

Instow Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113156
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325763
Inspection date	24 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Andrew Redpath HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	141
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Atkinson
Headteacher	Peter Kent
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Rectory Lane Instow Bideford EX39 4LU
Telephone number	01271 860545
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- Achievement and standards, particularly in relation to pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- The use of assessment information to check pupils' progress and to let them know what they need to do to improve.
- The quality of the curriculum.
- The school's promotion of community cohesion and pupils' knowledge of different religious and cultural traditions in modern Britain.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, policies and other documents, national published assessment data and the school's assessment records, lesson observations, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, and views expressed in parental questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Instow Community Primary School is a small school located on the outskirts of the coastal village of Instow, near Bideford in North Devon. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and virtually all speak English as their home language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The proportion entitled to free school meals is much lower than average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The school has been seeking to improve its accommodation for several years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Instow Community Primary School provides a good quality of education. It is an exciting and busy school where pupils really enjoy learning. In the words of one pupil, 'It's fun but hard working.' It is also a warm and friendly school where all pupils are encouraged to join in. The excellent curriculum is extended by an impressive range of after-school clubs, trips and visits. Pupils are rightly proud of their school and what it offers. They report, 'There's lots you can do,' and 'It's a small school but it doesn't mean we don't get to do things!'

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Children join the school with skills and understanding that are at or slightly above the levels expected for their age. They settle well in the Reception class and by the end of Year 2, they reach standards which are generally above the national average. By the end of Year 6, standards are consistently above average, with a high proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in national tests in English, mathematics and science. The school is particularly successful in raising the achievement of pupils who are at risk of falling behind or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. An excellent programme of early intervention ensures that almost all pupils leave school having reached the expected standard for their age in all subjects.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and their behaviour is excellent. Opportunities to participate in the life of the school and wider community, and the focus on developing speaking and listening skills in lessons, help pupils to grow in self-confidence and to become effective communicators. Pupils speak confidently about their role on the school council and how it has made a difference, for example by improving playground equipment or raising funds for charity. The provision of nutritious food, tending of the school garden, and a wide range of sporting activities including cross-country running, netball, tag rugby and daily warm-up exercises, ensure pupils lead very healthy lifestyles. Pupils report they feel very safe and secure in school and are very sensible when using equipment. Whilst pupils learn much about the global community and their own local culture and traditions, their knowledge of the diverse religions and cultures in modern Britain is less developed.

Teaching is good. As one parent commented, 'Topics are taught imaginatively and enthusiastically.' A good example seen during the inspection was a history topic on the Second World War, which culminated in an impressive drama presentation. Lessons are carefully structured, with thoughtful questioning to check pupils understand their task. This is particularly successful in engaging lower attaining pupils and raising their achievement. The detail in marking and the presentation of pupils' work vary between classes, and suggested corrections are not always followed up.

The school provides a very caring environment. In the words of one parent, 'It is like an extended family where every pupil is known on an individual basis.' The school has robust procedures for safeguarding pupils. Academic guidance has improved since the last inspection, although the school is still developing this aspect of its work. Pupils generally understand how they can improve their work and, in some subjects, they are usefully involved in assessing their learning. The school has established excellent links with parents and the local community which are very effective in enriching the curriculum and promoting pupils' enjoyment of school. These include visiting artists and musicians, and the school has received the Gold Artsmark in recognition of this work. Parents hold overwhelmingly positive views of the school. They are particularly pleased with the high quality of leadership provided by the headteacher and how he has built

a dedicated team of teachers and support staff. As one noted, 'The school has been lucky to have an excellent headteacher who is passionate about his school and its pupils.' Parents are rightly concerned about the school's accommodation. Staff are very creative in using available space, although the cramped accommodation has a limiting effect on teaching and learning. For example, movement in some classes is difficult and limits the teacher's choice of activities, and temporary dividers between rooms allow noise to interrupt pupils' concentration.

Since the last inspection, the school has improved arrangements for evaluating its performance and senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. A good system for tracking pupils' progress and setting challenging targets has been introduced, and it is being developed further to monitor pupils' progress in more detail. The governing body has undergone several recent changes in personnel. Governors are very supportive of the school and are developing rapidly their ability to challenge and hold the school to account. Improvements since the last inspection and the school's effective use of resources demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to their education. They work in a caring and stimulating environment where experienced staff have high expectations of what children can achieve. Children make good progress during their first year of school, particularly in linking letters and sounds and developing their early writing skills. They develop well as individuals and show consideration for each other. The outside environment is especially attractive and contains a good range of equipment which enables children to develop their own play. A significant group of children in the current Reception year entered with weaker skills in personal and social education than have been typical in the past. Sometimes, learning activities for these children are directed too closely by adults and opportunities are missed for children to initiate learning and thereby develop their independence and social skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed and all staff play an active part in developing a varied and high quality provision. Good links have been established with local pre-school groups and parents to ensure children settle in well. Thorough procedures are in place to ensure the welfare and happiness of the children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide greater opportunities for children in Reception to initiate learning and to further develop their independence and social skills.
- Promote a greater understanding of the wider British community by encouraging pupils to learn more about the diverse ethnic groups and religious beliefs.
- Continue working with the local authority to improve the accommodation so it is more effective in supporting teaching and learning.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Instow Community Primary School, Bideford EX39 4LU

As you know, I visited your school recently with another inspector. We really enjoyed our visit. Thanks to those of you who talked to us about your work and life at the school. You were very polite and helpful and are clearly proud of your school. I am writing to let you know what we thought about your school.

Here are the main points:

- Your school is a good school and you make good progress in your work.
- By the end of Year 6, you achieve results in national tests which are above average.
- Those of you in Reception settle well and get off to a good start.
- Your behaviour is excellent. You really enjoy coming to school and like taking part in the many interesting clubs, trips and visits on offer.
- You play a big part in the life of the school and this helps you to become confident young people by the time you leave.
- Teaching is good because teachers provide interesting lessons, such as the Second World War topic I observed during my visit, which encourages you to enjoy learning.
- Your school has excellent links with parents and the local community which help to provide more interesting activities.
- Those of you who need extra help with your learning get very good support.
- Your headteacher leads the school well and has created a very friendly environment where all staff work together to help you learn.
- Your parents are extremely pleased with the school.

I have asked the school to do some things to make it even better:

- Give those of you in Reception more opportunities to do things for yourselves.
- Help you learn more about the different religions and cultures in modern Britain.
- Improve the accommodation so it is more effective in helping you learn.

You can help by making suggestions about how the accommodation might be improved and by taking an interest in different religions and cultures.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath

Her Majesty's Inspector