

Kilmington Primary School

School Lane, Kilmington, Axminster, EX13 7RG

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- All pupils, including those who are disabled, have special educational needs or who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, achieve highly. The development and use of their reading and mathematical skills are notable strengths. All pupils read widely, often from texts aimed at older children, and use their rapid gains in knowledge and skills to produce work of increasing maturity and sophistication.
- Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils. They use assessment very well to plan tasks that are exceptionally well matched to the diverse needs of their pupils. Tasks interest and motivate pupils, and the skills of teaching assistants and other additional adults are used very effectively to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well, both in lessons and at play. In lessons, they respond quickly to teachers' instructions and reorganise themselves where necessary. At play, playground monitors quickly resolve disputes, including any that could potentially lead to bullying. Pupils know the dangers of, for example, cyber bullying. Attendance is above average and any sign of persistent absence is rapidly spotted and dealt with by school leaders.
- Leaders and managers are very effective in managing the performance of staff and ensuring that teaching is of consistently high quality. Any potential weaknesses, such as in the writing of pupils in Year 2, are quickly spotted and tackled. Membership of the federation of four local primary schools is having a positive impact, notably on the professional development of staff. The governing body is increasingly effective in ensuring that high standards are maintained. Resources such as the pupil premium are used very well for their intended purpose.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons taught by three teachers. He made briefer observations of other activities, such as groups of pupils learning their letters and sounds (phonics) or receiving intensive support. Most of these activities were conducted jointly with the headteacher. The inspector held meetings with staff, a group of pupils, members of the governing body and the executive headteacher of the federation. He had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed documentation including that relating to pupils' progress and achievement, their safety, and the school's evaluation of its own improvement. The responses of staff to a questionnaire and of 31 parents on the Parent View website were analysed, and the contents of two direct communications from parents were taken into account.

Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This primary school is of much smaller than average size and serves local villages in part of south-east Devon.
- The proportions of pupils with special educational needs supported by school action, 7.7%, or who are supported by school action plus or with statements of special educational needs, 4.4%, are below average. These pupils have needs ranging from disorders on the autistic spectrum to moderate learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, 6.6%, is below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of families in the armed services.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils' education.
- The school is a member of the Axe Beacon Federation of four primary schools which was established in September 2012. The federation is led by a single governing body and an executive headteacher. At the time of the inspection the long-serving headteacher of this school continues in his post and retains responsibility for the great majority of leadership and management functions concerning the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the cramped nature of some classrooms never causes learning to slow by:
 - planning the use of all of the school's accommodation so that it is always used as effectively as possible to reduce overcrowding in classrooms.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are broadly as expected for their age. In Reception, they learn quickly. For example children rapidly develop an understanding of letter combinations such as 'igh' and 'qu', saying them correctly and using them to spell relevant words with accuracy.
- In 2012, all pupils attained at least the standards of reading expected for their age in national checks and tests at the ends of Years 1, 2 and 6. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain highly in reading, writing and mathematics. All make at least the progress in these aspects that is expected of them, with a substantial and increasing proportion making better than the expected progress. In 2012, school leaders spotted that pupils in Year 2 were performing less well than expected in writing. This was tackled, and these pupils are now making very good progress in this area.
- A notable feature is the way pupils develop their interests through wide reading. A Year 2 pupil who found reading quite challenging had taken home a French word book 'because I am interested in France and French words'. A Year 6 pupil with an interest in Tudor history had read a wide range of relevant novels and non-fiction texts.
- Pupils also develop and use high order mathematical skills. More able pupils in Years 5 and 6 discussed how they might find the square root of the number 3249. 'It ends in 49, so the square root might end in seven,' was a typical contribution. They decided quickly that the likely answer was 57, then checked by squaring that number. No calculating aids were used.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make very rapid progress, especially when taught in small groups. A group from Year 3 could recognise simile and metaphor and were amused by the description of a frown as 'an unwelcome visitor nestling between the eyebrows'. The average attainment of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is in line with that of other pupils.
- Much of the learning contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Groups of pupils in Year 1 independently planned pieces of music and dance to illustrate a poem about animals. All the results were of a high standard, but the inspector was especially struck by the 'snake dance', performed to gentle music played by a classmate on the xylophone. In Years 5 and 6, pupils engaged in lively discussion when debating the arguments for and against the existence of zoos.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The experienced teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and are continually encouraging them to try new tasks or ways of working. They have very good knowledge of their subjects and of effective ways of teaching, for example pupils in Reception, Years 1 and 2 are taught their letters and sounds with accuracy and pace. This work is also very effective in linking reading to writing.
- Teachers offer very good guidance to parents on ways to develop their child's reading skills. Staff say with modesty that much of the excellent progress in reading is due to the support and commitment of parents. Parents rightly say they are pleased both with their children's progress and with the support they receive to help them.
- Assessment is used particularly well to identify any slow progress or to spot where pupils might learn even more quickly. Marking and targets are also used effectively to show pupils how and where to improve their work. Where necessary, pupils receive additional help from qualified teachers and other skilled adults. This is planned around pupils' individual needs and involves one-to-one or small group support as is most appropriate, contributing to the equally outstanding progress of all pupils and reflecting the school's deep commitment to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.

- Teachers plan an often wide range of tasks to meet the needs of all their pupils, who comprise the full range of ability across two or three year groups. Most tasks give pupils the opportunity to achieve at very high levels, for example work on computer databases in Years 5 and 6 enabled a pupil to develop a database to identify the chemical elements of the periodic table.
- Two of the three classrooms are rather cramped in nature, but teachers' very good management means that pupils know how to organise themselves quickly, and only very occasionally does this lead to any slowing of learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is mature and thoughtful. Pupils listen carefully to each other's contributions in lessons and respond quickly to adults' instructions. When playing they are very alert to potential dangers, especially when playing near younger pupils.
- The team of trained playground monitors, mostly from Year 6, is particularly effective and demonstrates how well the school fosters good relationships among pupils. As a Year 4 pupil said, 'There's no chance of any bullying, with the playground monitors around!' Parents agree that behaviour is a great strength of the school and that there is virtually no bullying. Behaviour was outstanding at the last inspection and there have been no exclusions or serious incidents for many years, confirming the school's well-kept records that very good behaviour has been maintained over a long period.
- Pupils are taught the dangers of bullying and other aspects of living safely in their mainly rural environment. They are taught to swim and cycle safely. The many educational visits give them confidence in unfamiliar environments. Reception children have an interesting and safe area to learn and play outdoors.
- Attendance is above average and pupils are punctual to school. Effective action has reduced unauthorised absence to well below average. The school subscribes to a policy developed by local schools that discourages the taking of family holidays during term time.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders and managers are very ambitious for their pupils and continually seek new opportunities to enhance their learning, such as by enabling pupils of all ages to take part in local and regional sporting events.
- Evaluation of the school's performance is very effective. Any emerging area of weakness is quickly spotted and tackled. Recent rapid improvement in the quality of writing by Year 2 pupils is an example of this.
- The management of staff performance is rigorous and has recently been enhanced through the involvement of the executive headteacher of the federation. Professional development is targeted on areas of need. Again, membership of the federation has improved quality by establishing groups of staff to share each other's most effective practice.
- The analysis and use of data is particularly effective, especially in tracking the progress of each pupil and identifying specialist help to enhance their learning. This includes the more able, and subjects such as physical education and music as well as English and mathematics. The broad, challenging curriculum is rightly seen as a major strength of the school by parents and by the local authority.
- The school has very strong partnerships with parents and others with a legitimate interest in its success. As well as expressing almost total approval in their responses on Parent View, parents who contacted the inspector directly spoke warmly of the school's many strengths.
- The local authority has a very good knowledge of the school and offers light, but appropriate, support. It has used the headteacher's skills in the recent past to help other schools in need of improvement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body of the federation assumed responsibility for the school in September 2012; hence, a number of policies and procedures are still being developed. Nevertheless, governors have a very good understanding of pupils' achievements and how these compare favourably to national data. The achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is checked frequently in order to satisfy the governing body that this resource is being spent wisely for its intended purpose. The management and improvement of teaching quality, together with links to teachers' remuneration, are given an appropriately high priority and governors are becoming increasingly effective in challenging the school to improve further. Statutory responsibilities, such as to keep pupils safe, are met in full, with governors checking health and safety matters and undertaking relevant training, such as on the safe recruitment of staff. It is clear that membership of the federation has increased the capacity of both governors and staff to maintain the already outstanding outcomes for pupils.
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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	113100
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	403193

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	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Knight
Headteacher	Malcolm Bettison
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2007
Telephone number	01297 32762
Fax number	01297 32762
Email address	admin@kilmington-primary.devon.sch.uk

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