

Laira Green Primary School

Bramley Road, Laira, Plymouth, PL3 6BP

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although pupils' achievement is improving rapidly by the time they leave in Year 6, too few of the more-able pupils have been enabled to attain the higher Level 5 in the past.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is not improving as rapidly as it is at Year 6 and too few pupils attain the higher Level 3.
- There is not enough good or better teaching, especially, but not only, in Years 1 and 2, to enable pupils to achieve well.
- Teachers do not use information on what pupils already know, can do and understand consistently well enough to plan tasks that meet the needs of all pupils.
- The deputy headteacher and middle managers are recent in their posts. It is too soon to see the beneficial outcomes of their work to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The priorities in the school development plan, although correctly identified, are not precise enough to enable easy monitoring and evaluation of their impact by leaders and managers, including the governing body.
- The information available to the governing body does not always identify clearly enough how well the school is performing compared to other schools nationally at the end of Year

The school has the following strengths

- The very strong leadership of the headteacher has enabled a considerable improvement in attainment at the end of Year 6 and in behaviour in the last few years.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils behave well and feel safe in the school. Safeguarding procedures are very robust.
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is consistently good and often outstanding.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress in their learning.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate view of strengths and areas for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- Inspectors visited 29 lessons or parts of lessons, some in partnership with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher and observed 12 teachers. Pupils were observed and spoken to at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff and a discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at the school's own self-evaluation and the linked school development plan, evaluated samples of pupils' work and listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 reading.
- Other documents looked at included curriculum planning, documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, records of pupils' attainment and progress including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, records of behaviour and records relating to the monitoring of teaching.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Some parents and carers were spoken to at the start of the school day.
- Inspection questionnaires received from staff were analysed.

Inspection team

Stephen Lake, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Heather Barraclough	Additional Inspector
David Williams	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than most schools and serves an inner city area of Plymouth.
- The large majority of pupils are White British with fewer than average pupils from other ethnic groups. A few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- More pupils than usual leave or join the school other than at the normal time.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average with an above average percentage of pupils supported at school action plus or by statements of special educational needs. The most common areas of need are speech, language and communication or behavioural, social and emotional. A few pupils have needs on the autism spectrum.
- The school holds the International Schools Award.
- Almost all of the middle and senior management have taken up their posts in the last year.
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school shares the site with a pre-school operated by an independent trust which is chaired by the headteacher. This also provides a breakfast club and after-school care in their own premises. This provision was not inspected as part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013 ensure that the large proportion of teaching is good or better in order to improve the achievement of all pupils further, especially those in Years 1 and 2, by:
 - making more consistent use of information on pupils' progress to plan tasks that meet the needs of all pupils, especially those who are more able
 - providing clear short- and longer-term targets to pupils that show them precisely what they are expected to learn and by when
 - embedding securely the proposed new system for teaching letters and sounds and monitoring the impact that it has upon attainment and progress in reading and writing
 - completing the review of the way mathematics is being taught to ensure that text books and material used to support teaching meet the needs of pupils and are used systematically, rigorously and consistently by all members of staff.
- By July 2013 embed the role of middle managers in improving the quality of teaching and ensure that they have clear procedures for judging the impact of their actions upon improving achievement.
- By March 2013 refine the school development plan to ensure that areas for improvement include:
 - precise detail on what is to be improved and by how much
 - a clear timeline for completion of priorities against which success can be judged.
- By March 2013 ensure that the information available to governors on the performance of groups and cohorts within the school enables them to compare performance with that of other schools nationally quickly and easily.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children typically start school with skills that are below those expected for their age. They achieve well in the improved Early Years Foundation Stage and start Year 1 with broadly average skills.
- Attainment by the age of seven has fallen for several years and in the 2012 national assessments was below average especially in reading. This was partly due to the greater than average proportion of pupils who moved into the school during Year 2, some with little previous experience of schooling and some just starting to speak English as an additional language. Evidence clearly shows that those pupils who had been at the school from Reception made expected progress. However, few made better progress than expected.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 improved considerably in the last year due to the improvements in teaching taking place in Years 3 to 6. Nevertheless, too few of the more-able pupils attained the higher Level 5. School assessments show that the current Year 6 is on track to continue the improvement in achievement.
- In the recent assessment of reading skills at age six slightly more pupils than average attained the expected standard, reflecting the good progress that has been made in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Reading at age 11 is average. Although many pupils reach the expected standard, too few at either age seven or age 11 attain the higher levels and this limits their achievement.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the good quality additional support that they receive. The small group of pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good support to enable them to be fully included in lessons.
- The pupils supported through the pupil premium funding are making similar progress to all pupils. The improved quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is enabling the gap between their attainment and that of all pupils to start closing but this is not yet happening fast enough.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that teaching is good. Although there is much good teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6, the quality of teaching is inconsistent. There is too much that requires improvement especially, but not only, in Years 1 and 2.
- Revised procedures for checking on what pupils already know are used well in some classes to plan work that matches pupils' abilities and helps them move on in their learning by clearly identifying what they need to do next. Nevertheless there are too many lessons where tasks set are aimed at the middle ability of the class and are too easy for some and too hard for others. This slows learning.
- Older pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6 have very clear longer-term targets that set out what they need to learn by the end of the term or the end of the year to achieve a given level. This does not happen consistently across the school and limits pupils' understanding of what they are expected to learn over time.
- Older pupils say that marking helps them know what they need to do to improve, but this varies across the school and in some classes, especially in Years 1 and 2, marking does not make it clear enough to pupils what they need to do next.
- In some lessons, especially in Years 1 and 2, the pace of learning is not brisk enough. For example, pupils occasionally spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher and do not settle to their tasks quickly enough.
- In most lessons the teachers are making sure that the revised and more creative curriculum is taught effectively. This is making a strong impact upon pupils' personal development. For

example in a Year 6 lesson pupils were engrossed in acting out the story of Rosa Parks and her efforts to combat segregation in America. This use of drama not only encouraged excellent discussion of moral and social issues but stimulated pupils to write and ensured outstanding learning.

- The new system for teaching letters and sounds (phonics) is not yet fully embedded and so its use is inconsistent. Recent training for all staff is enabling teachers and teaching assistants to become more familiar with the scheme.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive good quality additional support in classrooms and in small groups that enables them to be fully included in lessons.
- Visits and visitors are used effectively to support learning. The strong links with the local community can be seen in activities such as the groups of pupils who took part in a remembrance service with members of the local community.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say that behaviour and safety over time have improved. They say that the new behaviour policy has improved behaviour because all pupils understand the consequences.
- The large majority of those parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that behaviour is good. A few were concerned about bullying, but discussion with pupils shows that there is very little bullying now because behaviour is managed better and any that does occur is dealt with swiftly. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying including discrimination-based bullying. They understand how to keep themselves safe and know about avoiding cyber-bullying and unsafe sites on the internet.
- The large majority of pupils behave very well. Nevertheless a few pupils, mainly boys, cause some problems for lunchtime staff by running in areas where it is not appropriate to do so.
- A very small group of pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration in lessons. When teaching is mundane and fails to motivate or stimulate them, some pupils misbehave a little. Although this is usually confined to activities such as shuffling around the classroom or interrupting the teacher, this can distract the teacher and slow learning a little.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The improvements in pupils' achievement and shared expectations in the last year are a result of the headteacher drawing together staff and governors into a team with a strong ambition to improve the school. All staff are overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the headteacher. Most parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree the school is led and managed well.
- The quality of teaching is monitored frequently and, with good support from the local authority, robust action has been taken to strengthen the teaching team. Observations of lessons are used effectively to identify how teaching can be improved and good quality training is provided to teachers to support improvement.
- The new middle managers and the new deputy headteacher are already taking a measured but effective approach to improving teaching. They monitor the quality of teaching and learning and provide one-to-one support to teachers. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this work. For example, the team has identified the need to improve resources available to support teaching in English and mathematics. The new system of teaching phonics was introduced this term after carefully identifying which system would be most appropriate. The identification of a similar replacement scheme in mathematics is not yet complete because the subject leader has not been in post long enough.
- The rich broad curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A high emphasis on music enriches pupils' experience and creativity. The very strong

contribution to pupils' understanding of social and cultural matters that the close links with a school in Nepal make is recognised in the International Schools award.

- Safeguarding meets requirements and the training of all staff and governors in this area is up to date. Strong and effective links with parents and carers and with a range of local authority agencies ensure that those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are well cared for.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body monitors the budget well. The additional funding available through the pupil premium is used to reduce the size of some teaching groups and provide additional support to those pupils targeted by this funding. The governing body is well aware of the quality of teaching and allocates money for professional development in order to improve this. Performance management is used effectively and teachers' movement along the salary scale is dependent upon them achieving their targets. Governors undertake frequent and regular training including recent training on the interpretation of data, but the data currently used focuses too much upon monitoring performance in the school against previous years. Not enough attention is given to how well the school and groups within the school are performing against all schools nationally. Governors are closely involved with the school development plan. They add comments regularly and discuss the plan and its impact on improvement at every meeting. The main priorities are shared with parents and carers on the school website but these lack detail on exactly what will be improved, by how much and by when. This lack of precision makes monitoring the success of the plan more difficult than it need be.

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 pupils' 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 pupils' 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	113278
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	401353

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Pratt
Headteacher	Daisy Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 November 2012
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