

Blisland Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111909
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	378387
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Laurie Lewin

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	29
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dominic Fairman
Headteacher	Catherine Stoate
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector, who observed teaching and learning in six lessons, taught by two different teachers. The inspector met with pupils, staff, parents and carers and members of the governing body. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information and safeguarding policies; he also scrutinised samples of pupils' work. The inspector analysed 21 questionnaires from parents and carers, five from staff and 16 from pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well do pupils progress with their writing and mathematics?
- How well do more-able pupils and those who are gifted and talented progress?
- Are all groups of pupils making sufficient progress in mathematics?
- How well do staff use assessment information to inform their lesson planning?
- Is the partnership with another local school proving to be beneficial?

Information about the school

This is a small school. It serves the local area, but with some pupils coming from further afield. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. All of the pupils are White British. The school has two classes. One class is for children starting school in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils in Years 1 and 2. A second class is for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. The school is accredited with the Healthy Schools award. In September 2011, the school entered into a partnership arrangement with St Cleer School near Liskeard. The two schools are now run by an executive headteacher and are actively seeking to move towards federation status. The school has been accredited as an early years provider and will be accepting pre-school children from January 2012.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It has strengthened all areas of provision and improved rapidly since the last inspection. Parents and carers are very pleased with the quality of education and the improvements made. Typical of the comments from them were, 'The school has a vibrant atmosphere... the children thoroughly enjoy their time here.'

Children make an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where strong provision helps them make outstanding progress. As a result of outstanding teaching throughout the rest of the school, pupils achieve very well and attain significantly above average by the end of Year 6.

The school has a strong family atmosphere and staff and pupils get on extremely well together. As a result, all groups of pupils, including those who are more able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, become very confident and enthusiastic learners. Lessons are very well organised. Teachers ensure that all activities match pupils' abilities precisely and draw on their interests. Excellent curriculum planning ensures that pupils have lots of opportunities to learn to work creatively and independently.

As part of its work to gain the Healthy Schools award, the school ensures that the pupils acquire a good level of understanding about how to lead healthy lifestyles. Pupils contribute well to the immediate and wider community. For example, they have much involvement in organising charity fund-raising and regularly participate in local village events. The school council is active in helping bring about improvements, through making useful suggestions, for example, to improve sports equipment. However, staff recognise that pupils' ideas for improving the school are not as well utilised as they could be. Excellent links established with schools further afield mean that pupils have a very good understanding about how people from other cultural backgrounds live their lives.

Top quality care, guidance and support ensure that all pupils feel completely safe and very well looked after. Pupils very much enjoy their time at school and their rate of attendance is high. They are very friendly and quick to support each other. Older pupils show a very mature and sensible approach towards helping younger pupils. The behaviour of pupils both in class and at break times is excellent. They show an outstanding level of moral and social awareness. Any pupils deemed to be vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported

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and, therefore, make excellent progress.

The headteacher, very well supported by her assistant headteacher, does an outstanding job. She sets high expectations for staff in terms of continually striving to provide the best possible quality of education for the pupils. She works hard with staff and governors to ensure that all aspects of school improvement planning move forward rapidly. As a result, teaching, pupils' achievement and the school's facilities have improved at a very good pace. Morale among staff is high. They work together as a very strong team. They have a very clear understanding about how well individual pupils are progressing. They make excellent use of this knowledge to ensure that all individuals reach their full potential. Staff are very good at ensuring that parents and carers are kept fully informed about and involved in supporting their children's learning. The governing body works very well. Its excellent strategic planning has been central to helping the school improve rapidly, for example, with the current move to open a pre-school facility next term. The governing body has a very clear overview about how well the school is performing. It is proactive in seeking ways to support staff as well as holding them to account. It has established high quality safeguarding procedures and ensures these are fully embedded in the day-to-day work of the school. Comprehensive and accurate self-evaluation, success in sustaining and enhancing high performance in recent years and clear plans to guide future improvement mean the school has an excellent capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By December 2012, develop robust systems to survey pupils' views about the school and, where appropriate, make full use of the information gained to inform school development planning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The excellent provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children progress very well in relation to their prior attainment and reach slightly above average levels by the start of Year 1. In nearly all of the lessons observed across the school, pupils made excellent progress. They are extremely well prepared for succeeding in the future. Pupils progress very well with acquiring writing skills. By Year 6, they write detailed accounts for different purposes. They often use vocabulary in an expressive and imaginative way. Handwriting is very good and pupils present their work attractively. Across the school, pupils gain a broad range of mathematical skills. They learn to use and apply these skills very well in practical and problem-solving tasks. For example, pupils in a lesson in Key Stage 2 carefully researched a range of information, recorded the information in different types of tables and graphs, and then interrogated the information using precise questions. In this and many other activities observed, pupils showed very good skills in working independently, often discussing ideas with classmates to refine and improve the approaches used. More-able pupils also successfully work at higher-level tasks. For

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example, one more-able Year 6 mathematician was observed, moving to a more sophisticated format of graph work. Topic work seen around the school showed pupils applying their English, mathematical and information and communication technology skills very well in other subjects. For example, good quality written accounts, including poetry, were noted within topic work about the Victorians. Pupils achieve a high standard in their reading and comprehension work. They develop confidence and become enthusiastic readers due to the firm grasp of letter sounds and knowledge of vocabulary which they acquire as they progress through the school.

The school is a happy place, and pupils say things like, 'Our lessons are usually lots of fun and we get on well with the staff.' Pupils become particularly confident in articulating their ideas clearly. For example, older pupils spoken to showed a very mature approach to expressing their opinions about a wide range of subjects. However, they felt that staff do not always give them enough chances to express their views about what could be improved in the school. Pupils are extremely sensible and polite. They carry out responsibilities very well and are quick to help adults and each other when required. Pupils are extremely safety conscious as was seen in the great care with which Reception-age group and Years 1 and 2 pupils conducted themselves when going down the school steps and crossing the road on their way to visit a nearby farm. Pupils are very confident to approach an adult should they have any worries. They reflect deeply in assemblies and lessons about significant world issues. The writing from older pupils often shows much sensitivity. Through the strong family atmosphere which permeates the school, pupils learn to take very good care of each other.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1

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 of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use many very good ideas to accelerate pupils’ learning. For example, interactive whiteboard displays are used well to enhance explanations. Also, frequent use of practical resources and very good quality group and class discussion opportunities enliven many of the activities. This was noted in one excellent English lesson for the Key Stage 2 class where very good quality picture resources inspired discussion among the pupils. Through these means, they were motivated to work rapidly in producing very interesting and expressive pieces of prose and poetry. Staff make excellent use of local resources. For example, the Key Stage 1 class, including the reception children, thoroughly enjoyed the work studying animal habitats when visiting a smallholding close by the school. Teaching assistants provide excellent support for the teachers and pupils. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make rapid progress. Staff make excellent use of the relatively small class sizes to maximise the support given to all individuals. This and the rigorous use of assessment to check progress and guide lesson planning mean that activities are very closely tailored to match the needs of each individual. Furthermore, excellent marking and very effective target-setting ensure that pupils have a precise knowledge of what they need to do to improve.

The school has established innovative curriculum planning, with very well-thought-out topic themes which ensure strong links are made between subjects to maximise learning. Mathematical, writing and practical opportunities are fully embedded in all areas of work. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils worked well to gain wider understanding of fractions through artwork activities. The curriculum is extensively enriched through a wide range of trips, visitors and extra-curricular activities.

Staff have a very full understanding of pupils’ pastoral needs and cater for these sensitively. They are extremely vigilant in ensuring pupils are kept safe. All parents and carers felt this to be the case. The school makes excellent use of external expertise, where needed, to support any pupils who it feels are vulnerable. Very good quality advice and guidance are given to all pupils and, where needed, their parents and carers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is very successful in creating an atmosphere in which all staff feel valued and work with full commitment to keep the school improving. Very good systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision ensure staff have a very clear understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. They use the information gained very well in constructing the detailed school development plan. Staff gather precise information to show how pupils are progressing. They use this information very well to target support and are alert to spotting any individual who may be slipping behind. As a result, all pupils have the chances they need to become successful, and no discrimination occurs. Since its last inspection, the school has significantly strengthened its provision, especially for leadership and management and teaching. This has led to a broadening of opportunities for pupils. It has also enabled further improvement to the already strong picture of pupils’ attainment and progress.

The governing body and staff work hard to maintain excellent relationships with parents and carers. Through, for example, regular newsletters, close liaison at arrival and departure times and a very good range of meetings, parents and carers gain much knowledge about what is happening at school. The parents’ association does much very good work to raise funds for and to support school activities. Parents and carers feel fully confident to approach staff to talk about how their children are progressing. Full use is made of all partner organisations to boost the work of the school. The partnership with St Cleer School has been an especially successful venture, which has enabled the school to boost the range of learning opportunities for pupils as well as maximise the potential for professional development of staff.

The governing body is very well organised, has a full knowledge of how well the school is performing and is very proactive in supporting further development. Many governors are involved on a day-to-day basis with supporting school activities. The governing body ensures that excellent provision for safeguarding is underpinned by full risk assessments and health and safety checks. It ensures that the site is fully secure and the training provided for staff and its own members goes well beyond the basic level required. The school is very well orientated towards promoting community cohesion. Through such activities as performing shows locally, linking with the church and joining the local community for a meal, the school is central to the life of the village. The very good links established with schools internationally also illustrate the school’s dynamic approach in this area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the	1

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school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Excellent liaison with parents and carers and the school's family-orientated atmosphere mean that children settle quickly and easily into school routines. The provision is set up to provide attractive and lively activity areas for the children both indoors and outdoors. The excellent curriculum planning ensures that children are provided with a rich range of interesting activities. These activities engage the children very well and inspire an enthusiastic approach to learning. The children benefit greatly from working alongside and with the pupils in Years 1 and 2. For example, they follow the very good habits of older classmates settling quickly into their reading, writing and mathematics tasks. The outdoor play area is especially well set up to provide interesting practical activities. For example, the children thoroughly enjoyed exploring the possibilities of running water down a series of connected plastic ducts set up across the playground.

Class activities are very skilfully planned to ensure children have lots of chances to carry out role play and structured play activities. For example, after working with pupils in Years 1 and 2 discussing Christmas Eve stories, the children excitedly followed this up with role play on the same theme. There is a very good blend of opportunities for children to explore independently, set alongside activities guided directly by adults. The teacher and teaching assistant work very effectively together in organising and running all activities. Children have a lot of fun with all tasks and support each other very well. The high quality teaching ensures that they become confident learners who progress rapidly in acquiring the basic skills they need. Children do very well in their reading, gaining a good command of letter sounds. They acquire a good range of early writing skills. They also show a good ability with using their mathematical skills, for example, learning how to share cakes into halves and quarters. Staff manage the children extremely well and the behaviour of all individuals is excellent. Staff very carefully observe, monitor and record how well the children progress. The 'learning journal' booklets they produce are a particularly useful means of recording children's achievements. Staff use assessment information very well to inform planning so that tasks match children's needs precisely. The Early Years Foundation Stage is extremely well led and managed and runs smoothly and efficiently. Systems to evaluate the quality of provision are excellent.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The level of response by parents and carers returning the questionnaires was above average. All the parents and carers indicated they are happy with the provision and the work of the staff. In addition to the evidence of the questionnaires, all of the parents and carers spoken to had a high regard for the school. Very few parents and carers had any negative views about the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blisland 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 inspector received 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 29 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	71	5	24	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	71	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	62	8	38	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)	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	13	62	6	29	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	62	8	38	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	19	90	2	10	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



3 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blisland Community Primary School, Blisland, PL30 4JX

Thank you for making me feel welcome at your school. I have judged that yours is an outstanding school. Through talking to you I know that there are many things that you like about your school.

Here are some of the things that I found.

- You make an excellent start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- I can see that you enjoy school a lot and that excellent curriculum planning ensures that you get lots of interesting activities.
- You have a good understanding about how to keep yourselves fit and healthy.
- Excellent teaching helps you to make outstanding progress and your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you thoroughly enjoy your time in school.
- You all have an excellent understanding about how to stay safe. The adults in the school do a top quality job of taking care of you.
- The headteacher, staff and governing body have worked very well to improve your school and they work very hard to make sure it keeps improving.

Some of you told me that you did not feel the school took enough account of your views. I have asked the staff to ensure that your views are sought on a regular basis to influence improvements that can be made to the school.

All of you can play an important part in helping the school to improve by continuing to work hard in all lessons.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Lewin
Lead inspector

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