

# Plymtree Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	113361
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	378638
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Rowena Onions

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	66
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fiona Collier
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pat Fay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Plymtree Cullompton EX15 2JU
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	9–10 July 2012
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Rowena Onions

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in nine lessons, taught by three teachers. Some teaching assistants were also observed at work with pupils. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. She observed the school's work, and looked at data about pupils' progress. In addition, she considered the school improvement plan, reports from the local authority and a range of other documentation. Sixty-three responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire were received and analysed.

## Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is much higher than average. Pupils' special educational needs include autistic spectrum disorder; behaviour, emotional and social difficulties; speech, language and communication difficulties; and severe and moderate learning difficulties. The number of pupils who enter or leave the school at other than normal transition times is above average. Pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are taught in mixed-age group classes. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. In November 2011, the school federated with two other small schools. The three schools have a single governing body.

**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>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Plymtree is a good school. The headteacher's vision to ensure equality of opportunity is successfully translated into practice. Pupils with a wide range of abilities, strengths and difficulties are helped to achieve well. The school is not outstanding because some aspects of teaching and the curriculum are not supporting outstanding achievement.
- Pupils, including the more able, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. When given the opportunity, pupils show they can apply their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects. These opportunities are not, however, sufficiently systematically planned to ensure cross-curricular work plays a full part in further raising achievement. The school's reputation for successfully promoting the good personal and academic progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is richly deserved.
- The school's ethos of inclusion has a strong impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. As a result, pupils are thoughtful young people who show a remarkable sensitivity to the strengths and needs of others. Their behaviour is exemplary and this, together with their enthusiasm for their school and for learning, plays a key part in helping them learn. Pupils feel extremely safe at school.
- Teaching is good, and lessons interest and enthuse pupils. Teachers explain new knowledge and concepts very clearly, but there are times when direct teaching sessions are a little long and reduce the time pupils have to work independently. Teachers ensure that pupils are given advice about how they could improve their work, although they are not always sufficiently precise in telling pupils how to make these improvements.
- Leadership and management are good because the staff team is strong and continually focused on making improvements to teaching and learning. The management of performance is effective. Parents and carers are strongly

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positive about the education the school provides.

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

- Promote outstanding progress and achievement by:
  - ensuring marking tells pupils precisely where and how they could improve their work
  - systematically planning and providing opportunities for pupils to apply skills learned in English and mathematics lessons in other subjects
  - ensuring there is a good balance of teacher talk and pupil activity in every lesson.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Although small year groups mean that standards vary from year to year, overall by Year 6, the majority of pupils attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Children enter Reception with skills and understanding that are typical for their age. They progress well over their Reception Year, particularly in their personal and social skills. This was seen, for example, when a group of boys making a model with bricks, worked together very studiously and for a long period. Pupils have well-developed speaking and listening skills, and use them competently to promote their learning. In a science lesson, for example, pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 discussed their expectations as to what would happen to a white flower when coloured food dye was added to its water, and why this would happen. Pupils make outstanding progress in learning to read and standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. By Year 2, most pupils read fluently and with understanding, and many of the oldest pupils comprehend at an above average level for their age.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress at least in line with their peers. Over a number of years, staff have developed expertise in ensuring that those pupils with more complex needs are exceptionally well supported and these pupils often make outstanding progress. The school is very successful in ensuring that pupils joining the school after Reception, who may have experienced difficulties in the past, are supported to make good and often outstanding progress. The focus on the individual ensures that more-able pupils, and the gifted and talented, do well. Parents and carers are unanimously pleased with the progress their children make and pupils report that they feel they learn a lot in school.

### Quality of teaching

Teachers try hard to plan lessons that will interest and stimulate pupils. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5, learnt about air resistance through making parachutes. Pupils describe their lessons as fun and their interest increases their wish to concentrate and work hard. Skilled classroom organisation and deployment of adults

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mean children in Reception benefit from being taught alongside older pupils, while being given good opportunity to learn in a way appropriate for their ages. The atmosphere of mutual respect that all staff foster, and the consistent expectation that pupils follow this example, are key factors in promoting pupils' social, moral and spiritual development. Parents and carers are highly positive about the teaching in the school. When questioned about the strengths of their school, many pupils included the teachers in their responses.

Teachers have high expectations of each pupil, based on the good use of assessment data. They tailor lessons to individual needs well. There is skilled teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The good skills of teaching assistants are used well, both when they support these pupils directly and when they work with other pupils and the teacher works with these pupils. Teachers take care to provide clear initial teaching that is well focused on the objectives for the lesson. They use techniques to ensure pupils engage with the objectives, including, for example, getting pupils to discuss with a partner and the judicious use of film. Teachers' keenness to ensure full understanding, however, sometimes means that initial teaching sessions or end-of-lesson reviews of learning are too long, thus reducing pupils' opportunity to engage in more independent activities. The school has worked effectively to improve the feedback provided for pupils. They are given well-thought-out targets for the improvement of their work and there is secure advice given through marking. This advice, though, sometimes lacks impact because pupils are not always sure how to put it into practice. As one pupil explained, 'For example, the teacher might write that I could have used some exclamation marks in my work, but I am not sure where I should have put them.'

**Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Through the outstanding example set by all staff, pupils develop an extraordinary ability to understand and value others. Pupils' exceptional attitudes can be exemplified by the pupil who, unasked, named each of the others in her year group and explained the particular talent of each. Pupils describe the school as a place that 'feels like home'. Very positive behaviour around school is actively promoted by staff, such as by lunchtime staff who play ball games with the pupils. Pupils' outstanding behaviour and attitudes are noted when they are out of school; for example, at a recent sports event, pupils were awarded the Fair Play Award by the Devon and Cornwall Police.

Pupils' exemplary behaviour is evident in lessons, and this greatly assists their ability to learn and the teachers' ability to successfully teach the wide range of ages and abilities of the pupils in the class. Pupils are respectful of the views of their classmates, and this allows the younger or less able in the class to volunteer answers to questions because they are not afraid of the response of others. Pupils who have more difficulty in fitting in with the expectations and routines of a school are very successfully helped to develop their skills. The strength of this can be seen in the way these pupils are able to go forward and manage well at secondary school. Pupils report that there is little bullying of any kind in school and that any that begins, such

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as name-calling or potential cyber-bullying, is very quickly dealt with. Pupils are very clear that they not only have a responsibility to themselves in preventing bullying, but they also have a responsibility to watch out for any unkindness to others. As a result of their behaviour and the strong quality of care provided for each pupil, pupils feel exceptionally safe in school, a view that is whole-heartedly supported by parents and carers. Pupils' liking of school is also evidenced by well above average attendance.

## **Leadership and management**

The school team works together well to the benefit of the pupils. The school's provision is regularly checked and accurately evaluated. Improvements that are needed are correctly identified and worked on. There are good links between the monitoring of teachers' performance, professional development and performance management. The positive impact of action taken is evident, for example, in the development of pupils' reading comprehension skills and in teachers' use of data to fine-tune expectations. The use of assessment data at a strategic level is greatly improved since the school's last inspection. Information on pupils' progress is used to plan interventions for any pupil who is showing signs of underachievement, whatever his/her level of attainment. This focus and the heavy emphasis on inclusion ensure equality of opportunity is strong and potential discrimination is successfully avoided. Good teamwork and the record of successful past improvement show there is good capacity for further improvement.

The curriculum provides a broad and interesting programme of work and pupils speak very enthusiastically about activities provided. Pupils are provided with opportunities to use skills learned in English and mathematics lessons in other subjects. However, this is not sufficiently systematically planned to ensure that pupils gain the benefit as often as possible or to ensure that all aspects of the subjects are practised in this way. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is exceptionally well promoted through personal and social education as well as through the inclusive school ethos. Work to develop cultural understanding has developed pupils' attitudes to diversity extremely well, but the school is correct in continuing to expand pupils' knowledge about different cultural traditions.

The recent move to federation is strengthening already productive school links. The benefits are beginning to be evident in supporting a wider curriculum for pupils and in sharing expertise among staff. The new federation governing body is clear about its roles and responsibilities, and has made a very good start in organising itself to gain deeper knowledge of each of the schools. Safeguarding is given due importance and robust systems actively promote pupils' personal well-being. Engagement with parents and carers is very effective in promoting their full confidence and support, as was evident in the extremely high percentage who returned the inspection questionnaire and gave positive opinions. The one area of minor concern was the quality of the school's communications. The school has identified this as an area for development and a group of parents and carers is already working with the school to make improvements.

## 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.**



11 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Plymtree Church of England Primary School, Plymtree EX15 2JU**

Thank you for making me welcome on my visit to inspect your school. I especially enjoyed talking with you and hearing your views. This letter is to tell you what I found.

- Yours is a good school. It is particularly good at giving each one of you the help you need to make good progress.
- Your achievement is good. You learn well in your lessons. Those of you who have greater difficulty are helped to learn as quickly as your classmates.
- Teaching is good. Teachers make lessons interesting. This makes you want to work hard and means you enjoy school.
- Your behaviour is outstanding. You are very caring of each other. The respect you show each other in class really helps your teachers to teach you well.
- You feel very safe and secure in school. Your parents and carers agree that this is the case.
- The leadership and management of the school are good. All the adults involved work hard to make sure the teaching is as good as possible.

To help you to make even better progress, I have asked the governors and staff to do three things:

- make sure that teachers' marking is very clear in showing you exactly how and where you could make improvements to your work
- give you more opportunities to use what you have learned in English and mathematics lessons in other subjects
- make sure that in every lesson there is a good balance between teachers talking to you and the time you have to do activities.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and by supporting your teachers and each other. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions  
Lead inspector

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