

Estover Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113327
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	311214
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Ian Hancock

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)	171
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	Teresa Fisher
Headteacher	Kate Luffingham
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Miller Way Estover Plymouth PL6 8UJ
Telephone number	01752 709440
Fax number	01752 772699

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school with a language support centre for children aged four to seven years on site. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the Reception class. There have been numerous staff changes recently and the deputy headteacher is currently on secondment at another local school for two terms. The school serves the local area in the north of Plymouth. Almost all children are from White British backgrounds. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is significantly above average. The school has achieved the Healthy School Award, Investors in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Eco Schools Green Flag Award and Inclusion Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Parents describe it as 'Not just a school, it's a family. It has a lovely family feel when you visit and you are always able to speak to the teachers if you need to.' This is evidenced through strengths in pastoral care, moral and social development and working effectively with others. All this contributes much to pupils' good personal development and well-being. The outcomes are seen in happy pupils who behave well, feel safe and get on well together. They are keen to participate in exercise and have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life. Good enrichment activities, as part of the satisfactory curriculum, stimulate pupils' interests and enjoyment of learning.

Pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory. Children enter school in the EYFS with skill levels below those expected for children of a similar age. Here they settle quickly and make good progress, taking full advantage of the excellent links with the language centre. As a result of new initiatives, including more emphasis on developing basic skills, standards are improving, although by Year 6 they are below average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement through the school is beginning to improve as a result of more focused support such as intervention programmes to improve pupils' skills and confidence. Expectations of more able pupils are still not high enough to ensure that they make the best progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from the help given by teachers and support staff and make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils in the language centre achieve well against their own individual targets, where highly trained staff support them very well.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but variable, with the result that pupils' progress is inconsistent as they go through the school. Although there is much good teaching in the EYFS and Year 6, lessons elsewhere do not always sufficiently motivate or challenge all pupils. Assessment systems have significantly improved since the last inspection. However, information is not always used consistently by teachers when planning work or tracking individual progress, so that many pupils, particularly higher attainers, are not reaching the highest standards possible in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher provides a clear direction for leadership and management. The role of subject leaders in English, mathematics and science has appropriately been identified as a key area for further development, so that they are more proactively involved in self-assessment and school improvement. With the increasing involvement of subject leaders and governors, staff stability and the gradual success of recent actions, the school can demonstrate it is in a satisfactory position to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skill levels when they start school are below those expected for their age. In particular, many children have weak language, personal and social skills, and lack confidence. Very good induction arrangements, with excellent links to the language centre, help children to settle well, learn routines quickly and grow in confidence. The welfare of children is outstanding. High priority is given to the development of children's personal, social and emotional needs by the patient approach of the staff, so that children feel safe and well looked after. Good leadership and teaching, with an interesting range of well planned activities, ensure that children make good progress. Staff plan a good balance of activities between those led by adults and those the children choose. However, the outside area, although used well, has restricted space and would benefit from all-weather protection for greater all year use. Groups of children are

supported well by teaching assistants, who take an active part in children's learning and help teachers to carefully monitor their progress. By the end of the EYFS, many children reach expected levels when they start Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science by ensuring teachers carefully track individual progress and provide appropriate activities, particularly for higher attaining pupils, so that they reach their full potential.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning so that pupils make good progress in every lesson.
- Make sure subject leaders in English, mathematics and science play a full part in monitoring the school's performance to bring about improvement.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average in reading, writing and mathematics, because the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 is significantly below the national average. New initiatives to improve the progress of different groups of pupils, particularly higher attainers, have been implemented. As a result, standards and achievement are beginning to rise in writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2008 were below average in English, mathematics and science but the school exceeded its targets and improved performance from 2007. There was some underachievement for those capable of higher attainment. Inspection findings indicate that the school's action to improve standards and achievement is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards and achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress where individual education plans are relevant to their specific needs. The pupils in the language centre achieve well where they are well supported by a good number of highly trained staff who carefully monitor their progress and provide individual tasks that improve their language development and confidence.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to learning. They particularly like 'good sports, educational trips and working on the computers'. The school has worked hard to improve attendance, which is now satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with particular strengths in moral and social development. However, the school recognises the need to improve pupils' understanding of living in a multicultural society. Relationships are strong and pupils find great enjoyment in helping one another, as seen in the playground. Pupils are enthusiastic to take on responsibility around the school but the school council would like to have a greater say in promoting their ideas. Pupils make a positive contribution to the local community, recently participating in a half marathon for local charities and tidying up their surrounding environment. The school has achieved the Activemark and Healthy School Awards and pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and know how to keep safe. They enjoy the daily 'wake and shake up' session

and various sports activities, often led by coaches. Pupils' positive approach to learning and satisfactory academic achievement means their life skills are prepared suitably for their future education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although there is good and sometimes outstanding teaching and learning, particularly in the EYFS and Year 6, the quality is somewhat uneven through the school, with variations in how well pupils learn from year to year. All teachers use a variety of teaching styles, and positive relationships contribute well to the good personal development. The purpose of the lessons is explained well so that pupils know what they are aiming to achieve. Good use is often made of interactive whiteboards to support pupils' learning and work is marked thoroughly. The key variability in teaching is that lessons do not consistently meet the needs of everyone, particularly higher attaining pupils, so work is not well matched to what all pupils know and understand. When this happens, the pace is slow and expectations too low which has a negative impact on achievement. Well trained teaching assistants give good support when working with groups of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to increase their confidence. Good teaching in the language centre ensures these pupils make good progress in their language development and their individual needs are met well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is satisfactory overall. The recent review of provision has produced a more creative and innovative curriculum where teachers are beginning to link work across subjects that helps pupils make better sense of their learning. However, the school acknowledges more work is needed to ensure literacy and information and communication technology links are secure. Curriculum enrichment is good. Pupils really enjoy the residential trips and speak enthusiastically about their visits to places of interest and the various clubs. Specialist teachers are used well for music, sport and dance to broaden pupils' experiences and support their learning well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children are well cared for in the safe and supportive environment, including those in the language centre. Pupils feel they are listened to and parents know that staff take good care of the children at all times. Child protection, health and safety and safeguarding procedures are all robust. Vulnerable pupils with specific social, emotional and educational needs are supported very sensitively, with external agencies consulted where necessary. Improvements to assessment, including new tracking procedures, have secured accurate information about pupils' attainment. This is beginning to be used to track individual pupils' progress and identify those needing additional support, although not consistently.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The significant changes in the last few years, including the appointment of several senior staff, have enabled the school to get a firm grip on improvement. The experienced headteacher drives the work of the school and has been instrumental in establishing an inclusive school, where everyone feels valued. A typical parental comment was, 'The headteacher and dedicated staff are a true asset. Most importantly, the school really does care about including its pupils.' The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Although the school has established some effective links with a school in Uganda to help pupils' value diversity, it acknowledges that there are not enough opportunities for contacts beyond the local community. The new senior leadership team has begun to reconsider the school's self-evaluation procedures to identify key areas for improvement. Appropriate plans are in place to develop the role of subject leaders so that they have a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, enabling more rapid improvement. Governors are hard-working and supportive of the school. They have a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and are becoming more involved in monitoring the school's progress by regularly attending all meetings.

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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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

15 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Estover Primary School, Estover PL6 8UJ

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to your school. We enjoyed talking to you very much and thought you were friendly and polite.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education and these are some of the good things we found.

- Children in the Reception class and language centre achieve well.
- You enjoy school, behave well and look after each other.
- You have a good understanding of how important it is to eat healthy food and enjoy taking regular exercise.
- You like the clubs you attend and visits outside school including residential trips.
- Teachers and staff look after you well including in the language centre.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to make your school better.

These are the things we asked the school to do to make it even better.

- We have asked teachers to help you improve your work in English, mathematics and science by giving you appropriate work to ensure that you make good progress, particularly those capable of doing harder work.
- We have also asked teachers to plan your lessons more carefully so that children in all classes can learn more quickly.
- We have asked that teachers in charge of English, mathematics and science are more involved in checking how well you are doing to help your school get even better.

You can help by continuing to behave well, working hard and listening carefully to your teachers.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Ian Hancock Lead inspector