

Otterham Community Primary School

Marshgate, Camelford, Cornwall, PL32 9YW

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' attainment is rising and is above average for many pupils, especially in reading, by the time they leave school.
- Children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress in English and mathematics. Effective support by teaching assistants, both in lessons and in group work elsewhere, ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs share in this good progress.
- Teaching is predominantly good. Teachers manage the mixed-age classes well, using a range of resources and adult support effectively to ensure good learning.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They greatly appreciate the wide range of activities such as clubs and visits. Pupils feel very safe in school.
- Pupils enjoy lessons, partly because the school makes imaginative use of specialist teachers to provide expertise in sport, French, drama, music, art and design. There is also a strong emphasis on outdoor learning and exploring the local environment.
- The headteacher, well supported by governors, checks the quality of teaching and learning rigorously. She has succeeded in getting staff to share her commitment to pursuing excellence. The rate of improvement in the school shows that it has the clear capacity to improve further.
- The great majority of parents and carers acknowledge the school's strengths and are very appreciative of the opportunities provided for their children both inside and outside the classroom.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is not yet outstanding, and so does not ensure the best possible progress for all pupils. Occasionally teachers do not give demanding enough tasks to more-able pupils early enough in lessons.
- Progress in writing, although improving, is not as rapid as it is in reading and mathematics. Teachers' marking of pupils' written work is not rigorous enough in identifying strengths and weaknesses and explaining how the work can be improved.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons taught by four teachers and also observed several other part-lessons. Three of the lesson observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils, four members of the governing body, the headteacher and other staff. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a variety of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, documentation relating to safeguarding, data on pupils' performance and evidence from the school's surveys of parents', carers' and pupils' views. He also scrutinised pupils' work for evidence of progress and teachers' marking.
- The inspector took account of 18 responses to the online Parent View survey and 13 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

John Laver, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium, who in this school are all pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a class alongside Year 1 and some Year 2 pupils. Other pupils in Year 2 and pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in two mixed-age classes.
- The school has experienced a falling pupil roll in recent years.
- There have been considerable changes in the teaching staff since the previous inspection.
- The school has just been awarded Beacon School status for learning in the natural environment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, so that more-able pupils consistently achieve in lessons to their full potential by:
 - raising the expectations of what these pupils can achieve
 - making sure that these pupils are given tasks early enough in the lesson which are demanding enough for them always to make the best possible progress.
- Build on the school's existing strategies to improve writing by:
 - ensuring that teachers clearly identify in their marking the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' writing and explain how they can improve it
 - making sure that pupils respond to teachers' written comments when the marking identifies points for improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join Reception with levels of skill below those typically expected for their age, although they sometimes vary because of the small number of children who join the school each year.
- Typically, pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 with levels of attainment which are broadly average, although because of the small number of pupils this also varies from year to year. Pupils in the current Year 6 are working at a good level.
- Progress is good throughout the school, from Reception to Year 6. A dip in progress last year has been more than reversed. This year, a substantial proportion of pupils have made faster progress than pupils nationally, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Reading is a particular strength of the school. In last year's Year 1 phonics check (assessing pupils' understanding of letters and sounds), pupils achieved above the national expectation. Progress is even greater this year. Pupils read fluently, accurately and with good understanding.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs share in the good progress. They benefit from very good additional staff support both inside and outside the classroom.
- The few pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress. Mostly they make as much progress as other pupils in the school in English and mathematics and reach similar levels of attainment. They progress at a faster rate than similar pupils nationally. The school funds extra staff support for these pupils' learning, as well as supporting them in activities outside lessons.
- The school is working to increase writing opportunities in subjects other than English, because although most pupils achieve well in writing, progress is less rapid than it is in reading and mathematics. This is partly due to more-able pupils not always being given demanding enough writing tasks in lessons. Also, the marking of writing is not helpful enough in showing pupils how to improve their writing further.
- The inspector saw several examples of good learning. He observed children in Reception excitedly using Molly the puppet and responding to lively teaching as they learned new sounds and letter combinations. Older pupils were seen collaborating well in composing melodies in a music lesson, writing play scripts and individually working on their word processing skills.
- Most parents and carers believe that their children make good progress, in response to good teaching. Pupils agree, and value the targets which their teachers give them.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is not outstanding, because there is some variation in its effectiveness, but it is typically good, as it was at the previous inspection.
- A strength is teachers' use of teaching assistants in a variety of ways, both in lessons and in other situations, including in the nurture group for pupils who sometimes have learning difficulties in mainstream lessons. The work of support staff has been very successful in improving the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Teachers encourage pupils to develop good speaking and listening skills. The inspector saw this, for example, in a lesson in which pupils maturely debated at length the work of the school council.
- Teachers question pupils well as a way of consolidating and improving their understanding. They encourage pupils to contribute their ideas in class, as when explaining their reasoning behind calculations in mathematics.
- Occasionally learning and progress are not as rapid as they could be. This is usually when a few more-able pupils are given tasks which are too easy for them to make much additional progress at an early stage of the lesson.

- Teachers usually mark pupils' work conscientiously, especially in written tasks designed to demonstrate progress over time. However, teachers' comments on some other pieces of written work are very brief and generalised, giving no real indication either of the qualities or of how the work could be improved. When advice is given, it is not usually evident that the pupils have acted on this.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. However, behaviour is not outstanding, as pupils and parents and carers recognise. The school has to carefully manage a few pupils who demonstrate potentially challenging behaviour. However, the great majority of pupils have a very positive attitude towards learning, and respond well to the good teaching.
- Most pupils greatly enjoy coming to school, not just for lessons but for the wide range of out-of-class activities such as visits. Pupils particularly value the opportunity for every class to take part in residential visits and they appreciate the emphasis on outdoor learning and environmental education, which they follow up in some of the topics both inside and outside the classroom.
- Attendance is typically close to average, although this year it has been just below average.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They can distinguish between different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. The school gives a high priority to using computers safely. Pupils acknowledge this, and say that there is no issue with any form of bullying in the school. There have been no exclusions or racist incidents in recent years.
- Good behaviour also results from a strong programme of personal, moral and social development. Pupils of all ages get on very well together. They collaborate well in lessons. They are polite and welcoming to visitors and represent the school very well. Older pupils enjoy shouldering responsibility, as in the active school council and fund-raising for the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership has successfully addressed the issues from the previous inspection, by giving children in Reception more opportunities to find out things for themselves, independently of staff. Progress in writing has improved, although the school acknowledges this remains an area to work on.
- The headteacher, ably supported by experienced governors and all staff, has created a positive attitude towards improvement. The leadership ensures good progress in learning key skills like literacy and numeracy while also giving pupils lots of opportunities to explore the local environment and develop a broader understanding of the wider world.
- The headteacher checks the quality of teaching and learning regularly and evaluates the school's performance accurately. School improvement planning focuses on the right priorities. The school has coped well with changes in staffing and the complications of a falling roll.
- The leadership manages staff performance well. Pay is clearly linked to performance and progress. Staff are held accountable for progress and welcome the opportunities they get for professional development. Staff are very appreciative of what the school offers both to themselves and pupils, and describe the school as having a strong 'family' feel.
- The local authority recognises the school's strengths, and so offers only light touch support. It acknowledges that the school is developing in the right way, with its own strengths from within, and also benefiting from its links with other schools in the partnership between local schools. These links offer the chance for staff and governors to improve their expertise together. Pupils also benefit from the links, for example by having good opportunities to prepare well for their move to the next school.
- The leadership has adopted a very creative approach to ensuring that pupils have a wide variety of opportunities, despite the small size of the school. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in

music, French, drama, art, design and technology and physical education. The school successfully competes against other schools in sport, and there is a wide range of clubs and visits. Pupils enjoy the topics such as 'The Rainforest'. They put on regular musical and drama productions. These activities, along with a strong programme of personal development, are evidence of the school's success in promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Parents and carers strongly support the school and raise extensive funds for its further development.
- The leadership carries out its commitment to equal opportunities by ensuring that all groups of pupils achieve well; and the positive, happy climate of the school is evidence of the absence of any overt discrimination. Parents, carers and staff are very enthusiastic about these features of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has maintained its strengths from the previous inspection and built upon them. It does not shy away from questioning leadership decisions and ensuring accountability, particularly when difficult budgetary decisions have to be made. Governors closely monitor how effectively the school uses the pupil premium to further the progress and well-being of those pupils eligible for the funding. Governors understand the qualities of teaching in the school and are aware of how pupils achieve in comparison with pupils nationally. They are knowledgeable about how data on attainment and progress can be used as a basis for planning for further improvement. Governors benefit from appropriate training, for example in safeguarding, and so ensure that the school's safeguarding policies and practices meet requirements. They are very active in the school, often helping in lessons and other activities. Governors conscientiously carry out their role of ensuring the accountability of all staff, recognising that one of their prime duties is to ensure that all pupils have every opportunity to reach their potential.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 111935 |
| Local authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 412765 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 66 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Naomi Quinn |
| Headteacher | Helen Ward |
| Date of previous school inspection | 17 March 2009 |
| Telephone number | 01840 261344 |
| Email address | head@otterham.cornwall.sch.uk |

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