

# Plympton St Mary's CofE Infant School

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113486
<b>Local Authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	289647
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alexander Paul Baxter

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 on roll</b>	166
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	L Rendle
<b>Headteacher</b>	M Wild
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 February 2002
<b>School address</b>	8 Market Road Plympton Plymouth PL7 1QW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 337912
<b>Fax number</b>	01752 343782

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-7
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 April 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	289647

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This Church of England voluntary aided infant school is slightly smaller than average in size and attracts pupils from the local area. The numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals, from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are below average. Children's attainment on entry broadly matches that expected for their age.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Plympton St Mary C of E Infants is an excellent school. It has been most successful in recent years in securing outstanding pupils' achievement and well-above-average standards of attainment. Parents are particularly appreciative and supportive of the school; one typical written comment was, 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds since starting school and his confidence has grown.'

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's leadership is inspirational and with first-class support from staff and governors, provision is excellent in almost all areas. As a result, standards continue to rise and pupils are on course to meet their challenging targets. This proven track record of improvement has been achieved by a strongly shared 'team' approach to leadership and management. Self-evaluation is very effective and is informed by accurate assessments of pupils' progress and full consultation with members of the school community. Senior managers fine-tune their decisions through positive yet challenging dialogue and ensure full value for money and continued improvement. Consequently, the school's accommodation and resources are now excellent and facilitate consistently high quality teaching and learning in all classes.

The majority of children enter the school with a broadly average range of skills. Pupils are taught and progress exceptionally well in the Foundation Stage (Reception) and in other year groups as they move through the school. Pupils of all abilities are included equally and make outstanding achievement. Standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils also develop very good speaking and listening and problem-solving skills.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are extremely good. In response to excellent care, guidance and support, pupils are enthusiastic learners and adopt safe, healthy lifestyles very diligently. The pupils' wholehearted enjoyment and appreciation of school underpin their efforts and success in learning as they move through the school.

Teaching is excellent and is typified by its consistently good and better quality and the way teachers appreciate the pupils' opinions and encourage their independence. Teachers and their assistants know the pupils extremely well and meet their differing needs very precisely. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are particularly appreciative of this very effective support. The school provides a good curriculum, now enriched by frequent opportunities to learn by using information and communication technology (ICT). However, pupils do not always have enough time to develop their skills to equal effect in music and religious education or further through extra-curricular clubs.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen what is already a good curriculum by allocating more time for music and religious education and by providing more extra-curricular clubs.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Pupils achieve outstandingly well by Year 2 and overall standards are well above average. This excellent progress stems from consistently high quality teaching, which has a cumulative and very supportive impact on pupils' learning. Attainment is broadly average when children start

school. Children make excellent progress in Reception classes. Children achieve best in their personal, social and emotional and mathematical development. By the time they enter Year 1 most attain and many exceed expected learning goals. Pupils of all abilities continue to make excellent progress in Years 1 and 2 because of highly effective teaching. For example, improved standards in writing reflect a consistent emphasis across the school. Most pupils use their developing skills with increasing independence as they grow older and reach the challenging targets set for them. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in all aspects of English (reading, writing and speaking and listening) and in mathematics and science.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding in all parts of the school. Pupils are welcomed into a caring and supportive environment from the moment they enter school. They know that they are valued from the outset and respond very positively as committed learners. Pupils readily express their ideas in and out of lessons because their opinions are appreciated. Pupils' behaviour, attitudes to learning and relationships are exemplary. Pupils clearly enjoy school, especially each other's company, and this is seen in their mostly good attendance.

Pupils undertake responsibilities enthusiastically, for example, as 'Golden Helpers' at play times and as lunchtime monitors. They say, 'We have lots of friends and like helping people best of all.' Any pupil needing a friend or help has only to sit on the 'Friendship Bench' and warm support is instantly provided. This is just one example of the many ways that pupils demonstrate their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is supported by the school's Christian ethos.

Pupils have an excellent awareness of healthy living and readily adopt safe lifestyles. They contribute well to the local community and also contribute wholeheartedly to various charities, for example, sponsoring a child in Ethiopia. The pupils' social and academic skills prepare them very effectively for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teaching throughout the school is typified by its consistently good and better quality and by a sustained emphasis on promoting pupils' independence in learning. All teachers and their assistants value pupils' ideas and use them perceptively to raise questions and promote new learning. Other consistently used strategies include using interactive whiteboards and success ladders in writing. These give pupils a visual image of how things function and a structure to follow to improve their work. Pupils' vocabulary and subsequently their writing have been improved. This was clearly seen during the inspection when a Year 2 pupil wrote, 'The emerald green trees covered the gleaming sunlight so that it was dark and gloomy.' Teaching is lively and interesting and promotes learning through practical activity. This is evident in the pupils' high levels of enjoyment in learning in all parts of the school. Most pupils sustain concentration very well, but occasionally a few pupils need closer adult support to keep them on task. Teachers assess pupils' work, track progress carefully and set appropriately challenging targets for improvement. Pupils appreciate this and say, 'We know we are doing well because we get 'Gold Stars' and 'Table Awards''.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum that is well matched to the pupils' differing needs and capabilities. Throughout the school, pupils' independent learning and basic literacy and numeracy skills are given excellent emphasis. Children in Reception classes experience an outstanding curriculum based on practical learning opportunities. Learning opportunities include pupils sharing ideas and working co-operatively and these fully support their personal development. The curriculum is enriched by excellent accommodation and resources, including for ICT, and by a good range of visits and visitors. The 'Breakfast Club' provides beneficial activities each morning, but few other clubs are provided. The school promotes good links with the community and other schools and excellent links with parents and outside agencies to strengthen pupils' learning. Stimulating displays of pupils' artwork reflect the strong creative dimension of the curriculum. Although pupils do not always have sufficient time to develop their skills to best effect in music and religious education, the school is adapting planning to address this.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pastoral care, support and academic guidance are exceptional strengths of the school. These typify the school's very caring Christian ethos. Parents are extremely supportive and appreciate and contribute to the high quality of the guidance given to the pupils. Pupils show outstanding personal qualities and respond enthusiastically because they recognise the sincerity and value of the support they receive from caring adults. The pupils' well-being is safeguarded very effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported extremely well. Teachers assess pupils' work and progress very accurately and use these assessments most effectively to identify needs and to set challenging targets for improvement. This is clearly apparent in the pupils' consistently high performance in mathematics and their improving reading and writing skills. Among several appreciative comments, parents agreed that, 'Children come on so much at St Mary's School.'

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher clearly leads by example in an inspirational way. By developing a team approach to leadership and management she has empowered senior managers and indeed all those associated with the school to play a full part in its success. Governors give excellent support. Together with the headteacher, they have played a key role in appointing new staff with expertise, managing finances very precisely and in achieving significant improvements to the accommodation and resources for learning. The school is modest in judging its overall effectiveness as good, but it has a proven track record of evaluating its performance very effectively, thereby bringing about very good improvements since the last inspection. These include raising pupils' academic achievements, most recently in writing and ICT, in pupils' personal achievements, including attendance, and in bringing about consistently good and better teaching. Senior managers, increasingly including subject co-ordinators, continue to demonstrate an excellent capacity to continue improvement into the future.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
---	-----------------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> Grade 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 April 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of St. Mary's C of E Infant School, 8 Market Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 1QW

It was a pleasure to visit your school. Like you, I really enjoyed spending time at St Mary's. I agree with you and with most of your parents who feel that it is an outstanding school. These are the main things I found out about your school:

- You make excellent progress and the standards you reach in Year 2 are well above those found in most infant schools, especially in mathematics.
- Your behaviour, attitudes to work and the way you care about each other are superb. You clearly know how to live healthily and safely.
- Teaching is excellent. The teachers and their assistants know you very well and are also helping you to learn for yourselves.
- All the adults in the school care for you exceptionally well.
- Your headteacher and senior managers lead and manage the school very successfully.
- You are given a good range of learning activities and it was pleasing to see your enjoyment of school.

To help the school to improve I have asked the headteacher and governors to provide opportunities for you to learn more in music and religious education and to arrange for more clubs and activities outside of normal lessons.

Thank you once again. Please keep your enthusiasm for school and good luck in the future.

With best wishes,

Alex Baxter Lead inspector