

# West Down Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	113172
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	395700
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Denise Morris

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	87
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Katie Simpson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Carey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	May 2009
<b>School address</b>	West Down Ilfracombe EX34 8NF
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<b>Fax number</b>	01271 863461
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	13–14 June 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	395700



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Denise Morris

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons jointly with one of the executive headteachers over a period of four-and-a-half hours. Six different teachers and teaching assistants were observed teaching. Meetings were held with the two executive headteachers, senior leaders, members of the governing body, and groups of pupils and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection and observed the school's work including looking at pupils' books, school planning documents, minutes of recent governing body minutes, and assessment information. A total of 48 parents responded to the inspection questionnaires. The responses were scrutinised by the inspector, along with questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

West Down is a smaller-than-average primary school in a rural village near Ilfracombe. Pupils come from the village and from the surrounding area. Several travel from outside the immediate area to attend the school. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, mainly speech and language difficulties, is higher than average. Almost all pupils are White British. The school has recently federated with another small local primary school. Since September 2011, both schools have been led by two executive headteachers, each on a part-time basis, and both schools have the same governing body. The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected by the government. There is an on-site nursery for children from the age of two that is not managed by the governing body and therefore was not part of this inspection.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- West Down School is an outstanding school. Since the last inspection, it has maintained its strengths and made further improvements to standards in writing, the learning of boys, the use of assessment, and in developing the curriculum.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve outstandingly well. They make the best progress in reading and mathematics, so that, by the time they reach Year 6, standards in these subjects are well above those found nationally and show excellent progress from pupils' starting points. Standards in writing have improved because of the sharp focus on the teaching of phonics (matching letters and sounds). The learning of boys has also been improved and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress.
- Teaching is outstanding. It, typically, extends pupils' skills very well and ensures that pupils have equal access to a rich and exciting range of learning opportunities that meet their needs and abilities fully. Assessment procedures are very thorough and clearly show how well pupils achieve.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Parents, carers and pupils, overwhelmingly, and rightly, say that the school is safe and secure and that behaviour is excellent. However, a few parents and carers are not fully aware of lines of communication arising from the new federation. Attendance has improved and is now above average. Pupils are cared for very well.
- The two executive headteachers have successfully led the school into federation. Together with other leaders and the governing body, they have created a very supportive ethos in which pupils thrive. Leadership of teaching and management of performance are excellent and have benefited from the federation. The extensive outdoor area contributes very effectively to the rich curriculum and to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses and recognise the issue identified for improvement in this report.

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

- Promote the confidence of parents and carers in the new federation by ensuring clear lines of communication so that they feel fully involved in their children's education and know who to contact for support.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Almost all parents and carers, rightly, say that their children achieve well. 'My children are having a wonderful learning experience' is a typical comment from a parent. Inspection evidence supports that view. Pupils make excellent progress from their average starting points, so that, by Year 6, standards are well above average. Pupils make the best progress in reading and mathematics and, as a result, the vast majority attain high standards in these areas. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils exceed the reading standards expected for their age. Standards in writing have improved because of the sharp focus on the teaching of phonics and on promoting writing across many subjects. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve similarly well and make very good progress in their learning as do disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. In a phonics session, for example, children in the Reception class improved their reading skills and showed high levels of enthusiasm, working at a fast pace as they added an 'e' to the end of a three letter word to change the sound and the meaning. The new phonics programme is very effective and having an excellent impact on all pupils' reading and writing skills. Pupils up to Year 3 join in with confidence as they identify different letter sounds and build words accurately to support their writing. Older pupils use their phonic skills very well in their reading and writing, attempting new and unknown words accurately and with confidence.

The introduction of Big Write sessions enables pupils to extend their skills and focus on creative ideas. Some excellent examples of older pupils writing an alternative to the *Three Little Pigs* story and different perspectives on the poem *The Highwayman* show their highly imaginative approach to story telling and very good use of a wide vocabulary. The creative approach engages boys and girls successfully in writing. Mathematics is also promoted well in other subjects, resulting in challenges that engage both boys and girls. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 were presented with a science challenge to discover whether people with longer legs jump further than those with shorter legs. With partners, they discussed their approach to solving the puzzle and carried out their experiments, using their mathematics skills extremely well to measure leg lengths and testing jumps. The way in which they worked together, negotiated methods and solved the challenge using fair tests showed exceptional enquiry skills. The strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development ensures pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development, regularly taking responsibility and helping those younger than themselves.

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## Quality of teaching

Lessons throughout the school are exciting and engage pupils fully in learning. Parents and carers are right when they say their children are taught well. Teachers ensure that the pace of learning is at least good, so that almost all pupils make much better progress than expected. This was exemplified fully in a mathematics lesson for Years 2, 3 and 4. The teacher set pupils a challenge based on the Olympics, with different expectations for each year group. The pupils were required to work in pairs to create a story showing how a particular number of Olympic medals could be displayed in as many different ways as possible. Pupils worked together well and the lesson was very productive in improving pupils' multiplication skills and encouraging pupils to work quickly. They concentrated for long periods, testing out hypotheses and trying to be the first pair to find the answers and made excellent progress in developing their mathematics skills in the process.

Teachers make excellent use of the creative curriculum to design their lessons, matching tasks to pupils' needs and extending their abilities. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoyed using drama to develop their understanding of the story of *Hercules* as part of their study of Greek myths and legends. They had great fun as the teacher dressed up as the goddess Hera, promoting enjoyment as well as enquiries. Very effective questioning helped pupils to deepen their knowledge and prepared them very well for a writing task. Teachers use the excellent assessment and marking system very well to collate an accurate view of progress and to help pupils achieve the next steps in their learning. Homework is regular and targets are known well by pupils. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported particularly well and enabled to make the same strong progress as others in their class.

Teaching promotes pupils' personal development effectively through the use of projects where pupils work together to solve problems, where older pupils work with and help younger ones, and where they all work to raise money for charities such as the local dogs' trust. Those activities foster pupils' clear awareness of social responsibility, how to know right from wrong and prepare them very well for their futures.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils respond exceptionally well to the school's strategies to promote their behaviour and safety. That results in their excellent behaviour and their clear awareness of how to stay safe. All of the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires said that behaviour at the school is good. Pupils agree. In discussion with two different groups, pupils told the inspector that there was absolutely no bullying of any kind at the school. They said that if anyone is ever teased or upset staff dealt with it quickly and that 'everyone is friendly'. There are many examples of pupils playing together, being careful with balls in the playground and older pupils supporting younger ones. They take on simple responsibilities

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diligently, for example, preparing the hall for assemblies, helping out at lunch times and ensuring that everyone has someone to play with. The school council, for example, arranged for a 'friendship bench' on the field and, at playtimes, the members make sure that no pupil sits on it for long without a friend. The very good range of playground resources and the high staff presence have a very positive impact on the positive atmosphere. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is promoted very well through the rich curriculum. A recent trip to Ilfracombe caused great excitement and aspirations as pupils saw the Olympic flame carried by a well known local Olympian. Regular assemblies, with stories from the local vicar, and village activities, in which pupils take part with enthusiasm, promote pride in their community. Pupils show obvious enjoyment of school and almost all attend regularly so that attendance has improved and is above the national average.

Almost all of the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaires believe that their children are kept safe. There is no evidence in records of any bullying, including bullying related to disability, special educational needs, race, religion, or gender. Pupils learn how to work safely, to be careful in the playground and to use simple tools such as scissors carefully. The Forest School, where younger children learn to work together to build dens and shelters, and a recent project for older pupils, where they took part in aluminium casting with a local artist, show that the school enables pupils to take carefully managed risks and fosters their understanding of staying safe.

### **Leadership and management**

Leaders have worked diligently to embed the federation across the school and ensure that it brings advantages for pupils. The two executive headteachers have an excellent, shared vision for the future and have successfully created an exciting environment for pupils. Training for staff has been rigorous and improvements to the outstanding curriculum ensure it promotes basic skills very well and widens pupils' awareness of the world successfully. The introduction of residential visits for all pupils in Years 3 to 6 ensures that pupils are increasing their understanding of communities other than their own. Year 6 pupils, for example, were on a trip to Bath and were also visiting Bristol during the inspection to learn about life in cities, as opposed to the quiet country area in which they live. Those activities, along with close links with the local church and the village, swimming for all pupils, regular sports, and the teaching of French for the older pupils, show how well the school promotes pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Leaders, including the governing body, have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and an excellent track record of successful improvements since the last inspection. That demonstrates the excellent capacity there is for sustaining improvements. Performance management has a very high focus and is proving effective. That is clearly evident in the way that all staff promote successfully the strategy for the teaching of phonics.

Leaders promote equality well and tackle any discrimination rigorously through the outstanding curriculum, so that the needs of all groups, including disabled pupils and

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those with special educational needs, are met very well. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school; a small minority, although happy with their children's education, are concerned about levels of communication in the new federation. A few are unclear how the federation works or how they can contact the headteachers. The school's safeguarding procedures are applied rigorously and meet statutory requirements fully.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



15 June 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of West Down School, Ilfracombe EX34 8NF**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently. It was very nice to meet and talk with you. You had lots of things to say about your school and told me how much you enjoy your lessons. You explained what you like doing and how good your school is. You told me also that you feel safe.

I have judged your school to be outstanding. From the answers to the questionnaires received from your parents and carers, it is clear that you are happy at school. There are lots of excellent things in your school, such as your behaviour, your achievement, and the teaching. Your headteachers are doing a very good job in bringing your school and your partner school together so that you get to know many more children. I find that you are kept very safe and that your behaviour is excellent and I know that you all try to come to school every day. Well done for that!

Your skills in reading and your mathematics are impressive. I can see that you have been working very hard to do well. Thank you for the way you explained your work to me. You know a lot about books and clearly enjoy your reading. Because of this, your reading skills are improving quickly. Your writing has also improved, so that you all do very well and achieve better than other pupils of your age. Well done. I know your parents and carers are very pleased with your successes, but a few of them have some concerns about the new federation. I am asking your leaders to help your parents and carers understand more about the way collaboration between the two schools is helping you to have more opportunities and to explain how they can contact leaders. I hope you will help your parents and carers by telling them about some of your shared activities.

Thank you again for your welcome.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris  
Lead inspector

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