

Ford Primary School

Cambridge Road, Plymouth, Devon, PL2 1PU

Inspection dates 17–18 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The school's relentless drive to raise standards has been successful, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection because pupils make consistently good progress in all classes.
- The headteacher's high expectations for pupils' achievement are shared by all staff and governors.
- Information about pupils' progress shows that pupils in every year group have made good progress in reading and mathematics for the last three years and in writing this year.
- Teaching has improved strongly and is consistently good across the school. Rigorous performance management and training have ensured teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding.
- Teachers give pupils good opportunities to talk about their learning and to explain their thinking.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Behaviour is good and the very rare occasions when pupils fall out are tackled effectively.
- The school's strong focus on building pupils' emotional development promotes high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Information about every pupil's progress is shared. All staff take responsibility for ensuring that pupils whose progress slows are given the support they need to catch up quickly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teachers do not consistently check learning early enough during lessons to make changes to their teaching or to tasks when pupils are finding the work too easy or too difficult.
- Pupils do not always have enough time to make improvements to their work in response to teachers' feedback, especially in writing.
- Pupils are not always given enough time for writing in some lessons and so do not practise their spelling, punctuation and handwriting and use their newly learned vocabulary as regularly as they should.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by nine teachers, three with the headteacher. In addition, they made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The inspectors heard a number of pupils read. They looked at past and current information about pupils' progress and pupils' work in books and on display.
- The inspectors looked at documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding, the school's checks about what is going well, and school improvement planning.
- The inspectors met with small groups of pupils to talk about their learning and to find out what they thought about the school. Inspectors also met with staff, and with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspectors talked to parents and carers informally at the start of the day. There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to inform the inspection. Inspectors took into account the responses in the most recent parent survey carried out by the school.
- The inspectors took note of 35 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Georgina Beasley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ford Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care, and those who have a parent or carer in the armed services. There are no children in local authority care or who have a parent or carer in the armed forces in this school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is high in comparison with other schools.
- The proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The number of pupils who join the school after Reception and leave before Year 6 is high. A majority are eligible for the pupil premium.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards (the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring all teachers always use information about pupils' progress to:
 - check early in lessons that all pupils are learning as well as they can and make changes if it is found that they are not
 - give pupils time to act on teachers' guidance and so make the necessary improvements to their work.
- Raise the standards of writing across the school by:
 - giving pupils regular opportunity to write as well as talk in lessons
 - ensuring pupils are always given the support they need to remember to use exciting and relevant vocabulary, the correct spelling and punctuation, and neat handwriting when writing in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in Nursery with skills and knowledge at well-below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress and nearly all reach the expected levels in all areas of learning except in their reading, writing and mathematics. Few exceed the expected standard. Excellent progress in personal, social and emotional development ensures children are confident learners by the time they start in Year 1.
- Standards have improved again this year and are now average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. A greater proportion of more-able pupils are reaching above-average levels the longer they stay at the school. When compared with others across the country pupils in this school make faster than expected progress: in reading and writing last year and in reading, writing and mathematics this year.
- Progress in reading is consistently good across the school. Younger pupils use their knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) to read and spell most unfamiliar words accurately. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics check is higher than last year's proportion.
- Although progress in writing is good now, it has not been consistently good in all year groups until this year. Pupils' talk is developed well but they do not always have the same amount of time and opportunity to write in lessons. As a result, pupils do not always use adventurous and relevant vocabulary in their writing, check that they use correct spellings and punctuation and make sure that they always write as neatly as they can.
- Steps to increase the rate of progress in mathematics for all pupils have been successful and reflected in much higher standards across the school last year and this. Progress speeds up in Year 6 and so the majority of pupils reach their potential. Some pupils have reached the higher Level 6 this year.
- The high proportion of pupils who start and leave the school at different times throughout the year makes it difficult for the school to show the consistent progress pupils make in some year groups. Sometimes, these new pupils start with lower skills in different subjects each year. Support is immediately put into place to help them make good progress and to help them catch up with their classmates, which they do if they remain at the school for more than two years.
- The high proportion of pupils in each year group who receive the pupil premium make good progress across the school. While pupils do not catch up fully until Year 6, they have achieved as well as their classmates in reading for the last two years. After being about a term and half behind last year, they achieved as well as their classmates in mathematics this year. While the gap has closed each year for the last three years, by the end of Year 6 achievement in writing still lags behind that of other pupils who do not receive the funding.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress especially in reading and consistently do better when compared with other pupils with special educational needs across the country. Many reach their potential to attain average and sometimes above-average standards.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good across the school. Some teaching is outstanding including the teaching of personal, social and emotional development in Nursery and Reception, the teaching of reading to small groups of pupils who find learning to read hard from time to time and the teaching of mathematics in Year 6.
- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' achievement and plan activities that interest and motivate pupils to want to learn. This, and positive relationships between pupils and with adults, encourages pupils to ask and answer questions without worrying whether they will be wrong.
- Teachers plan tasks and activities that generally meet pupils' different abilities in most lessons.

As a result, less-able pupils are supported to achieve well and more-able pupils are challenged to reach higher than average standards. Occasionally, teachers do not check early enough in lessons that pupils are learning as well as they could and make the necessary changes to tasks and activities when they find some pupils are not.

- Teachers, and adults who work alongside them in the classroom, ask pupils question rather than telling them the answer and so help them to work things out for themselves. Pupils are fully involved in checking their own learning against checklists. Teachers give pertinent feedback through discussions and writing comments on their work. However pupils are right when they say, 'We don't always have the time in lessons to make our work better.'
- Teachers put a strong emphasis on developing pupils' language and vocabulary in lessons to give them confidence to talk about their ideas and learning. This sometimes takes up too much time and so pupils have too little time to write. As a result, they do not consistently transfer their newly acquired language to paper. Also teachers do not always ensure that pupils remember to use the correct spelling and punctuation or write neatly in all of their writing tasks.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have positive views of the school. They are proud to be a pupil at the school. Positive attitudes to learning ensure lessons run smoothly. Pupils listen attentively and try hard to succeed even when they find tasks difficult. They consider carefully the feelings of others in the way that they behave for most of the time.
- Behaviour is good in nearly all lessons and at playtimes. The behaviour of pupils with specific behavioural difficulties has improved significantly due to the positive and effective support given by the school. Pupils give visitors a warm welcome and are polite and courteous at all times.
- Pupils are fully involved in the school's decision-making procedures through the school council, pupil surveys and discussing important issues during assemblies. Pupils look forward to their badges which they receive for learning their times tables and other achievements, and the 'Golden tickets' for staying in the 'green zone'. These celebrations, which are well understood by parents and carers, make pupils feel special and raise their self-esteem.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They are adamant that the school is 'a no bullying zone'. The 'What is bullying?' guide written by pupils for pupils helps everyone to understand the different kinds of bullying and what to do if they have a concern. Pupils recognise that they do fall out occasionally but that they always sort this out for themselves or through an adult or a peer mediator.
- Attendance has improved steadily since the previous inspection and especially the number of pupils who are absent for too many days. Nearly all pupils have good attendance. However despite the school's efforts, there are still a small number of families who do not send their children to school regularly enough.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, and teachers who lead particular subjects and aspects, regularly check the quality of teaching across the school. Through discussions with teachers, observing learning in lessons, and by talking to pupils about their work, they have an accurate view of how well the school is doing and what it needs to improve.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher ensures that every member of the teaching staff has the information that they need about pupils' progress to plan for successful learning.
- Training for teachers supports the school's needs and the needs of individual teachers as identified in their performance management plans. Other adults who work in school have attended relevant training that helps them to support learning and pupils' personal development effectively.
- The school promotes equal opportunities well. Pupil premium funding is used to subsidise visits to ensure that cost does not prevent any pupils from attending. More-able pupils are given the

challenge, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs the support, that they need to achieve well.

- Pupil premium funding is checked closely, including by the governors, to ensure that the additional staff and resources are raising the achievement of eligible pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum is good. Pupils study a range of subjects and take part in varied activities to enrich and extend their learning. Clubs and visits make a particularly strong contribution to pupils' learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority gives good support through training and support activities for staff and governors. It keeps a watchful eye on the school's performance data and visits immediately if there is a fall in standards to investigate the reasons why.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's work through regular meetings and frequent visits to the school. They monitor safeguarding arrangements to ensure that they meet national requirements and check that staff have received the training that they need to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement. Suitable training has given them the knowledge they need to ask the school probing questions about pupils' progress which they use to make decisions about staff pay rises and promotion. Many governors live and/or work close to the school which has helped to raise the school's positive profile in the local community.

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	113270
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	413173

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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philippa Davey
Headteacher	Jonathan Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 October 2009
Telephone number	01752 567661
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