

# Oreston Community Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	136380
<b>Local Authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	373144
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Laurie Lewin

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	340
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ann James
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Ackers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 July 2008
<b>School address</b>	Oreston Road Plymouth PL9 7JY
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty lessons were observed and five teachers were seen. The inspectors met with pupils, staff, parents and carers and with members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information and safeguarding policies. They also scrutinised samples of pupils' work. The inspectors analysed 187 questionnaires from parents and carers, 98 questionnaires from pupils and 36 questionnaires from staff. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How the school has dealt with the dip in the standards achieved by pupils in Years 5 and 6 in the last academic year.
- How well pupils achieve in writing across the school.
- How well pupils are involved in assessing their own progress.
- How effectively subject leaders carry out their roles.

## Information about the school

The school is above average in size. It serves the local area, with some pupils coming from outside the immediate catchment area. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Nearly all of the pupils are White British, with a very small number coming from other ethnic backgrounds. The school has 12 classes. It has created a new class for Nursery age group children in the last academic year and has two classes for Reception-age children. In September 2010, the school became a Trust School and in January 2011 took on Academy status. The school holds several national accreditations including the Healthy Schools Award, the Active Sports Mark and the International Award.

**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?**

**2**

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

**3**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It provides an ethos in which pupils enjoy their learning and, as a result, attendance is high.

Over the last two academic years the attainment and progress made by pupils at the end of Year 6 declined, with a significant drop in attainment noted in 2010. Actions taken by the school's leaders and managers to address this have been effective, so that pupils now achieve well and attain above the expected levels by the end of Year 6. While standards remain lower than those reported at the time of the school's last inspection, the improvement this year shows that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. This capacity to sustain development is further confirmed by good improvements made to the school's facilities and resources, broadly accurate self-evaluation and the clear actions laid down to further strengthen provision across the school.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where, as a result of good teaching, they achieve well. Good progress continues throughout the rest of the school due to good, and occasionally, outstanding teaching. Staff have good relationships with all pupils and use these well to encourage all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are very confident to express their views, and in this way they make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community. For example, pupils spoken to said, 'Our ideas are viewed as being important • we wanted proper plates and menus at lunchtime and now we've got them.' In working to gain the Healthy Schools Award and Active Mark, pupils have acquired an excellent understanding about how to keep themselves fit and healthy. As part of the work to gain the International Award, the school has successfully linked with schools in other countries. This, along with excellent links to other schools in the United Kingdom, ensures that pupils gain a very keen insight into how people from other cultures lead their lives. Through this and other studies, pupils acquire a strong sensitivity to the world around them. Through class discussions, the keen sense of responsibility they acquire and their understanding of world issues, pupils gain very good moral and social awareness.

Although pupils achieve well in most areas of their work, attainment in writing is not as good as in reading and mathematics. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 in particular, do not have a wide enough range of opportunities to write for different audiences and purposes. Staff are very good at taking care of the pupils and are vigilant in all matters concerning safeguarding. As a result, all pupils feel completely safe.

The headteacher has established good systems for the staff to work in teams for different age groups. Senior leaders, who lead these teams, work well with staff to ensure that clear targets are set for pupils' progress. However, good practice is not always shared sufficiently between the teams. Team and subject leaders have a clear understanding of

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the performance of pupils within the age groups they teach. However, their knowledge of pupils' overall performance across the school is not sufficiently detailed. This hampers their ability to plan precise actions to raise pupils' attainment further. Safeguarding procedures are of outstanding quality, and exemplary procedures and systems are in place to ensure all activities are fully risk assessed. The governing body is good at holding the headteacher and staff to account. Governors are fully involved in all strategic planning and fully focused on ensuring the school derives the maximum benefit from its newly established Academy Trust School status.

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

- Improve attainment in writing by July 2012 through ensuring that pupils in Years 5 and 6 have regular and frequent opportunities to practise writing for different purposes and audiences.
- Improve the capacity of the school to drive up the attainment and progress of the pupils rapidly by July 2012 through ensuring that:
  - senior leaders and subject leaders receive training in analysing whole-school assessment information to inform the actions they plan for raising standards further
  - opportunities are provided to share good practice between staff teams.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Children's attainment is generally below typically expected levels when they start school. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and attain broadly average levels by the time they start Year 1. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well by the end of Year 6. Pupils use and apply their mathematical skills well in practical and problem-solving tasks. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were seen gaining good skills in learning to investigate and explore the properties of two-dimensional shapes. Pupils learn to become successful and confident readers. In a lesson for Years 5 and 6, pupils showed good skills in analysing a range of different short texts to learn how different authors create impact in their writing. In Years 3 and 4, pupils produce good quality written accounts for different purposes and audiences, often using a wide range of interesting vocabulary. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also produce some good quality writing. However, their work in writing is not as good as in reading and mathematics.

Overall, pupils develop good basic skills to help them progress in the future. These skills are reinforced well through the wide range of practical tasks undertaken and the good use pupils make of information and communication technology in carrying out their work. Through such groups as the School Council and the 'Eco' and 'Food Critics' groups, pupils are fully involved in helping to make their school a safe and better place. Parents and carers are confident that their children are very safe. Pupils' behaviour is generally at least good, and is often outstanding. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and support each other well, concentrating fully in lessons and developing enthusiastic attitudes to learning. Through charity fundraising, activities such as singing in the community, interaction with local businesses and the local council, pupils make a very good level of

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contribution. Pupils gain a strong sense of working as a team in much of what they do, for example working as playtime helpers and 'waiters' and 'waitresses' at lunchtime.

*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>2</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>1</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>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers use a wide range of strategies to help pupils learn in different ways. For example, in an outstanding English lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher skilfully used video clips, clear questioning and active involvement of all individuals through partner discussion. This helped pupils to work rapidly, enjoy the activities and develop confidence. Teachers provide clear learning objectives in their lessons so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. They promote pupils' engagement well through the use of a good range of practical activities. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils were seen closely engaged in constructing models of European landmarks in their design and technology session. They enjoyed this work and were very proud of their designs and models. Staff plan the curriculum very well in this respect to incorporate a lot of good quality and interesting practical work along with a good range of trips and visitors coming in to work with the pupils. This approach enlivens much of what the pupils do and helps to promote an enthusiasm for learning. Strong links between subjects also make the activities very realistic for pupils as, for example, in the English work seen in Years 3 and 4 where pupils wrote about a recent field trip made to study a local river. Good partnerships with other schools and local organisations, and the wide range of extra-curricular activities, also serve

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to fully enrich pupils' learning. Overall, curriculum provision is strong, but there is some inconsistency of approach across the school. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefit from a wide range of opportunities to practise their skills in writing for different purposes and audiences, but pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not have sufficient opportunities to boost their skills in this way. Teachers generally use assessment information well to plan their lessons so that tasks match closely to the needs of pupils of all ability groups. Pupils are also fully involved in the processes of assessing their own and each other's work. Those spoken to all felt that this is very helpful in 'giving us ideas to improve what we are doing'.

Teachers and teaching assistants work well to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Through the skilled support and strong encouragement they receive, these pupils work with the same level of interest and enthusiasm as their classmates.

Staff have an excellent understanding of pupils' pastoral needs and cater for these fully and sensitively. They work very well together to ensure there is a caring and happy atmosphere in which all pupils develop confidently. Where needed, full use is made of external support agencies to support pupils' needs. Staff are vigilant in all areas concerning the safeguarding of pupils. The school has done an excellent job in boosting the level of pupils' attendance. The school is usually very successful in helping parents and carers to support their children's learning. However, it is not completely successful in supporting a very small minority of parents and carers who say they do not always feel fully confident in approaching the school about areas of concern.

*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	2
<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>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and staff work closely together to ensure that high expectations are maintained for pupils' achievement and that a clear focus is kept on improving the school further. Together, they ensure that the school is a very attractive environment for the pupils and that the best use is made of all facilities and resources. The strong emphasis on teamwork has been at the heart of its recent success in bringing the pupils' progress back on track. The school has robust systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and check on pupils' progress. As a result, staff are good at making sure no individuals fall behind in their work. In this way, they also ensure that all individuals are helped to be successful and that no discrimination occurs. However, senior leaders do not always have a full overview of the whole-school picture of pupils' performance to enable them to analyse patterns in performance and to help them ensure that action plans for raising attainment are as precise as possible.

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In the main, the school works successfully to maintain good relationships with parents and carers. Their views are regularly surveyed and acted on where appropriate. They are kept fully informed about their children's progress.

The governing body has good involvement in all self-evaluation, regularly monitors the work of the school and has a clear understanding the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors and staff have a very good level of training in safeguarding and the school is made very secure through exemplary procedures and tight security systems around the site. All aspects of safety and safeguarding are deeply ingrained in the work of the school.

The school has good links with other schools and partner organisations and uses these well to boost pupils' learning. The provision for promoting community cohesion is good, with effective plans constructed that help the school to engage with a range of community groups beyond the school and the immediate community. The pupils' strong awareness, through charity fundraising work, of the plight of other people around the world is an example of the school's successful impact with promoting community cohesion.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Nursery and Reception working areas are bright, lively and attractive with a rich range of interesting resources and activities laid out to engage children's interest and inspire an enthusiastic approach to learning. Staff work together as a strong team and provide excellent care, guidance and support for all individuals. As a result, children are happy and confident learners who enjoy all activities. A good example of this was a group of children working outside in their 'all weather suits' very sensibly using watering cans to provide each other with a 'rain shower' amidst much fun and laughter and jumping in the resulting puddles. All staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. As a result, behaviour is excellent and children show good concentration and application with all tasks provided.



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Teaching is good and occasionally excellent, with lesson planning being well informed by the good range of assessment information. As a result, tasks match children's needs well and children therefore make good and sometimes very good progress. Children's competent skills are well grounded in a confident approach acquired through the wide range of practical exploration and investigation provided.

Within the good curriculum provision, children acquire a very good understanding of how to stay healthy and fit through a good range of physical activity and a good awareness of the need for personal hygiene, for example the need to regularly wash their hands. The curriculum and lesson planning provides good scope, helping children to learn in different ways. For example, the 'hot seating' technique is used well to help children become good at individually learning to speak out and ask questions. However, children do not have enough opportunities to use information and communication technology. Also, chances for children to develop their independent creative skills are not as fully developed as they should be.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The recent creation of the Nursery class has meant that children's start to school life has been very much improved and enriched. The close working partnership between the Nursery class and the two Reception classes means that the transition from Nursery to Reception is a seamless operation. The self-evaluation is accurate and good plans are in place to keep provision improving at a good pace. Children's progress is very carefully assessed and information gained is used well to inform lesson planning. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that all safeguarding procedures are followed through rigorously.

*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:	2
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

There was an above average return of questionnaires. Responses to almost all of the statements in the questionnaire showed a higher level of agreement than that found in most other inspections for this type of school. In particular, most parents and carers feel their children enjoy school, feel safe and are well taught. They feel well informed about their children's progress and that the school does a good job of helping their children adopt a healthy lifestyle. Inspection judgements supported these views.

A very small minority of parents and carers do not feel their children make sufficient progress. They do not agree that the school helps them to support their children's learning, meets their child's particular needs, deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour, takes account of their suggestions or concerns or is well led and managed. Inspectors found pupils show good progress in their work. They judged that the school

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has put good measures in place to help parents and carers support their children's learning, with, for example, well maintained home-school reading logs, regular meetings for sharing pupils' targets with parents and carers and termly information sheets to parents and carers with ideas for how they can support their children's work at home. Inspectors judged that provision is good for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for more able or gifted and talented pupils. They noted that staff have good skills in managing pupils' behaviour, with good and often exemplary behaviour noted around the school during the inspection. Inspectors judged that the school has good systems in place to check and, where appropriate, act on the views of parents and carers. However, occasionally, not enough is done to make parents and carers feel completely confident about discussing their views. Inspectors judged that the school is well led and managed.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oreston Community Academy 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 187 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 340 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	100	53	80	43	6	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	120	64	65	35	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	82	44	95	51	8	4	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	79	42	82	44	17	9	7	4
The teaching is good at this school	90	48	82	44	10	5	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	90	48	73	39	21	11	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	115	61	71	38	1	1	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)	79	42	90	48	7	4	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	81	43	82	44	15	8	6	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	63	34	94	50	10	5	8	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	66	35	87	47	19	10	7	4
The school is led and managed effectively	84	45	78	42	8	4	10	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	101	54	67	36	12	6	3	2

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



23 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Oreston Community Academy, Plymouth PL9 7JY**

Thank you for making us feel welcome at your school. We have judged that yours is a good school. Through talking to you and through the questionnaires you completed, we know that there are many things that you like about your school.

Here are some of the good things that we found in your school:

- You make a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- We can see that you enjoy school and the well-planned curriculum makes sure you get lots of interesting activities to take part in.
- Your fitness and health are outstanding and you know a lot about how to stay this way.
- You make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community.
- Good teaching helps you to do well and your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- Your behaviour is good and you have good attitudes towards learning.
- You all have an outstanding understanding about how to stay safe. The adults in the school do a good job of taking care of you.
- The headteacher, staff and governing body work well together to make sure your school keeps improving.

This is what we have asked the school to do now:

- Help you improve your writing by giving you more chances to write for different purposes and different audiences when you are in the Year 5 and 6 classes.
- Help senior staff in the school gain a clearer picture about the progress made by all of the pupils in the school, so that they can develop even better plans to help you improve your work in the future.

All of you can play an important part in helping the school to improve by continuing to work hard in all lessons.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Lewin

Lead inspector

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