

# Plaistow Hill Infant and Nursery School

Roman Way, Higher St Budeaux, Plymouth, Devon, PL5 2DT

## Inspection dates

13–14 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Teaching is good and children throughout the school make good progress in their learning. Many have a narrow range of skills and knowledge when they start in the Nursery, but they reach the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- The headteacher, who is well supported by the deputy headteacher and governors, has provided strong leadership and moved the school forward rapidly
- High expectation, a rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and well-chosen professional development for staff have improved teaching and pupils' learning.
- Pupils behave well. They enjoy school, try hard and want to do well. They feel very safe in school and help each other at playtime and in their lessons. Attendance is now good.
- There is a wide range of interesting lessons that motivate the pupils to learn. A strong focus on developing children's reading has rapidly increased their skills.
- Relationships through the school are very positive and pupils' personal skills are developing well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils' attainment in writing has risen, it is has not improved as well as in reading and boys do not yet reach the same levels of attainment as girls in the school.
- Pupils' writing is not always carefully presented.
- Pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make is not yet high enough at the end of Year 1.
- Pupils' writing skills are not sufficiently strengthened in subjects other than English

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day’s notice.
- Inspectors observed 16 teaching sessions taught by 10 teachers. Many of these were joint observations undertaken with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- A variety of shorter sessions taught by teaching assistants was also observed.
- Inspectors held meetings with two members of the governing body and with groups of pupils. A telephone conversation about the school also took place with a representative from the local authority. In addition to a number of meetings with members of staff, the questionnaires completed by 20 members of staff were taken into account.
- Nineteen parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation including the school’s analysis of pupils’ progress, teachers’ lesson plans, the school’s action plan, local authority reports, leaders’ monitoring records and pupils’ work.

## Inspection team

Hazel Callaghan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

David Nebesnuick

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is of broadly average size for its type.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and two parallel Reception classes. Children who have originally attended other local pre-school groups and nurseries also join Plaistow Hill Reception classes when they are four years of age.
- Pupils in Year 1 are taught in two parallel classes and those in Year 2 are taught in two classes.
- Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage and very few are from minority ethnic groups.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is smaller than that found in schools nationally. There is a small number of children from service families. Both of these groups of pupils are entitled to additional funding called the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils who have disabilities and special educational needs supported at the school action level is smaller than average, but there is a larger than usual proportion of these pupils in one year group.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus level and those with statements of special educational needs is also below that found nationally.
- A monitoring report on the school by HMI in 2011 judged the school to be making good progress in raising attainment.

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

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing, particularly that of boys, by:
  - ensuring that pupils make the same good progress in all the different writing groups
  - ensuring that teachers have the same high expectations for the quality and quantity of pupils' writing in their topic work and in other subjects as they have in English lessons
  - improving pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds so it better supports their writing
  - developing pupils' handwriting skills so that pupils are able to write at length in a legible style.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school in the Nursery with a much narrower range of skills and knowledge than is expected for their age. They settle into school routines really well and enjoy the many exciting activities available. The range of resources and opportunities to experiment and explore ideas enables them to make good progress. They were seen working confidently alone and with friends, supporting each other well.
- This good progress continues into the Reception classes. Attainment at the end of the year has been rising steadily and, last year, standards were in line with those seen nationally in all areas of their learning. Children who enter the Reception classes from other pre-schools and nurseries are often a little behind those who have attended Plaistow Hill but they achieve particularly well because of effective targeted support.
- Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and standards at the end of Year 2 have also been rising in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in Year 1 showed a weaker understanding of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) than is expected for their age, but attainment in reading generally has accelerated over the last year due to the many activities used to develop a wide range of reading strategies.
- Attainment in writing has also been rising. Pupils reach similar standards to those found nationally, but the difference in the attainment of boys and girls in the school is much wider than in other subjects. Pupils' writing skills are developed effectively in their English work but not sufficiently practised in other subjects.
- Pupils of all abilities make at least the expected progress and a good proportion make more than expected progress over their time in the school. Those pupils with special educational needs are well supported and also make good progress from their various starting points. Many pupils who are supported at school action level make sufficient progress to be considered no longer in need of specific support.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding are also well supported both in class and through specific group sessions. A good range of strategies is used to enable them to achieve well. Gaps in learning have been closed and their attainment last year was similar to that of the other pupils in the school.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is well matched to the ages and needs of the children. Resources are well chosen and a wide range of activities stimulates children's interest and extends their knowledge and skills well. Adult-led sessions are well planned and opportunities for children to revisit new ideas in a variety of activities underpin their good learning. The outside areas are used well by both the Nursery and the Reception classes and provide an exciting environment in which children plan and organise their own activities, so consolidating their good learning.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is also typically good. Teachers have good understanding of the subjects they teach, plan activities that interest the pupils and use their good understanding of how pupils learn to promote good learning. Lessons are structured well so that new skills are introduced steadily, building on what pupils already know and can do. The pace of lessons is usually brisk and pupils are thoroughly engaged and involved so their progress moves forward quickly.
- In most lessons boys and girls achieve as well as each other. Sometimes activities could be more finely tuned to some groups' abilities, so their learning is extended more effectively, but usually the match of activities to pupils' needs is good. The topics are well chosen to motivate pupils' interest, particularly the boys, but opportunities for boys to write more freely and from choice are not always encouraged as well as they could be.

- The teaching of reading is effective and pupils' attainment rose sharply last year. This is in contrast to the teaching of phonics last year (the knowledge of the sounds letters make) which did not ensure all children were able to reach the levels expected in Year 1. This has not affected their reading overall, but has slowed their development in spelling.
- The teaching of writing is good. Teachers have high expectations for what pupils will achieve in English lessons and provide a good basis of knowledge and skill which is helping them to improve. Children enjoy the Big Write sessions, where they have the opportunity to write at length and where there are high expectations for the quantity and quality of writing which are not as evident in other subjects.
- Teaching assistants play an important part in the pupils' good progress. They lead daily groups in the phonics, reading and writing sessions, as well as the intervention groups for those with special educational needs. They plan carefully with the teachers and share the responsibility for assessing pupils' progress. There is some variation in the pace and effectiveness of these sessions but overall they are an important part of the provision.
- Teachers monitor pupils' work in the different groups and adapt the activities so that pupils' progress is maintained. They use their marking to celebrate pupils' good work and to explain how the work can be improved. Marking of pupils' writing is effective in their English books, but not as helpful in other work. Insufficient focus is placed on improving pupils' handwriting and presentation and an inability to form letters correctly sometimes slows pupils' writing.
- Excellent relationships and clear expectations for good behaviour result in all classes having a calm and purposeful atmosphere. All pupils are treated equally and there is no element of discrimination.
- Teachers offer lots of praise and this helps to build the pupils' confidence and self-esteem well. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and in small groups. As well as successfully promoting the pupils' social and moral understanding, this enables the pupils to share and support each other in their learning.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are keen to attend, follow instructions well and enjoy working and playing together. Even the youngest show thoughtful gestures and care for each other. Their social skills are developing well.
- Older pupils in Years 1 and 2 are polite, friendly and get on well with each other. They show good levels of confidence and self-esteem. Their positive attitudes and good levels of concentration and involvement contribute to the positive learning environment.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to do well. This was clearly seen in the levels of concentration they showed and their enthusiasm when answering questions. Pupils celebrate each other's good work and listen with attention to each other's ideas. They show empathy for others and there is no discrimination evident in their relationships.
- The good personal and social education programme helps to support pupils' understanding of how pupils keep themselves and their friends safe. Pupils say they feel very safe at school. They recognise the need for sensible and considerate behaviour, for example when participating in the Forest School activities, where they develop a good awareness of possible risks.
- Pupils say behaviour is good and bullying of any kind is rare, especially any physical or emotional bullying. They say that any upsets or name calling are to do with minor arguments or due to frustration and pupils say they know that the adults will help them if they are worried or unhappy. Parents and carers believe that behaviour is good and few had any concerns.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average. Persistent absence is rare.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The well-focused and effective leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has moved the school forward successfully since the previous inspection. Teaching and pupils' learning have improved, with the result that standards of attainment have risen and continue to rise.
- Rising standards have not been at the cost of the good care and support given to all of the children. Parents say they are very happy with the quality of education provided by the staff and very few have any concerns. They feel their children are safe, happy and learning well.
- Teaching is monitored carefully and staff are provided with a good range of professional training that is well matched to their developmental needs. Staff are set challenging targets about pupils' attainment and progress as part of their performance, and these targets are consistently met.
- There are robust systems for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. The results are analysed rigorously so that any underachievement is identified quickly. A good range of intervention strategies and support groups is then used, which enables pupils to make improved progress in their work.
- Other leaders and middle managers have a good understanding of their subjects and roles of responsibility and make a positive contribution to school improvement. The Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, is well managed and led effectively so the children's learning is improving at the same pace as that in Years 1 and 2.
- The range of subjects and activities provided matches pupils' learning needs well. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the current topic on Space in Year 2 is well used to motivate the interest of boys in their reading and writing. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.
- The governance of the school:
  - Governors have high expectations for the school and provide suitable challenge to the headteacher and the staff. With the headteacher, governors decided to retain the services of a school adviser after the government arrangements ceased so that the outside view of school performance was maintained. The governing body has gained good levels of information from the local authority through the adviser's reviews and through their analysis of data. They consequently feel confident to make their own checks on the school. Governors seek information about the outcomes of teachers' performance management discussions and support the headteacher's strategies to improve teaching. They are aware of how teachers' pay is aligned through this process and make informed decisions. The governing body is fully involved in deciding the use of pupil premium funding and the governors evaluate its impact on raising achievement. The release of class teachers where necessary to provide additional support for these pupils in their classes has had a significant impact on raising attainment. The HMS Heroes friendship group for children from service families is also giving strong emotional support for these children when required. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet regulatory requirements in full.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113295
<b>Local authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	401357

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	215
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Tricia Collins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Fiona Hazeel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 365410
<b>Fax number</b>	01752 351224
<b>Email address</b>	plaistow.hill.infants.school@plymouth.gov.uk



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