress more closely and adapt activities as a result. Day-to-day management is very smooth, and parents attest to the caring nature of Early Years Foundation Stage provision and the security and good relationships enjoyed by children. Parents and carers also appreciate the way the school involves them in their children's learning. A strong feature of personal development is evident in the way children cooperate very well, and the fact that many of them talk confidently and clearly to visitors.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers are very complimentary about their children's experience at the school. They are unanimous in their praise of the leadership. Typical of many comments was one parent's assertion that Padstow School 'has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, which builds confidence and makes our children very happy'. Parents are particularly positive about the role of the headteacher, supported by a committed staff, in moving the school forward. They believe that their children are very well cared for. A very small minority of parents and carers are concerned that the school does not manage the few instances of misbehaviour well. While the inspection team acknowledges these concerns, it believes that the school is a

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very harmonious community in which pupils feel very safe and get on very well both with each other and with adults in the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Padstow 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there 174 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	76	9	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	82	7	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	70	12	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	70	9	23	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	58	15	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	62	13	33	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	58	16	40	0	0	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)	22	55	17	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	70	28	70	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	45	14	35	4	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	58	16	40	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	75	10	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	70	10	25	0	0	0	0

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.



12 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Padstow School, Grenville Road, Padstow, PL28 8EX

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school this week. We were very impressed with your willingness to tell us about your school, and the things you liked, such as the after school clubs and your teachers. We know that you feel safe and enjoy coming to school, especially now that more of you attend school more regularly than used to be the case. The school gives you a satisfactory education. It is improving, because your headteacher and the staff are working hard to make sure that you make more progress in your learning than you did until recently. For example, many of you are now doing better in mathematics because you get extra help. Some of you do not get enough opportunities to learn more independently and you do tasks which are too easy for you. You have well-organised lessons, and you told us how you enjoy some of the projects such as the River Camel study. We agree with you that your teachers and other adults look after you well. Sometimes, you are not given enough information about how well you are doing, and several of you told us this. Sometimes, your work could be presented more neatly.

You can make better progress and improve the standard of your work by continuing to work hard in lessons. We have also asked that:

- the youngest children get more opportunities to choose activities and work independently
- the school thinks about ways of making the work more challenging for every one of you, so you can make more progress
- you are given more information, especially in marked work, so you know how well you are doing and how you can improve your work still further.

Thank you again for such an interesting visit to your school.

Yours sincerely

John Laver

(Lead inspector)

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