

Charlestown Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136760
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	397481
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2012
Lead inspector	Ian Hancock HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephanie Housman
Headteacher	Stephen Gibson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ian Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sandra Woodman

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team sampled 16 lessons taught by eight teachers, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. Informal discussions were also held with several parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at monitoring information, plans for improvement, analysis and tracking of pupils' progress, and records of meetings of the governing body. They looked at pupils' work in books, listened to a sample of pupils read and checked attendance. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection and looked at the questionnaire responses submitted by 20 staff, 115 pupils and 119 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Charlestown Primary School is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportions of pupils that are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those that are supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are lower than most other schools. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school's work has recently been recognised by the Healthy Schools award and the Dyslexia Friendly School Quality Mark. The school converted to academy status in June 2011.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school where pupils achieve well because of the good teaching that they receive. Strong links with the local community enrich pupils' learning effectively and enable the school to live out its aim to provide 'success for all children in a caring environment'. The school is not yet outstanding because there are some inconsistencies in teaching so that pupils' good progress is not sustained in all lessons.
- High-quality play and learning activities ensure that children get off to a good start in the Reception class. Their good progress continues across the other key stages, but is particularly strong in Years 2 and 6. Weaker readers and more capable pupils are supported and challenged particularly well. Standards in English and mathematics are high by the time pupils leave the school.
- Teaching is good and at times it is outstanding. Pupils concentrate for sustained periods because lessons are purposeful and engaging. Teachers confidently promote technical vocabulary and demonstrate important learning strategies. Occasionally, pupils have limited opportunities to show their understanding and explain their learning strategies. This is because teaching is overly directive and pupils are not always sufficiently guided in their learning, particularly through individual target setting.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and take great pride in their learning. As a result, their attendance rates are higher than in most other schools. The school's caring and positive ethos ensures that most pupils behave well and feel very safe.
- Leadership and management are good. Staff work with a clear sense of purpose because roles and responsibilities are distributed well. The effective leadership of teaching and the management of performance have improved pupils' rates of progress throughout the school. Not all of the systems that support leaders' monitoring of the school's work are fully utilised.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, ensure that pupils make good progress in every lesson by:
 - embedding the features of the best teaching across the school
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to explain their strategies and give reasons for their opinions
 - making greater use of individual learning targets and success criteria to guide pupils in their learning.
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- Strengthen the systems that help leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's work by:
 - setting end-of-year attainment targets and short-term objectives for each class
 - summarising pupil tracking information succinctly and sharing it frequently with members of the governing body
 - recording and reviewing behaviour incidents systematically.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children currently enter school with basic skills and understanding similar to those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Reception Year because of the good balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. For example, the Reception teacher demonstrated correct letter formation before children chose activities to practise their writing skills by making captions for their small world creations. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1 and their levels of attainment in reading and other core skills at the end of Year 2 are securely above average. Their good progress continues across Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. A focus to challenge the more capable pupils enabled over half of the current Year 6 to reach the higher National Curriculum levels and around one fifth to reach an exceptionally high level in mathematics. On a few occasions, pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons because teaching is less effective.

In lessons, pupils take great interest in their learning and work with sustained concentration to good effect. This was evident in a guided reading session where a group of Year 4 girls earnestly discussed the elements of a persuasive text and suitably explained what made it interesting to the reader. Most pupils have a clear understanding of what is required because they frequently use success statements to check and assess their work. For example, Year 5 pupils worked with sustained concentration on short writing tasks before evaluating their partner's effort against different success statements. Such guidance is not used in every class so pupils are not always sufficiently clear how to improve their work.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because they receive well-targeted support in lessons and in small group sessions. Gaps between

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other groups of pupils and the rest are localised and are closing. For example, a comprehensive programme of support for weaker readers enabled most of them to make exceptional progress and make up lost ground.

Parents and carers believe that their children make good progress and that their individual needs are met effectively. Most pupils say that they learn a lot in lessons and this was evident during the inspection when all groups of pupils were seen to be achieving well in most lessons.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers, and the pupils themselves, believe that teaching is good. This was also the finding of the inspection team. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, including in the teaching of letters and the sounds they represent, (called phonics). In Reception, adults effectively support individuals to develop their reading skills. In other classes teachers keep detailed and informative records of pupils' reading progress. Individual reading books provide an appropriate level of challenge and pupils know that they have to demonstrate proficiency before progressing to the next reading level.

High-quality teaching, particularly at the end of each key stage, is characterised by high expectations and clear explanations that move learning on at a brisk pace. New technologies illustrate important ideas well. Teachers recognise and respond promptly when pupils have not fully understood the concepts being taught. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the class teacher skilfully questioned Year 6 pupils to assess their learning before quickly giving an impromptu review to those that were struggling. Her probing questions and clear explanations enabled the pupils to successfully solve challenging algebraic problems. In a small number of lessons, teaching is overly directive and pupils are not asked to explain their strategies or give reasons for their opinions. Consequently, pupils are unable to demonstrate their understanding of the learning. Some pupils know their individual learning targets, but these are not used consistently in all classes.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught equally well. This is because teachers, and teaching assistants, ensure that tasks are carefully matched to pupils' different capabilities so that pupils are challenged effectively. Teaching promotes pupils' personal and wider development well. For example, in assembly pupils thoughtfully considered the Olympic ideals of promoting peace through sport. In other lessons, pupils demonstrated exceptionally mature and reflective attitudes towards their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning. Their consideration of others is demonstrated in spontaneous acts of kindness, such as older pupils offering their chairs for younger pupils to sit on. Reception children share activities and patiently wait their turn. Older pupils collaborate frequently in pairs and small groups. For

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example, pupils in Years 3 and 5 recently worked together to create animation films. Responsible roles, such as membership of the school forum or playground buddy, enable pupils to play an active part in managing the behaviour of others. Discussions with pupils confirm that the behaviour of most pupils is good. Pupils, including those with additional needs are aware of, and respond to, the clear systems for encouraging good behaviour. For example, the coloured cards used at lunchtimes provide thinking time for pupils to reflect on their actions.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of different types of bullying. They report that incidents are infrequent and taken seriously. A few parents and carers expressed concerns regarding incidents of poor behaviour including bullying. The inspectors found that the school responds to incidents vigorously, but incidents are not always recorded and reviewed systematically. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, such as when crossing the road or using the internet. The very large majority of pupils feel safe, and parents and carers share similar views. Pupils are confident that, if any issues or concerns did arise, they could talk to a member of staff. Pupils value the 'worry boxes' in each class and report that they are emptied regularly and that issues are dealt with effectively. As one pupil commented, the boxes are 'emptied on Friday and by Monday it is dealt with'.

The school has effective systems to promote and manage attendance. As a result, attendance rates exceed those of most other schools and continue to improve.

Leadership and management

The ambitious and principled leadership of the headteacher and other leaders has established a shared sense of purpose among all staff. Leaders have effectively supported colleagues through staff training and by working alongside them in the classroom. This said, the features of the best teaching are not yet fully embedded. Teachers are held accountable for the progress that pupils make and pupils at risk of underachieving are identified. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and the support provided for specific groups of pupils enable them to catch up. Individual pupils are tracked closely, but the information is not summarised succinctly and shared frequently with the governing body. Consequently, opportunities are missed to evaluate the difference that actions are making. The increased rates of pupils' progress and the improved attendance seen over the current academic year demonstrate the school's capacity for further improvement.

The governing body is actively involved in the school and plays its part in shaping its future development. Members visit the school frequently and participate in short-term project groups. They know the school well and are astutely aware of its strengths and areas for development. While plans for classroom improvement are informed by regular monitoring activities, they lack a succinct set of measurable targets and interim milestones to enable easy monitoring and evaluation. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are robust and meet current requirements.

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The school's revised curriculum supports pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy well. It provides many enriching and memorable experiences including residential visits and participation in local festivals. During the week of the inspection, the pupils received a talk from a former Olympic champion and had opportunities to hold an Olympic torch. Pupils value the range of after-school clubs and the frequent opportunities provided to participate in sports activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The high-quality artwork displayed around the school is testimony to pupils' positive responses to the work of local and international artists. Pupils have a good understanding of cultures and faiths that are different from their own. Strong links with the local community foster their appreciation of Cornish culture.

Parents and carers that made their views known to the inspection team were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Several praised the school's contribution to the community as well as the quality of education the school provides. Speaking for many, one parent commented, 'The children are happy, safe and confident.'

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



13 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Charlestown Primary School, St Austell, PL25 3PB

Thank you for being so helpful when I visited your school recently with another inspector. We were grateful to those of you that talked with us and read books to us. I would like to tell you our findings about your school.

Your school is a good school. This is because most of you make good progress and achieve high standards by the time you leave. You are proud of your learning and work hard in lessons. Those of you that spoke with us, and returned the questionnaire, told us that you feel safe and the school helps you to do as well as you can.

We have asked those who lead the school ensure that more teaching is good or outstanding so that you all make good progress in lessons. We have suggested to your teachers that they should ask you to explain your answers and make regular use of your learning targets and success statements in lessons. We have also suggested that your headteacher and other leaders make some further changes to help them monitor and continue to improve the education provided.

You can help with these improvements by thinking carefully about your answers and making good use of your learning targets and success statements in lessons. I wish you all the very best in your education.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector

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