

# Plympton St Mary's Church of England Infant School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113486
<b>Local Authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	338182
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rowena Onions

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>	179
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Banbury
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Sennett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 April 2007
<b>School address</b>	8 Market Road Plympton PL7 1QW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 337912
<b>Fax number</b>	01752 343782
<b>Email address</b>	admin@stmarysinfants.org.uk

---

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

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

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Nine hours were spent looking at learning during the inspection. Inspectors observed at least one lesson taught by each of the seven teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and the chair of governors. Inspectors also talked informally with parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, reports from the school's improvement partner and a range of other documentation. Inspectors received 101 responses to the questionnaire for parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment and progress of all pupils
- pupils' feelings about their own safety and security and the contribution they make to the community
- the use made of assessment to identify and build on individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses
- the quality of leadership and management systems in place in the school.

## Information about the school

This school is of average size. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and speak English as their first language. A below average proportion of pupils have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is one intake into the Early Years Foundation Stage during the autumn term. The school runs and manages a breakfast and an after-school club.

At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for a very short time.

**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: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Plympton St Mary's Church of England Infant School provides a satisfactory education. It has a number of good features and some that are outstanding. Because teaching is good overall, pupils make good progress in learning to read, write and do mathematics. Children enter the school with the skills usually expected for their age and leave showing above average attainment overall.

Teachers plan activities for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to help them build on their own interests and become independent and eager learners. The school, however, is right in identifying the need to smooth their transition into Year 1 by better developing their abilities to write and use number. Some significant strengths in teaching in Years 1 and 2, including the relationships built between teachers and pupils and the enthusiastic way teachers approach teaching, motivate pupils to learn and try hard, underpinning their good progress.

A good curriculum ensures that pupils are interested in what they do and gives them both the basic skills they need and a love of learning that should support them well in their later lives. The curriculum and the outstanding care, guidance and support given to the pupils are helping them to become happy, well-rounded young people who are a pleasure to meet and talk to. The pupils love their school and show that they know how to keep themselves safe and very healthy. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary.

Leadership and management of the school are, however, only satisfactory and this is the main reason why the school's overall effectiveness and capacity to improve are satisfactory rather than good despite the often good overall outcomes for children and good teaching and learning. Since the last inspection, the school has not made as much progress as it should have. The new headteacher has made a strong start in evaluating the school and galvanising the school team into taking action. Her initial evaluation of the school is insightful; she has already correctly identified key areas for development and work to address these has begun.

Although there has been work done to develop the education the school provides, and staff aspire to provide high quality provision, a lack of checking of the quality of teaching and learning meant that school self-evaluation and linked action to improve lacked precision. A new system for the tracking of pupils' progress has only recently been put into place and prior to this, there was a lack of awareness of the different progress of individuals and groups. This meant the school could not be sure that all pupils were achieving as well as they could. Although teaching is strong in many aspects, the use of assessment is only satisfactory. Teachers use their knowledge of the pupils to plan lessons appropriate to their ages and abilities. They are, however, often not sufficiently

**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

explicit in the way they communicate to the pupils what they plan for them to learn and what they expect them to have achieved by the end of the lesson. This means that pupils cannot target their efforts or consolidate their learning and their progress in the lesson is not optimised. Governors keep a check on the outcomes for pupils, but lack a systematic approach to gathering first-hand information with which to hold the school to account about progress and standards. The school's overall effectiveness has slipped from the excellence seen at the last inspection. Leadership and management, however, have remained strong in ensuring the well-being and safety of the pupils.

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

- Develop day-to-day assessment so that pupils are clear what they will learn in each lesson and how they will know they have been successful.
- Ensure children are well prepared for the transition to the Year 1 curriculum by developing their ability to write for a purpose and to use their number skills more effectively.
- Improve school self-evaluation by increasing and formalising the checking of teaching and learning by headteacher and senior staff, including through the improved use of data.
- Ensure governors are proactive in seeking first-hand information about the school and in using this to hold the school to account.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Standards at the end of Year 2 in 2009 in reading, writing and mathematics fell a little from the previous year, but remained above average. This year's pupils are on track to attain similar standards. Classroom observations reveal that pupils communicate well when talking and writing and show that they can apply their numeracy skills, although they are not always as good at explaining their thinking in mathematics as they are when discussing other subjects. Pupils could, for example, write clear imaginative accounts of what they might have felt if involved with the Great Fire of London. They have good spelling skills for their ages and their choice of phrases such as 'flames shooting into the sky' demonstrated their effective learning. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and high attaining pupils, make good progress. The care the school takes of individuals is particularly evident in the good progress made by pupils with medical needs.

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. They are lively and interested in everything! On occasion they 'bubble' with excitement at an activity, but the way they calm on request exemplifies their outstandingly good behaviour. They know what keeps them healthy and enthusiastically join in with physical activity. They feel very safe in school and understand they need to take action to make sure they stay safe. They talk, for example, about the need for knowing who it is appropriate to speak to in school and beyond. They know that they do not have to fear objects like scissors but that they do have to take care with them. As far as they are given opportunity, they

**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

contribute to the school and wider communities. For example, they made the suggestion that they should collect money to assist the Haitian people who had just experienced an earthquake. The school is just setting up a school council and reviewing the curriculum to allow for more opportunities for the pupils to contribute both in school and in the wider context.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Knowledge and care of the individual typify the school's provision. All staff strive very successfully to provide a warm, friendly environment in which individual needs are taken into account and provided for. Great emphasis is placed on keeping pupils safe and this is very effectively managed on a day-to-day basis. Motivating pupils to want to learn is given high and successful priority. Teachers plan activities that are varied and pertinent to pupils' interests. They often link subjects, for example, getting pupils to learn how a dictionary works through use of the words used in a science lesson. The school is, however, rightly looking to develop links between different subjects in order to deepen pupils' understanding and learning about new things. Teaching assistants are used well

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

**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

in supporting individuals and they demonstrate good skills in helping pupils to learn. On occasion, however, their skills are not used to full effect because the use of assessment by teachers means that they, like the pupils, are not fully sure what learning they should be focusing on in a lesson. Curriculum enrichment is successfully linked with the gaining of skills both academic and personal, for example pupils learn to problem solve and to work together cooperatively when working outdoors. Good quality breakfast and after-school clubs ensure that pupils' well-being is supported beyond the school day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Staff at all levels demonstrate a drive and ambition to improve the school. Senior leaders are supporting the new headteacher in planning ways forward and demonstrate keenness to do this. There have been a number of initiatives, such as the introduction of the revised National Strategies for the teaching of English and mathematics, over recent years which have been conscientiously worked on and embedded. Because of a lack of formality in the school self-evaluation, the school is, however, unsure of the impact of these initiatives; a situation which is rapidly changing. The emphasis on the individual pupil is successfully promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring pupils are free from discrimination. New tracking systems are now helping the school check there are no pockets of underachievement amongst groups. Good safeguarding procedures contribute to the very strong care provided for pupils.

Governors ensure statutory duties are met and play an appropriate role in important aspects of school life, such as the safeguarding of pupils. They have already demonstrated a wish to increase their role in challenging the school more by seeking training from the local authority.

The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Good local dimensions of community are seen in links with the church. Global aspects are developed soundly, for example through the teaching of French.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Because the children are well taught in a stimulating environment and benefit from good teaching and learning opportunities, they make good overall progress. By the end of the year, almost all attain the expected goals for their age and this proportion means that standards are higher than expected overall. Observations reveal that they develop particularly good spoken language and show well-developed personal and social skills. Teachers' enthusiasm is quickly picked up by the children. The curriculum allows children to select from a range of activities designed to provide opportunities for them to pursue their own interests. Adults are skilled in the way they intervene with this, subtly enhancing learning through a well-targeted question or brief demonstration. There is a good mix of opportunity to learn inside and outside. There is, however, some lack of emphasis on the development of writing for a purpose and the application of number skills which is making the transfer to the Key Stage 1 curriculum more difficult than it need be. There is good leadership and management of the provision. The need to ease the transfer into Year 1 had already been identified through good use of data and the monitoring of teaching and learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers



**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

The 101 responses to the inspection questionnaire show that the vast majority of parents and carers are happy with the education provided for their children. A very small number expressed concerns about the amount of information they receive about their child's education: inspectors found this to be good. On the whole, however, the parents' and carers' views concurred with those of the inspectors. The ethos which permeates all the school's work and ensures that each pupil is valued and cared for as an individual is greatly appreciated by parents and carers and is an aspect which inspectors agree is of high quality.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Plympton St Mary's Church of England Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 179 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	82	81	18	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	78	22	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	56	55	41	41	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	61	36	35	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	79	78	21	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	68	67	30	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	67	66	34	34	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	59	58	32	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	67	66	32	32	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	52	39	39	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	52	40	40	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	60	59	33	33	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	73	27	27	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



25 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Plympton St Mary's Church of England Infant School, Plymouth, PL7 1QW

We really enjoyed our two days at your school and would like to thank you for your help and friendly conversations. I know you will be pleased to know that we judge yours to be a satisfactory school that has a number of good features and some that are outstanding.

Here are some of the highlights:

- the good progress you make in reading, writing and mathematics, and the good standards you are reaching
- that you really enjoy school and try so hard to learn
- your very good behaviour
- the way your teachers make your lessons interesting for you
- the way each of you is treated as a very important person and the care that is taken of each one of you
- that everyone in your school is working together to make it an even better place.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked your school to do now:

- to make sure that you know what you are going to learn in each lesson and how you will know if you have been successful
- to help the children in the early years' class learn to learn to write and use numbers a little better
- to more regularly check your progress and how you are helped to learn
- to make sure the governors come to see you in school more often so that they can see what you are doing for themselves.

We are very glad that you like your school and think you are right to do so. We think that you could help your teachers to make your school even better by continuing to work hard and doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions,

Lead Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**