

Instow Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113156
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	378656
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Rowena Onions

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 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Atkinson
Headteacher	Mark Gough
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2009
School address	Rectory Lane Instow Bideford EX39 4LU
Telephone number	01271 860545
Fax number	01271 860545
Email address	admin@instow-cps.devon.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons were observed and six teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with pupils, governors and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at data about pupils' progress. In addition, inspectors considered the school improvement plan, reports from the School Improvement Partner and a range of other documentation. Sixty-eight responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire were received and analysed, together with 67 pupil and 9 staff responses to their respective questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress made by more-able pupils, especially in reading and writing.
- The inspection team examined the quality of provision for children in the Reception year.
- The effectiveness of assessment in helping pupils know how to improve their work.
- The inspection team looked at the effectiveness of leadership (including governance) in improving pupil outcomes.
- The team examined the extent of pupils' knowledge of cultural diversity.

Information about the school

This smaller-than-average sized school serves its local area close to Bideford and an increasing number of pupils travel to the school from further afield. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Only a few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. An average percentage of pupils have a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities; these include specific and moderate learning, and speech, language and communication difficulties. Pupils in Year 3 are taught in a single age-group class. Other pupils, including children in the Reception year, are taught in classes covering two age groups.

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

Instow is a good school. One of its major strengths is the way it enthuses pupils so that they really enjoy coming to school. The headteacher has shown effective, dedicated leadership in leading staff in improving many aspects of the school. As a result, after a dip in effectiveness, the school is now improving rapidly. Overall, pupils make good progress in both English and mathematics and in most years they attain above average standards by Year 6. Less-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively supported to make good and sometimes outstanding progress. However, although their progress is satisfactory, some more-able pupils could be doing better, especially in English. The school had already identified the progress of higher-attaining pupils as an area for development and work to ensure this in mathematics is already successful. Improvements have been made in the provision for children in the Reception year but there remain aspects, in particular the opportunities for children to learn independently, that require further development.

One of the high points of the inspection was talking with the pupils. They are well behaved, thoughtful and articulate and take these skills with them into the classroom. Pupils want to succeed and are being increasingly supported in this by improved systems for the setting of targets and for providing them with feedback. Marking of work is helpful, but there are occasions when it is not sufficiently precise in showing, in particular more-able pupils, where and how they could make specific improvements to their work. Pupils feel exceptionally safe and secure in school. They show understanding that this is linked with, in their words, the 'big family' of which they are a part. This means they are sure they can trust those around them and go to adults in school with even the slightest worry. Through pastoral systems that are planned to form relationships between pupils of different ages, they learn to support each other in a way not commonly seen. The setting up of such systems and the highly effective support for pupils whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable are examples of the outstanding effectiveness of care, guidance and support in the school.

Both teaching and the curriculum are successfully aimed at providing an exciting, stimulating education for the pupils. The success of this is evident, for example, in the raised level of attendance, which is now high. Pupils describe their experiences as 'fun' and they are particularly positive about the weeks in the year when they focus as a whole school on a particular subject. A recent week, focused on the development of the understanding of cultural diversity, has, for example, significantly

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raised pupils' interest in, and knowledge of, the cultural backgrounds of others in the school community, the local area and beyond. The school is, however, correct in seeing this aspect of pupils' development as work in progress. Good relationships between adults and pupils mean that lessons are conducted in a relaxed and productive way. Teachers try hard to ensure that they are clear with pupils about what they are expected to learn and how they will recognise success. They are also good at providing clear explanations of new skills and concepts. There are, however, occasions when they take up too much of the lesson doing this and this reduces the time that pupils have to complete activities. In some lessons, this has a particular effect on more-able pupils because they do not have the opportunity to think through and plan their work at the more complex level at which they are capable of working.

Over the last two years, there has been a significant increase in the number of staff involved in school self-evaluation. Governors too are much more involved with this than at the time of the last inspection. This shared approach means there is a common understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement for the school and a shared vision for moving towards excellence. This extended team and shared vision, together with accurate school self-evaluation and the track record of recent improvements, shows that the school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise rates of progress in reading and writing for more able pupils by:
 - ensuring that in lessons, the balance of teacher talk and independent work allows pupils sufficient time to both plan and complete more complex activities
 - improving the precision of marking so that it shows pupils exactly where and how they could improve their work.
- Improve provision for children in the Reception year by:
 - ensuring all activities that are designed to encourage independent work promote good learning.
 - helping children to recognise and report back what they have learned when working in an independent, self-initiated way.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils take an enthusiastic approach to their learning in lessons. Older pupils, for example, were keen to think and talk about the way in which an author had engaged his audience in a piece of narrative text in order to use these techniques in enhancing their own writing. Levels of concentration are good and pupils apply themselves diligently to the tasks in hand. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about practical activities such as working outdoors. They explain how such activities not only help them to learn, but also provide them with experiences, such as cooking outdoors, which help them to understand that assessing risk and taking appropriate action are important in keeping safe. The good focus on the development of basic

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skills in reading, writing and mathematics, together with the enthusiasm promoted by the range of exciting activities, ensures that the vast majority of pupils make good progress. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and are keen to be active. They make a very significant contribution to the smooth running of the school, through both their good behaviour and their willingness to take on day-to-day responsibilities. These attitudes, as well as well-developed basic skills, are preparing pupils well for their future lives. Pupils talk with some insight as to what helps them to learn, but as yet, this aspect of their ability to help improve provision has not been fully exploited by the school. Very good spiritual, social and moral development is characterised by the way pupils support each other and by the empathy they show for the difficulties of others, especially some living in other parts of the world. Pupils are quickly gaining knowledge of cultural diversity but, as the school recognises, they show greater understanding of this when talking about other countries than they do about life in different areas of the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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	1
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	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching combines with the lively curriculum to promote learning effectively. Teachers use a good range of techniques to try to ensure that lessons are interactive so that pupils stay interested and on task. On occasion, however, when introductions to lessons are too long, pupils become a little passive and thus time is not used as well as it might be. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that less-able pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Teachers use the assessments they make of pupils’

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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attainments to accurately challenge them in lessons. Expectations are high for all pupils, including the more able, but some lessons do not allow these pupils to make the most of their abilities, due to insufficient time for independent activity. Through the relatively new target setting procedures, pupils are clear about ways in which they could improve their work. School improvement work has been successful in ensuring improved marking. However, in addition to some lack of precision in showing pupils where they could improve, pupils report that, although in mathematics they are always expected to put right any mistakes, they are not always given the time to make improvements to their writing and thus they do not gain as much as they could from their teacher’s comments. The outstanding care, guidance and support mean that the school is notably successful in promoting the safety and well-being of all. Robust and concerted work to promote better rates of attendance has been very successful. Consequently, attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now high. Very close relationships with other professionals help ensure strong support for vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has provided strong leadership and has been very successful in promoting a team approach to development activities. A notable success of the teamwork between the headteacher and governors is the imminent upgrading of the school’s accommodation, action which has been sought and needed for many years. Systematic checking of the school’s work has ensured accurate self-evaluation and very good quality improvement planning. Although the role of senior staff is significantly broader than it was, the plan to extend this by providing staff with time to observe each other and support each other in making further improvements to their teaching is well devised. Greatly improved tracking of pupils’ progress, the results of which are systematically analysed and shared with teachers, means that staff have detailed knowledge of what is needed to help pupils learn and improve. This detailed tracking is also supporting good equality of opportunity for different groups of pupils. For example, the rate of progress of more-able pupils is improving. Governors are well informed and this allows them to both support the school and to ask challenging questions of leaders to ensure that decisions, for example those associated with staffing, are in the best interests of the pupils. Governors are taking care to ask the opinions of parents and carers, but are right in identifying that their role in encouraging parents and carers to contribute to school self-evaluation is an

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area for further work. The school is currently working through an action plan to develop its role in promoting community cohesion. The action plan shows good understanding of how this work can be further extended to the community in the United Kingdom. Governors have been assiduous in ensuring that pupils are properly safeguarded and have taken action to promote this, for example, by enhancing site security.

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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Reception year are given a satisfactory start to their education. Much has been put in place over the last year to improve the provision and this is beginning to bear fruit. The accommodation for these children, although not always easy to manage, provides them with appropriate opportunities to work both inside and outside. Adults have formed good relationships with the children, so they are happy to come to school and enjoy their time there. Last year, children made good progress and by the end of the year, most met the national expectation for their age and a good number exceeded this. There are times during the day, however, when children are not learning well enough and this is preventing better progress. This less productive time is largely linked to occasions when children are expected to be working and learning independently in a self-initiated way. At times, the proposed activities do not lead to or support this style of learning well enough and children are not asked to explain what they have achieved or learned, so their play can become less productive than it should be. More adult-directed tasks are based on good assessments and good knowledge of the children and are productive. The welfare of the children is seen to be very important and the children in this year group benefit from the same levels of care as those in the rest of the school.

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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

The above-average number of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire showed parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Their opinion can be summed up by one who wrote, 'My child loves the school and thrives in an environment that feels more that of a close protective family than an institution.' Parents and carers were particularly positive about the quality of teaching, the way their child is kept safe and the extent to which their child likes school. Inspectors agree with these positive opinions. A small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns that their child's needs were not being met. Inspection evidence showed that less able pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well provided for and make good progress but that some more able pupils could be making better progress in English.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Instow 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 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 138 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	62	26	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	62	26	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	31	46	31	46	3	4	3	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	54	25	37	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	60	26	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	40	59	21	31	6	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	65	19	28	4	6	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)	39	57	23	34	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	32	47	26	38	8	12	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	49	30	44	4	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	46	31	46	2	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	44	65	19	28	2	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	47	69	19	28	2	3	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 08 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.



17 November 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Instow Community primary School, Instow, EX39 4LU

We very much enjoyed our time at your school. How lucky you are to go to school in such a beautiful place! We agree with you that yours is a good school and we can see why you enjoy being there. Thank you for talking to us and helping us to get to know what goes on in your school. These are some of the things we liked best about your school:

- The good progress most of you make in English and mathematics
- The interesting and exciting activities that your teachers plan for you
- The way you try so hard to learn and improve
- The fact that you like school very much and want to attend, so that rates of attendance are high
- The way that feeling part of one big family makes you feel exceptionally safe and secure
- The outstanding care that adults take of each and every one of you
- The hard work your headteacher, staff and the governors are putting in to make your school even better.

In order to improve your school, we have asked your headteacher and the staff to:

- Help more able pupils to make better progress in English by being more precise in telling them how they can improve and by giving them more time to plan and complete work
- Give children in the Reception year better opportunities to work and learn independently.

Thank you again for the way you made us feel so at home in your school. We know that you will continue to contribute to making your school better in every way that you can. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions
Lead inspector

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