

Riverside Community Primary School

Poole Park Road, Plymouth, PL5 1DD

Inspection dates 20–21 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a popular growing school that lies at the heart of its community. A welcoming, caring atmosphere and effective teaching promote the pupils' good achievement.
- High quality care is a notable feature throughout the school that secures the pupils' good behaviour and safety. Consequently, attendance is above average and learning is enriched by the pupils' positive attitudes and enjoyment of school.
- Strong team leadership and management at all levels, including governance, are underpinned by the headteacher's determined drive and a shared commitment to continued improvement.
- Outstanding training of staff and effective self-evaluation have significantly improved teaching and, consequently, pupils' progress across the school since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is typically good with examples of excellent practice, especially in raising pupils' self-confidence and valuing their efforts, and in targeting the work of skilled adults to meet pupils' individual needs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally there is too little opportunity in lessons for pupils to learn by setting up and following their own lines of enquiry.
- There is some inconsistency across the classes in the way that teachers develop pupils' self-evaluation skills and use of targets.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 30 lessons and made a number of other shorter visits to lessons. Inspectors were accompanied by senior leaders during half of these observations. In addition, the inspection team observed morning playtime and lunch breaks.
- Inspectors also attended breakfast club and an assembly of celebration.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes. Inspectors also met with governors and spoke informally with a large number of parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors also held meetings with school staff, including senior and middle managers.
- Inspectors consulted the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection. The inspection team also examined 40 staff questionnaires and consulted the school's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views gathered earlier in the year.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data of pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Lynn Thomas	Additional inspector
Peter Clifton	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is above average in size.
- Since the previous inspection the accommodation and facilities have been significantly extended. Currently, new classes are being built to meet the needs of the increasing number of pupils seeking admission.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is above average.
- The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above the national average. The pupils' needs relate mainly to speech and language difficulties, including dyslexia.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium is above average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery unit and in three Reception classes.
- The school runs its own breakfast club and this was examined during the inspection. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Spread existing best practice and lift the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - providing more opportunities in lessons for pupils to set up and follow their own line of enquiry
 - deepening the pupils' understanding of what pupils need to do to extend learning by more systematically developing their self-evaluation skills and use of targets as they move through school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter school with skills that are well below the levels expected for their age, especially in communication and social and emotional development. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, especially in developing self-confidence and learning how to work with others.
- Observation of learning in lessons shows that pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. This reflects the school's own assessments and the quality of work in pupils' books.
- Improvement in pupils' attainments as evidenced in national assessments, especially over the past year, is now accompanied by first hand observations of pupils' improved learning. Together they show that the broadly average levels of attainment at end of Year 6 are now mirrored in other year groups, confirming that pupils are now achieving well.
- Achievement is good for all pupils across the range of ability, including by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and increasingly by the more able. Sharply targeted assistance for those in receipt of pupil premium support is also lifting their basic literacy and numeracy skills effectively and shows how the school successfully promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Visits to classrooms showed that strengthened learning in reading, through a consistent emphasis on developing pupils' recognition of the sounds of letters (phonics,) has lifted pupils' reading skills.
- Additionally, over the past year, the measured use of a published scheme is also lifting pupils' writing skills, alongside progress in reading.
- Increasingly, in response to the teachers' good modelling of language, pupils are improving their speaking, listening and vocabulary skills. However, whilst some pupils have good opportunities to develop their self-evaluation and independent enquiry skills, these are not yet as strong in all classes.
- Overall, pupils readily talk about their increased reading, writing and numeracy skills, and parents too welcome their children's improving progress, reflecting raised expectations, which are supporting further improvement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good in all parts of the school, reflecting sustained improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning since the previous inspection.
- Improvements include:
 - accurate assessment to inform lesson planning and the pitch of work at the right levels so that pupils of all abilities build on previous learning
 - consistent teaching of reading, now supported by the systematic use of a published scheme, which is also extending writing skills
 - raised skills of teachers and teaching assistants, including the use of interactive whiteboards to interest pupils
 - targeted intervention and support to reinforce pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the teacher's knowledge of pupils' differing levels of understanding informed her questioning so that it extended the pupils' ability to re-arrange and so grasp the place value of numbers.
- Whilst mostly good teaching was observed during the inspection some outstanding features were evident, particularly:
 - the deployment and work of teaching assistants to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and, increasingly, those with more ability

- the staff's modelling and promotion of caring relationships and their encouragement of pupils to think about their work.
- An example of typically good teaching was seen in a Year 4 French lesson. Lively teaching, high expectations and motivating reward strategies deepened the pupils' knowledge of basic words and grammatical understanding.
- Teachers make good use of a wide range of clubs, visits and topics in lessons and assemblies, such as 'Hope', to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- The best teaching observed included practical work and enabled pupils to contribute to their own and each other's learning. In the Nursery, for example, children chose from a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities and advanced their social skills by joyfully sharing large wheeled toys and tricycles.
- However, a few inconsistencies remain. At times, there are too few opportunities for pupils to decide for themselves or with others how to continue their learning. Similarly, whilst pupils' self-evaluation and skills in setting themselves targets are developed well in some classes, they are not yet nurtured to best effect in a step-by-step way through the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The pupils behave well and show a genuine willingness to learn. These were consistent features observed by inspectors and were represented in discussions, including with members of the governing body, and in surveys of pupils', parents' and staff's views.
- The pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good relationships reflect typical strengths in the staff's high quality care and good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in this inclusive school.
- Examples of outstanding behaviour were also evident during the inspection, as in an assembly where pupils were enthused by lively role play and celebrations of their achievements.
- On occasion, a few pupils require support to remain fully engaged in learning and behaviour at playtimes sometimes becomes too boisterous.
- The school's records of pupils' behaviour over time show continued improvement since the previous inspection. This reflects the diligence of staff in managing behaviour and providing individual support for pupils, especially those with emotional needs. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are infrequent and there have been no exclusions over the past year.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and understand the different forms of bullying, for example cyber bullying. They say they feel safe and enjoy school and that any misbehaviour or bullying is firmly dealt with by the staff. Pupils also commented, 'Teachers are kind and know us well and also make learning fun,' reflecting pride in the school and in, 'doing things the Riverside way'.
- The pupils' enjoyment of school also stems from supportive links with parents and is seen in their improved, above average attendance.
- The pupils talk appreciatively about the Cool Club, which gives them the opportunity to respond to risk and to make their own decisions about when they need help to manage their behaviour.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, well supported by talented senior staff and an effective governing body, continues to drive this relatively new, and still expanding, school forward.
- Good quality teaching and pupils' achievement reflect this fully shared and relentless commitment to sustained improvement.
- Several outstanding features demonstrate an ability to bring further improvement and

include:

- very efficient use of staff appraisal and performance management, including for middle managers and teaching assistants, which now ensures that pupils' needs are well met, especially those with disabilities and special educational needs
 - rigorous safeguarding of pupils' welfare, which lifts the confidence of pupils and their parents and helps pupils to feel safe
 - high staff morale, which reflects strong teamwork and a shared commitment to sustaining a welcoming, inclusive ethos, where all pupils are treated equally and their contributions are valued.
- Pupils' improved achievements, especially in reading, writing and basic numeracy, reflect systematic development of the teachers' use of assessment to meet pupils' differing needs. Well-targeted intervention and support ensures that pupils in receipt of the pupil premium achieve as well as their peers.
 - Strengths in leadership, including of the Early Years Foundation Stage and special educational needs, ensure that close links with parents and other agencies underpin pupils' self-confidence, their good behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good links with parents and the rigour of the headteacher's actions in reducing persistent absence have contributed to above average attendance.
 - However, some other initiatives, for example to develop pupils as independent learners, have not yet been established to similarly good effect in all classes.
 - Pupils' learning is extended by the school's broad and imaginative curriculum. Stimulating assemblies and visits and cross-curricular topics, such as The Tudors, enthuse pupils and extend their literacy and numeracy skills effectively.
 - The local authority has played a key role in establishing this very well resourced and still relatively new school. Over the past year, given the proven ability of the school's own leadership team, the local authority has sustained light touch support. Over time this assistance has helped to lay the foundations for continued improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is good and meets statutory requirements, including exemplary vetting of staff and regular checks of the school site to keep pupils safe.
 - ensures that funds are managed efficiently, including those set aside to support staff professional development, to accelerate pupils' achievements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupil's needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupil's needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135348
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	402693

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	443
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Cox
Headteacher	Brian Jones
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2010
Telephone number	01752 365297
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