

Dobwalls Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111957
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337792
Inspection dates	4–5 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	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernadette Yeatman
Headteacher	Jason Holland
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Approximately 60% of the time was spent looking at pupils' learning. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, observing eight teaching staff. They also observed activities before school, at break and lunchtimes, and held meetings with staff, pupils, governors and parents and carers. Inspectors looked at plans, policies, reports and the school's tracking of pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed 45 questionnaires from parents and carers, 18 staff questionnaires and 98 questionnaires from pupils.

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

- how well pupils are achieving in core subjects, and especially in writing
- the extent to which pupils' personal development, the quality of the teaching and the curriculum are underpinning pupils' progress
- how developed is the school's contribution to community cohesion
- how effectively leadership and management are sustaining school improvement.

Information about the school

The vast majority of pupils in this smaller-than-average primary school are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with a range of learning difficulties, which include speech, language and emotional issues, is below average. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. The school has the Healthy Schools, Activemark and Sportsmark 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

Most parents are very appreciative of the successes and welcoming ethos of the school, and particularly its positive impact on their children's personal development. Typical was the comment of one parent that: 'Dobwalls is a haven of safety and harmony, helping children to achieve their very best both academically and personally.' Pupils enjoy coming to school, as shown by their above average attendance, and they feel safe in the school environment. They particularly enjoy the good range of enrichment activities.

Between the ages of five and 11, pupils from all backgrounds and of all abilities, ranging from those with special learning needs to the gifted and talented, achieve well by the time they leave school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress overall but do not progress at the same rate as older pupils. This is mainly because children in the Reception class, despite recent improvements, get limited opportunities to develop active and independent learning skills. The good progress between Years 1 to 6 is due to several factors: good teaching; pupils' positive attitudes towards learning; and rigorous monitoring by the leadership, both at senior and subject coordinator levels.

Teaching is good, more consistently so higher up the school, where the best lessons are characterised by high expectations and teachers putting the emphasis on pupils thinking for themselves and learning actively through 'doing'. The school has developed a rigorous assessment system which tracks pupils carefully and enables it to put strategies in place to support the few pupils at risk of underachieving. Despite these developments, there are still inconsistencies in how teachers use assessment information, mark pupils' work and use pupils' targets in their everyday teaching. This means that pupils are not always clear about exactly how well they are doing.

Nevertheless, the overall strength of the teaching ensures that pupils make good progress. The leadership team evaluates the school's performance accurately and sets challenging targets for continued improvement. Knowledgeable and active governors, and a committed staff, also ensure good progress. The previous inspection raised the issues of improving standards of five- to seven-year-olds and improving information and communication technology (ICT) expertise. These issues have been successfully addressed. The school's track record of success in raising standards and ensuring good progress for pupils between the ages of five and 11 demonstrates that it has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' learning and understanding of how well they are doing and how

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they can further improve their work by:

- teachers using targets and clear indicators of success more consistently in their marking and other forms of feedback to pupils.
- Improve provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and improve their progress towards meeting the early learning goals by:
 - increasing the opportunities for more independent and activity-based learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The 2009 national test results demonstrated that most pupils were making good progress, and the inspection showed that the school has maintained this trend. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, their attainment is above the national average in mathematics and science. For many pupils standards in English are well above average, as reflected in the most recent national test results. The strategies employed to raise standards and progress, particularly in English, have resulted in improvements in the range and quality of pupils' writing. Standards of speaking and listening are particularly high; pupils of all ages are confident and articulate talkers, because teachers encourage them to contribute ideas in class. The good level of key skills, and well-developed knowledge in literacy, numeracy and science, mean that pupils are well prepared for the next phase of education. Only a very small number of pupils underachieve, and the school identifies these and gives them appropriate support so that they quickly catch up. Because the needs of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively provided for, their progress matches that of their classmates.

Pupils behave well in lessons and outside, despite occasional boisterous activity in the playground. Relationships in class are excellent, and pupils succeed well in working collaboratively and productively. Pupils have a good understanding of why a healthy lifestyle is important, as shown by their knowledge in discussion and their take-up of sporting activities. They enjoy taking responsibility, for example in serving on the school council, acting as prefects and helping younger children. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although pupils have a more limited understanding of issues relating to cultural diversity in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the world, compared to their knowledge and understanding of their own locality.

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	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
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 generally put a strong emphasis on pupils learning actively and independently. In the best lessons, the teaching is imaginative, well-paced and engages the pupils very well. This was seen, for example, in a Year 5 lesson in which pupils were given the confidence and motivation to develop a range of striking vocabulary to imagine the experience of being in the Amazonian rain forest. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than better, lesson objectives are less clearly explained to pupils and they are not always sure how to improve their work. Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively to help pupils with particular learning needs to make good progress. Pupils enjoy the range of the curriculum, which now includes two modern foreign languages, much improved ICT provision since the previous inspection, and the many extra-curricular clubs and visits. The school provides good learning opportunities for those finding difficulties with basic skills, while gifted and talented pupils benefit from additional projects such as those provided at the local secondary school or in venues such as the Eden Project. The school maintains very good links with various outside agencies such as social services, in order to provide effective additional support for any pupils who need this. There are effective procedures to encourage attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

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	
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 headteacher provides a very clear direction for the school and has successfully shared his ambition with the staff team. The leadership has effectively developed the role of subject coordinators. In key subjects, notably English and mathematics, they play a full role in the monitoring of learning and progress, and this has been an important factor in helping to improve the quality of teaching and in raising pupils' achievement. The school has an outstanding record in tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities, so that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities achieve well, feel valued and enjoy very good relationships in school. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion: pupils make a good contribution within the school, and maintain the school's high profile in the local community. However, there are limited links with communities further afield and limited provision for developing pupils' understanding of issues of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom. Overseas links, although developing, have as yet a limited impact on pupils' understanding of wider global issues. The school maintains good links with the local secondary school and with a range of other institutions and agencies. These links extend pupils' learning opportunities, for example when they benefit from the expertise of teachers from elsewhere in subjects such as design technology. There are robust procedures in place to ensure that pupils are well safeguarded. Key staff are well trained, clearly identified to their colleagues and carry out their duties diligently and effectively.

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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress in the various areas of learning. Children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge broadly typical for their age. When they leave, their attainment is generally average, although a little below in the area of creative development. Provision is improving, but some of the developments to promote better learning are too recent to be fully embedded. In particular, there have been limited opportunities for children to develop a good range of child-initiated activities and show the independence and capacity for active learning of which most are capable. Sometimes, outdoor facilities are under-used for this purpose. Leadership and management are satisfactory, although improving, as staff become more aware of the need for systematic assessments which can be used to move children on more quickly to the next stages of learning. Children feel safe and do enjoy many of the activities. There is good social development, and children are confident and articulate, for example engaging voluntarily in extended conversations with visitors. Parents are generally happy with their children's progress and feel well informed. Day-to-day management is efficient, so that the Reception class runs smoothly, as is evident in the good relationships and cooperative ethos.

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 have very positive views about the school. A typical comment was: 'This is a happy school with excellent, caring staff.' Parents and carers are confident that their children enjoy school, feel safe there, and benefit from an ethos which combines a drive for good standards with good personal development. They are very complimentary about most of the staff, recognising their commitment to ensuring that pupils have a good start to their education. A small minority of parents and carers do not believe that the school manages behaviour well. These parents and carers are concerned particularly about over-boisterous behaviour in the playground, and occasional instances of unsatisfactory behaviour within school. The inspection team acknowledges these concerns, but believes that the school is very much an orderly

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community and that the school has worked hard, involving the pupils themselves, to devise ways of ensuring harmony at lunchtimes and break times.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dobwalls Community Primary 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 173 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	69	13	29	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	69	12	27	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	49	22	49	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	56	16	36	4	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	58	18	41	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	51	21	48	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	44	21	47	1	2	1	2
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)	19	42	23	51	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	51	15	33	3	7	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	38	17	38	6	13	4	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	44	20	44	3	7	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	21	47	16	36	3	7	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	62	12	27	1	2	2	4

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.



6 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dobwalls Community Primary School, Dobwalls, Cornwall, PL14 4LU

Thank you for the polite and friendly way in which you welcomed us when we inspected your school this week. We saw you all in lessons and around the school. We particularly enjoyed talking to you, and were very impressed by how polite and enthusiastic you were when you told us about how much you liked the school. Dobwalls Primary School gives you a good education, with nearly all of you making good progress. You also enjoy the range of activities such as sports, cookery, the choir and learning various musical instruments. You attend school more regularly than children in many other schools. We know that, although you do not think behaviour is perfect, you do feel safe and well-looked after in school. Your teachers teach you well, encouraging you to think and do things for yourself. This is why you make good progress, whatever your own particular skills and interests. Your headteacher leads the school well, so that the school continues to get better over time.

Although you are already doing well in school, you could help to make this good school an even better one. In order to achieve this, in addition to you continuing to work hard for your teachers, we have asked that:

- When in lessons, your teachers give you clearer information through marking and using your targets so that you know exactly how well you are doing and what you need to do to reach the next level in your work.
- Your teachers give the very youngest children more opportunities to find out things for themselves and become more independent.

Thank you again for such an interesting visit and letting us see you at work and at play.

Yours sincerely

John Laver

Lead inspector

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