

Whimble Primary School

Whimble, Exeter, Devon, EX5 2TS

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school's leaders and managers show that they have consistently high expectations for the progress of each pupil.
- The achievement of pupils over time is good, especially in writing and mathematics. Standards are above average.
- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding; good use is made of skilled teaching assistants to support the learning of all pupils.
- Behaviour and safety of the pupils are outstanding. The pupils behave exceptionally well and have excellent relationships with each other and with adults in the school.
- The school provides a wide range of experiences that enhance the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- The governing body is strong and knowledgeable. Governors work well with the school's leaders and managers to keep a close eye on all aspects of the school, including the quality of teaching. They provide good support at the same time as holding the school to account for the achievement of pupils.
- The headteacher is unflinching in her determination that all pupils will succeed, and she successfully shares this vision with staff and parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although standards attained are above average overall, pupils' progress and attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 2 are not as good as in writing or mathematics, particularly for more-able pupils.
- The quality of teaching is not outstanding throughout the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons, nine of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- She listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 reading and made several brief visits to classes to observe the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- The inspector met with a group of pupils to discuss their views of the school. She also observed the pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes and spoke to some informally.
- She met with four members of the governing body and had a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector scrutinised work in pupils' books during lessons, and observed displays of their work in classrooms and in the corridors.
- She held a meeting with the school's special educational needs coordinator. She also met regularly with the headteacher.
- Account was taken of 78 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as to the views expressed by parents spoken to during the inspection in person, by telephone and who contacted the inspector by email. Seventeen questionnaires completed by staff were also taken into account.
- A wide range of school documentation was examined, including statutory policies relating to safeguarding, and the school's logs of behaviour. Records of the school's own monitoring and self-evaluation, tracking data showing the progress of all pupils and minutes of governing body meetings, attendance information, and the school improvement plan were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Anne Newall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average primary school, situated in a rural community, which has one Reception class, one class for pupils in Year 1, and three mixed-age classes for pupils in Years 2 and 3, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6. The number on roll is rising steadily.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well below the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Very few pupils are eligible for support provided by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the children of service families or who are in the care of the local authority).
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher provides support to newly appointed headteachers of schools within the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the frequency of outstanding teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement further, especially in reading and particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
 - sharing the best practice in teaching already in the school
 - always providing more-able pupils with work which is well matched to their abilities
 - systematically teaching the higher level reading skills of inference and deduction, or 'reading between the lines'.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Most children join the school in the Reception Year with the skills and abilities normally expected for their age. They progress well in Reception and most meet, and many exceed, the expectations for their age by the time they enter Key Stage 1.
- During Key Stage 1, pupils continue to make good progress because their needs are carefully identified. Their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has steadily risen over several years and is now well above the national average by the end of Year 2.
- Phonics are taught well by teachers and teaching assistants, who use a range of strategies to appeal to the learning styles of all pupils. In 2012 a higher proportion of pupils in Year 1 met the expected standard in the national phonics screening check than was found nationally, and this year the proportion is even higher. Across the school, however, pupils do not always apply their phonic knowledge to their written work, even though the school has taken prompt action to ensure phonics, and also spelling, are now given a higher profile.
- Good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 and, due to the school's commitment to individuals, virtually every pupil makes at least the progress expected of them, and a similar proportion to that found nationally make more than expected progress in writing and mathematics.
- Discrimination of any type is not tolerated. The very small numbers of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, and those supported by the pupil premium, make similar rates of progress to their peers. This is because of the school's commitment to equal opportunities for pupils, and good provision which supports the learning of all.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are above the national average. However, progress and standards in reading are not as high as they are in writing and mathematics because not all of the more-able pupils capable of reaching the higher levels in the national tests do so. The school has identified this and has implemented strategies to increase standards in reading, for example teaching the higher level reading skills of inference and deduction. However, it is too early to judge their effectiveness.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's records of lesson observations show that teaching is always at least good, and sometimes outstanding, and this was confirmed by teaching seen during the inspection.
- Within the lessons observed, good and outstanding teaching was characterised by teachers' thorough subject knowledge, together with motivating activities for pupils which were adapted during lessons to engage pupils' interests. Teaching assistants were always used effectively to support learning.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked and often shows pupils what they need to do next to improve their work. Homework is varied; it sometimes involves pupils accessing the 'virtual learning environment' to tackle different work and to support their in-class learning well.
- In a few lessons the pace of learning slows for some pupils, particularly those who are of higher ability, because the work does not challenge them to attain the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Teachers know their pupils extremely well, and set them appropriate targets for improvement. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used their individual targets when writing diary entries relating to their imaginary experiences on a fantasy island, with the result that all pupils were able to produce interesting writing.
- Teachers ensure that pupils achieve well in mathematics and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to other areas of the curriculum. An excellent example of this was seen in an outstanding science lesson where pupils collected data which they transferred into a graph,

before finding the mean of their data. In the same lesson, pupils were enthused and challenged by their teacher's question, 'Why doesn't honey rot?' This prompted lively discussion of living organisms.

- Pupils speak enthusiastically of the wide range of physical education lessons and extra-curricular sporting opportunities they participate in, which they say help to keep them fit and healthy.
- Good use is made of the village environment to enhance the curriculum, for example, through visits to The Heritage Centre and the local church. Pupils also learn about a range of faiths and cultures, have visits to local historical places of interest, such as Killerton, and engage in sporting and musical events with other schools in their learning community. These are all examples of the school's excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils consistently show extremely positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to work, show the utmost respect for their teachers and other staff, and work well together individually, in pairs and in groups. Their behaviour in lessons, as well as around the school, is excellent. Together with their good achievement, and developing spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, the pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education.
- Respect, courtesy and good manners permeate the school. Relationships between all members of the school community are based upon this powerful ethos, with the result that pupils are articulate and confident youngsters.
- Pupils of all ages agree that everyone plays well together, with older pupils ensuring that younger ones are happy and safe. The school council plays an active part in school life and was instrumental in improving safety by negotiating different days of the week for ball games.
- There are very few recorded incidents of poor behaviour or alleged bullying. Pupils say there is not any bullying now, but if there was they would be confident to talk to adults in school about it and that it would be dealt with promptly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including racist or cyber bullying, and were able to discuss how to keep themselves safe when online. 'You always keep your password secret and ask if you can go on a website.'
- There have been no pupil exclusions over the past three years.
- Attendance is closely monitored by the headteacher, and the school constantly advises parents of the importance of full attendance. Rates of attendance are improving and are average.
- All staff pay close attention to ensuring the pupils' safety. Safeguarding policies and procedures are followed closely and staff receive suitable training in first aid, safer recruitment and child protection, according to their role.
- Parents, staff and pupils are extremely positive about both behaviour and safety. Parents spoken to say that any concerns they have raised with the school have been dealt with sensitively and quickly.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers show that they have consistently high expectations for pupil progress. They monitor assessment information and the quality of teaching regularly and implement action plans where necessary.
- The school involves all stakeholders in evaluating its work. The views of parents and pupils are regularly sought and governors hold open evenings where parents are invited to give their opinions. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, were supportive of the school.
- The steadily rising standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and the maintenance of above average attainment in Key Stage 2, together with improved financial stability due to the rising school roll, confirm that the school has the capacity to improve further.

- Effective work between the school and its various partners, including those in the local learning community, external agencies such as speech and language therapists, and those in the local community, bring about benefits to the pupils.
- The school has already audited its provision for sport and physical education to ensure the additional resources made possible by the Olympic legacy funding to develop primary school sports are used effectively. Clear plans, including staff development and the introduction of additional sports such as archery, have already been created and their impact will be monitored closely.
- Teachers work together to make sure that pupils get a broad and balanced range of topics to study, enriched with visit and visitors. Pupils particularly enjoy their residential experience at Brixham, where they take part in adventurous outdoor activities, as well as fossil hunting at Charmouth.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this school and the headteacher in turn provides support to newly appointed headteachers of schools within the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is fully involved in school life. Consequently, governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have a good knowledge of how the school's performance compares to that of similar schools nationally and challenge the headteacher and staff when they feel something could be improved. Governors attend regular training and their individual skills are matched to their areas of responsibility. They are proud of the school and its reputation in the local community. Many governors live in the village and, as a consequence, are well known to parents, who in turn feel confident to approach them. Governors are involved in the performance management of the headteacher and receive reports from her on the performance of teachers in relation to the national standards for teachers. Governors carefully consider the use of the pupil premium funding and closely monitor the impact of how it is spent. As a result, eligible pupils are making similar and sometimes better progress than other pupils. Governors are also fully aware of the plans for the use of additional sports funding and will monitor its impact. Governors fulfil their statutory duties relating to safeguarding and finance, managing the school's resources well.

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	113113
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	426847

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maria Wallis
Headteacher	Susie Jessop
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 November 2010
Telephone number	01404 822584
Email address	admin@whimple.devon.sch.uk

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