

# Plympton St Mary's CE Infant School

8 Market Road, Plympton, Plymouth, PL7 1QW

**Inspection dates** 23–24 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their move to junior school.
- Pupils make good progress because they are well taught. Learning and progress are strongest in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Aspects of reading, writing and mathematics have all been strengthened.
- In lessons, teachers manage behaviour well and regularly praise the contributions that pupils make. Pupils have many good opportunities to discuss their ideas with each other, and to answer questions.
- Pupils are given activities which are at the right level for them when they work in groups or on their own. Valuable additional support is given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning and work well together. They are outgoing, friendly and confident when talking to adults. They feel safe in school and know who to talk to about any concerns.
- Leadership, management and governance have improved since the previous inspection when they were satisfactory. Staff work well together, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching and there are times when pupils' learning slows in lessons, particularly for more-able pupils. This happens because checking and support by leaders has not been sharp or regular enough.
- Marking in books to help the pupils to understand what to do to improve, and the presentation of their work, are inconsistent.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills by writing at length in different subjects are missed.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, including three joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also made shorter visits to some additional lessons and the after-school club.
- Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils.
- An inspector discussed by telephone with a representative from the local authority the support provided to the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 41 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and information from the school's survey of parents' opinions. Parents' views were also gathered from informal conversations at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documents, including safeguarding records and arrangements, the school's improvement planning, school checks on teaching and progress, records relating to attendance, the school's numerical data on pupils' progress, and samples of pupils' work.

## Inspection team

Peter Clifton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Heather Barraclough

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. There are seven classes. There is no alternative provision off site (lessons that take place regularly away from school).
- Nearly all pupils are White British.
- There are few pupils who speak English as an additional language, but they are not at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils from forces families, is below average
- Pupils from forces families form about a tenth of the school roll.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that pupils make even more progress by:
  - promoting a brisk pace of learning at all times, particularly for the more-able pupils
  - marking books consistently to help pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - checking up more closely on the quality of teaching and pupils' work to give teachers even more help and support to improve their practice
  - ensuring that there are better opportunities for pupils to write at greater length in different subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are broadly in line with those expected for their age, with writing being a weaker area. Pupils' attainment is above average at the end of Year 2, representing good progress as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. In the current Year 2, pupils' attainment is on track to be higher than in the last three years in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress was seen to be strongest in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the quality of the planning and the effective way the staff worked with each other. In Years 1 and 2, there is a few occasions when learning slows in lessons and this affects the more-able pupils the most.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They are frequently well supported individually or when working in small groups, for example to discuss their ideas and to write sentences with interesting words.
- The school's information about progress shows no significant difference between groups and this was confirmed through observing different groups of pupils in lessons. Historically, based on average point scores, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has not been as high as other groups. However, this gap is being closed quickly, particularly in reading and mathematics, because these pupils have been given extra support specific to their needs. Additional activities are also provided to support children from forces families who also make good progress.
- The samples of work seen for example in Year 2 showed that different groups of pupils are all making good progress. However, the quality of presentation and the amount of work in books is inconsistent between classes.
- More-able readers in Year 2 read fluently and show a good understanding of characters and plot. They are beginning to make choices about books based on the authors and different types of book. Less able readers in Year 1 use their understanding of different letters and their sounds (phonics) well to help them to read unknown words. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn to make and read words such as 'peck' and 'pet' and identify which ones rhyme.
- Writing skills are developed strongly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, pupils act out the story of *The Three Bears* and then write sentences with the support of adults. By Year 2, more able pupils write confidently for different purposes and write in different styles to interest the reader.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Since the previous inspection teaching has remained good. However, there is not enough outstanding teaching. Teaching in some parts of lessons is excellent. In Year 1, for example, pupils made excellent gains in developing their understanding about place value during high quality questioning and discussion.
- Reading, writing and calculation skills are taught well in literacy and numeracy lessons. However, planning does not provide regular enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects. In some books there are too many worksheets being used.
- Learning typically moves on at a brisk pace, such as in phonics teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Learning is also good when the pupils tackle individual tasks or work together in groups. However, on some occasions the pace of learning dips in some parts of lessons, for example at the start of lessons when teachers talk for too long. This results in pupils not always doing as well as they can.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils want to do their best. They help each other when working in groups. In Year 2, for example, the pupils shared several different ideas when trying to solve a mathematical problem.
- At the start of lessons pupils are given clear information about what they need to complete by

the end of the lesson. Marking is sometimes helpful and at its best it informs pupils about what must be improved. However, this practice is not consistent and sometimes this information is missing.

- Teaching assistants provide valuable support particularly to help less-able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. For example, in Year 1, pupils were supported well to use their counting skills and identify numbers one more or less than the number in question.

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

- Pupils show good attitudes to learning in lessons, and discussion and questioning are often lively. They listen well when being taught as a whole class. On a few occasions they become a little restless or 'switch off' when, for example, they have been listening for too long. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good understanding of class routines and choose activities confidently.
- Pupils play together well in the playground. They help each other if someone gets upset and quickly seek adult help when required. They say they enjoy playtimes and that adults sort out problems and 'cheer them up'.
- In lessons, pupils like working together and usually share resources well. They are beginning to resolve differences for themselves without the need for adult intervention. Year 2 pupils persevered when working in pairs to try to solve a tricky number problem.
- Pupils show a good awareness of different types of bullying, including that some internet sites may not be safe to use. They feel safe when in school and know what to do, for example, if there is fire.
- Parents and carers express the view that pupils' behaviour is good and that their children are happy and settled. They comment typically that the school looks after their children well. Staff agree and there are only a few incidents in records about any misbehaviour.
- Pupils arrive at school on time and their attendance is very regular.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Leaders have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and where improvements are needed. A stronger emphasis on teaching phonics is improving reading. The use of story boards in the Early Years Foundation Stage to encourage the children to use talk as a starting point for writing, and the use of simile in Year 2, are helping to improve attainment in writing. In mathematics, there is improvement in the way that place value and mental mathematics skills are taught.
- Good teamwork is well established. Questionnaire returns and discussions with staff confirm that they enjoy working together and value the support and training provided. However, this has not yet been sharp enough to promote outstanding teaching or to eliminate those occasions in lessons when learning is not sufficiently brisk. Leaders recognise that inconsistencies in marking remain.
- Leaders have tackled issues identified at the time of the previous inspection firmly. Most notably, the Early Years Foundation Stage is now a strength of the school and ensures that the pupils are well prepared when they move into Year 1.
- Leaders have improved how they check the progress of individual pupils. The school's system for tracking pupils' progress is regularly updated. Leaders use this information to demonstrate that pupils have equal opportunities to do well. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- Topics covering different subjects make learning enjoyable for pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is promoted well. However, the samples of work seen in Year 2 show some opportunities for extended writing in history and geography, but this was not evident in science.

The after-school club is popular and provides well-organised activities which the pupils enjoy.

- As leadership has strengthened, the local authority has reduced the level of support and now, appropriately, provides light touch support for this school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has good oversight of the budget and ensures that sensible decisions are made about spending. Governors have a good awareness about the progress of pupils in different year groups, including the effectiveness of the use of pupil premium funding which is well targeted. Action taken since the previous inspection has improved governance, including being given better first-hand information about how well the school is doing. However, governors have not demanded more detailed data to get a clearer view of achievement in different classes, so that they can hold leaders fully to account. There is a clear performance management procedure, which they follow to make decisions about teachers rising up the salary scale. Governors have been suitably trained to fulfil their statutory duties. They have recently attended a large range of courses in order to develop their skills and understanding. This includes training for new governors and courses on safeguarding. They follow appropriate procedures to ensure child protection and safer recruitment of staff.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113486
<b>Local authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	401374

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Keith Escott
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Hayes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 337912
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