

Lostwithiel School

Bodmin Hill, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0AJ

Inspection dates

25–26 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children and pupils thrive in this school. This is because the exciting outdoor environment is very well used, enabling them to learn through the childhood joys of exploration, adventure and play.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and, for the most part, in mathematics. They also succeed in other subjects such as music, physical education and history.
- Teaching is typically good. Teachers have a good understanding of their pupils' needs and plan work that enables them to make good progress. Marking is effective in showing pupils how to improve their work.
- The early years provision is of good quality and is a strength of the school. Children make good progress, notably in developing their communication skills.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and during play. They are keen to learn. While minor bullying sometimes occurs, this is dealt with effectively.
- Parents, carers and pupils agree that the school keeps pupils safe, for example during outdoor activities. Risk is assessed carefully and accurately.
- Leaders and governors are effective in checking the quality of teaching and in ensuring that it is improving. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses and successfully tackle the latter, for example in improving attendance and punctuality.
- The governing body is well informed and is effective in challenging leaders to bring about improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Some pupils, notably those who are attaining average standards in Years 3 to 6, do not always make good enough progress in mathematics because they lack confidence when using subtraction or division.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge in other subjects, including when learning outdoors.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 14 lessons. Five of these observations, and some other inspection activities, were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, briefer visits were made to a number of lessons in order to pursue a theme, such as the quality of support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' written work in order to analyse their achievement over a period of time and the quality of teachers' marking. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors reviewed school documents, including those relating to pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of 50 parents and carers who completed the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire were analysed. Parents and carers discussed their views in person, some at their own request, and a few submitted letters. All these views were taken into account. In addition, inspectors considered the views of the 10 staff who completed the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marian Marks

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It serves the town of Lostwithiel and a number of surrounding villages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. This is additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The governors provide breakfast and after-school clubs that offer childcare.
- There is a pre-school on the school site. This is not managed by the governing body and was not inspected on this occasion.
- The early years provision within the school is full time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress in mathematics, especially among pupils of average attainment, by:
 - ensuring that all pupils can use subtraction and division with accuracy and confidence when solving problems
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in a range of subjects, including when learning outdoors.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher and other leaders have, over a number of years, developed an approach to learning that centres on effective use of the school's exciting outdoor environment as a resource. This approach, rightly, has the full support of parents and carers, pupils, governors and staff and has created a climate where good teaching and behaviour flourish.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have taken appropriate action, for example to improve attendance and punctuality. The only concern expressed to inspectors by parents and carers concerned new arrangements for late arrival at school. Inspectors found these arrangements to be entirely appropriate and designed to encourage prompt arrival.
- School leaders have made good progress in adapting the curriculum in response to the recent changes in the National Curriculum. They are also working successfully with another local school to try out new ways of checking pupils' progress.
- The curriculum includes a range of lively and interesting activities and subjects. It makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The school promotes equality of opportunity well, fostering good relations between pupils and with staff. Leaders tackle discrimination rigorously, for example by not tolerating homophobic or racist language.
- School leaders are aware of the need to strengthen pupils' awareness of cultural diversity and are taking appropriate action. For instance, they are planning to introduce the study of Islam, which will include a visit to a mosque. In other respects, such as in promoting fairness, tolerance and respect, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Teachers' performance is well managed by the headteacher. It is regularly checked and is linked correctly to their pay and responsibilities. Appropriate training is provided where required and necessary action has been taken, with governors' knowledge, to eliminate weak teaching.
- Middle leaders, including those in charge of subjects, are effective. Early years provision is well led and those with overall responsibility for provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have a good knowledge of these pupils' progress. Middle leaders also have very good relationships with pupils' parents and carers and with other agencies concerned with their welfare.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe meet requirements. All necessary checks are carried out and staff are trained in child protection to a higher level than the minimum required. The many outdoor activities are carefully assessed for risk and are always supervised well.
- Parents and carers speak highly of the school. Nine in 10 of those expressing a view would recommend the school to others. Parents and carers value especially the emphasis on outdoor learning and the fact the staff are approachable. Staff enjoy working at the school.
- The school works closely with local primary and secondary schools to the benefit of pupils when they change schools. Competitive sporting events are held with other schools. Good use is made of local resources such as The Eden Project to enhance pupils' learning.
- The school rightly values the good support of the local authority. Support for governors, for personnel matters and to improve teaching has been particularly effective.
- Leaders and the governing body use additional funding well. Gaps between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others have been almost entirely eliminated. The primary school sports funding has been used well to increase the range of sports that pupils can try and participation in sports is increasing. All pupils are physically active.
- The school's website is easy to understand and navigate. It contains much useful, up-to-date information including that which is required on matters such as the curriculum and the use of additional funding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well trained and effective. They use data and other information well to challenge leaders to improve and direct resources where they are most needed. They have a good understanding of how the school's performance relates to that of others locally and nationally. Governors have appropriate information concerning teachers' performance in order to determine pay levels.
 - Governors ensure that they check the impact of the use of additional funding. They have appropriate long-term plans concerning potential changes in the number of pupils and rightly keep developments in alternative models of school organisation under review. They meet their legal requirements, for example concerning their duties to keep pupils safe and to check the quality of the childcare provision.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to learn. They respond quickly to adults' instructions and stick to the task when learning.
- Pupils are orderly and polite when taking lunch. Lunch is taken in several sittings and pupils appropriately made a request through the school council to vary the rota, so that the same pupils were not always eating last. This was agreed by staff.
- When at play, pupils like to be outside. During a drizzly lunchtime, most of Years 3 to 6 were observed on the school field. Some were playing football, supervised by a member of staff. Others were running around or playing various games. They returned to class promptly, some muddy and red-faced through exercise, but all then got on with learning.
- Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility, for example as members of the school council which has taken major decisions concerning provision of outdoor equipment.
- Pupils report that there are isolated incidents of name calling and pushing, but that bullying of any kind is rare. They say that staff deal with such incidents effectively. The school keeps comprehensive records of such incidents. These show that very occasional examples of the use of homophobic or racist language have also been dealt with very well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are supervised well around the school and at play. Staff are well trained, including in organising informal games and activities at playtimes.
- The childcare provision offered through the breakfast and after-school clubs is effective. Staff are checked and are well trained in matters such as child protection and the organisation of activities.
- Attendance has improved considerably since the previous inspection, due to changes in policies concerning the authorisation of holidays and prompt arrival at school. Persistent absence has been reduced by the use of formal warnings. In 2013/14, attendance compared favourably with that in similar schools.
- The school ensures that pupils are completely safe when using the school's computers by barring access to any unsuitable websites or material. Pupils have received some teaching on how to use the internet safely and wisely when outside school and the dangers of misuse of other electronic media such as mobile phones, but the understanding of some pupils is not as well developed as it could be.
- The many outdoor activities are carefully assessed for risk and certain rules are understood well by pupils. For example, they are allowed to climb trees to a height equal to their own height. Children in the early years provision were observed learning the importance of wearing high-visibility clothing when out and about.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and plan work that challenges them. This enables them to make consistently good progress. For example, the most able mathematicians in Years 5 and 6 receive additional teaching to extend and deepen their understanding of the subject.
- Teachers check pupils' progress regularly and take action to rectify slow progress. Weaker readers in Years 1 to 3 receive additional teaching to help them catch up. This also contributes to the effective teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Reading is taught well so that by the end of Year 2 almost all pupils can read fluently and with meaning.
- Marking is used well to help pupils improve their work, especially their writing. The approach used was introduced fairly recently and is beginning to improve progress in most classes.
- In mathematics, teachers check that pupils are using the correct method to find the answer to a problem. However, they do not always check that the calculation has been accurate and this contributes to the slower progress of some pupils in learning to use subtraction and division with confidence.
- Homework is used well to develop pupils' research skills and their range of writing styles. Projects are challenging, such as in Years 3 and 4 where pupils wrote a letter to the president of Zambia complaining about educational provision in the country.
- Teachers give much of their time to supervising and organising outdoor activities. They train teams, referee matches and take part in residential experiences, such as to the Isles of Scilly.
- The specialist skills of teachers and other adults are used well, especially in subjects such as music and physical education.

- Teaching assistants are effective in accelerating pupils' progress. Some have particularly good questioning skills, especially when working with pupils who lack confidence or have special educational needs.
- Teachers are aware of disadvantaged pupils in their classes. Their support is very effective and has enabled these pupils to make equally good progress when compared with other pupils.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well, so that by the end of Year 6 they reach standards in reading and writing that are above national averages. In mathematics, their attainment is broadly average, although the most able achieve well.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. By the end of Year 1, the proportion doing well in the national check on pupils' skills in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is above average. By the end of Year 2, almost all can read fluently. In a class of mainly Year 3 pupils, all could read the poem 'The Inchcape Rock' with fluency and expression, using dramatic emphasis to reinforce the meaning.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 read a wide range of fiction and can discuss books they have read with clarity. The *Swallows and Amazons* series by Arthur Ransome is as popular as the works of modern authors, reflecting pupils' interest in outdoor adventure. Pupils' non-fiction reading is less wide and mainly restricted to their particular interests or to specific research for school projects, such as on the life of Ernest Shackleton.
- In 2014, a group of Year 6 leavers appeared not to have made good progress in reading. These pupils arrived at the school in Years 4 to 6, and the school's checks showed that they had made slow progress previously. Records show they then made good progress. Current pupils' work demonstrates that these too are making good progress.
- Pupils' writing develops well and by Years 5 and 6 they can write in a range of styles. Formal writing is especially well developed, with accurate use of vocabulary and grammar.
- In mathematics, most pupils make good progress. However, some in Years 3 to 6 of average attainment make slower progress because they are not confident or accurate in subtraction or division. Whereas literacy skills develop well in many subjects, there is less emphasis on applying mathematics elsewhere, including during outdoor learning.
- The most able pupils achieve well, especially in mathematics due to specialist teaching. In national tests, they attain the highest possible standards. They are given challenging work and respond enthusiastically. Their research into the life of Ernest Shackleton led to some high-quality writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils also achieve well, in many cases making progress that exceeds that of other pupils. Gaps in their performance by the end of Year 6 compared to other pupils have narrowed; in 2014 there was no difference in their attainment in writing, and in reading and mathematics these pupils were, on average, less than one term behind other pupils. These pupils also attain at a similar level to pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. Those who make a slow start have generally caught up with their peers by the end of Year 6.
- All pupils take part in a lot of physical activity. Most understand the concept of a healthy lifestyle, which many see as a day's hard physical activity outdoors, followed by a hearty meal.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is a strength of the school. The proportion who reach the goals set for children to start Year 1 exceeds the national average.
- Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning. However they make better progress in their communication skills and physical development than in some areas of mathematical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Children's behaviour and their social and emotional skills develop well due to the high expectations of staff and the clear routines they are taught, such as in lining up before being taken to lunch.
- This good progress comes about because of good teaching. A particular strength is the imaginative use made of outdoor learning.
- Staff make regular checks on progress and make a comprehensive record that is shared with, and welcomed by, parents and carers.
- Staff work closely with the adjacent pre-school and organise shared activities, especially involving outdoor learning, so children are well prepared for school when they start.

- Arrangements to ensure children's welfare and safety are very good. Staff are well trained, and ensure that all activities include appropriate attention to safety.
- The provision is well led and is rightly considered by the local authority to be a model for other schools in its use of the outdoor environment as a learning resource for the early years.

Inspection judgements

| 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 | 111916 |
| Local authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 443859 |

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 | 162 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Kathryn Smith |
| Headteacher | Carolyn Huxley |
| Date of previous school inspection | 15–16 October 2009 |
| Telephone number | 01208 872339 |
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