

Shakespeare Primary School

400 Honicknowle Lane, Honicknowle, Plymouth, PL5 3JU

Inspection dates

25–26 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils leaving Year 6 in 2013 did not reach the minimum standards set by the government for primary schools.
- Too few current pupils make progress in writing and mathematics that is better than the minimum expected of them.
- This is because of past weaknesses in the teaching of basic skills, especially spelling and multiplication. As a result, many pupils in Years 3 to 6 are behind where they should be in their writing and mathematics.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to make very rapid progress in response to suitably exciting and highly motivating tasks.
- Pupils sometimes make slower progress than they should because the work they are asked to do is too easy or too difficult for them.

The school has the following strengths

- Over the last year, the headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have taken successful action that is bringing about rapid improvement in the quality of teaching. They check the quality of teaching rigorously.
- As a result, current pupils' attainment and progress is much improved on the previous year.
- Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. The school takes effective action to keep them safe. Pupils and parents confirm that there is very little bullying.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 18 observations of the work of 15 teachers. Inspectors carried out most of these observations jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made briefer observations of adults working with individual pupils or with small groups.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' written work in order to analyse their achievement over a period of time, and the quality of teachers' marking. Some pupils were heard reading.
- Inspectors reviewed school documents, including those relating to pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and with members of the governing body. Telephone conversations were held with representatives of the local authority and the Plymouth Teaching School Alliance.
- Inspectors analysed and took into account the views of 129 parents who submitted them on the Ofsted online Parent View website, and of 65 staff who completed a questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mary Usher-Clark	Additional Inspector
Mark Anderson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It serves an area of mixed private and social housing on the outskirts of Plymouth.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs is average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children who are looked after and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school includes a nursery class for children aged 3 to 4. It also provides childcare both before and after school in the form of breakfast and homework clubs.
- The school is a member of the Plymouth Teaching School Alliance, a consortium of 80 schools that work together to improve teaching by providing training and support for teachers. The headteacher sits on a management board of the Alliance.
- The Teaching School Alliance has access to the services of a number of National and Local Leaders of Education. Two of these experts have worked directly with staff of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all tasks are challenging for the groups of pupils for whom they are intended, but are not so difficult that they cannot understand what is required.
- Enable pupils to make more rapid progress in their writing by:
 - improving the spelling of pupils in Years 3 to 6
 - providing suitably exciting tasks that motivate pupils and enable them to make very rapid progress.
- Improve pupils' ability to use their mathematical skills by:
 - ensuring that pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a secure knowledge of multiplication tables, as appropriate to their age
 - providing pupils with plenty of opportunities to apply these skills when solving problems.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2013, the performance of pupils leaving Year 6 was below the minimum standards set by the government. These pupils' attainment and progress were less than they should have been in reading, writing and mathematics. Performance in the test of English grammar, punctuation and spelling, new in that year, was particularly weak. School leaders identified correctly that this was due mainly to poor spelling.
- Again in 2013, too many pupils showed limited progress in the reading check at the end of Year 1 and in tests of reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- Weak teaching in the past means that some current pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, are still behind where they should be. This is especially true concerning their spelling and knowledge of multiplication tables.
- On starting school, children's skills and knowledge are well below those expected of children of their age. Of those entering the nursery in September 2013, none was assessed as having fully acquired the expected skills and knowledge. For example, a number were unable to speak in sentences.
- At the time of the inspection, assessment and testing for 2014 was close to completion and a number of results had already been externally checked and agreed. These results show significant improvements on those for 2013.
- In the Reception classes, most children are now reaching the goals set for children of their age. Their communication and social skills have improved especially well.
- Across the school, standards of reading are now much improved, due to effective action taken by senior leaders. In 2013, around half the pupils were reaching standards expected for their age. This has risen to around three-quarters in 2014. Teachers encourage pupils in Years 5 and 6 to read widely, including non-fiction works and newspaper articles.
- The proportion of pupils who make the progress expected of them from Year 3 to Year 6 in English and mathematics is now much improved and is close to the national average. Proportions making more rapid progress are lower, due to weak teaching in the past.
- The most able pupils achieve well and a small number reach the highest levels in national tests at the end of Year 6. Other groups of pupils make progress that is similar to that of all pupils. For example, the progress of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is similar to that of others, because they get good quality help.
- Pupils who attract additional funding also make progress that is similar to others. In 2013, gaps in the progress of these pupils compared to others ranged from about one term's progress in mathematics, to no difference in reading. Analysis of the school's records of progress shows that, in all year groups, these gaps are on track to narrow further. This is an example demonstrating the commitment of school leaders to equality of opportunity.
- Pupils enjoy physical activity such as dance and take part in a range of sports, where they achieve well. During the inspection, Years 5 and 6 took part in a decathlon, where they attempted to reach personal goals in aid of charity.
- Pupils also enjoy an increasing range of opportunities for outdoor education which broadens their horizons and enhances their progress in classroom work. These activities contribute to pupils' improving spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- On some occasions, work that teachers set either does not challenge pupils sufficiently or is too difficult for them. In Year 3, teachers set pupils a task involving simple addition. This was intended to develop their skills of mental addition, but most did the sums on paper and made little progress.
- In the nursery, children were asked to complete a storyboard for 'The Gruffalo'. This was beyond

the understanding of most of them, so they also made little progress.

- There is too little teaching that is outstanding. With the exception of work based on outdoor activities, tasks are sometimes too mundane. Pupils tackle them willingly, but the enthusiasm needed to promote rapid progress is sometimes lacking.
- Scrutiny of pupils work shows that most have made good progress in the current school year. However, this is often from starting points below where the pupils should have been, demonstrating weak teaching in the past. This is particularly true of their spelling and use of mathematical skills, such as knowledge of multiplication tables.
- The teaching of reading is now a notable strength. Teaching of letters and their sounds is consistent and accurate, so pupils, including children in the Reception classes, are learning to read quickly. In Years 3 to 6, new teaching approaches are leading to rapid improvements in spelling and fluency. Parents have noted with approval these improvements in their children's reading.
- Teachers mark work regularly and in detail. They show pupils how to improve the work and expect them to respond to the teachers' comments. The redrafting of written work is developing as an effective tool, leading to some recent work that is of very good quality.
- Teachers assess and analyse pupils' progress at least six times annually. This is producing high quality data that enable teachers to identify and tackle any slower progress. Teaching assistants and other adults are then used effectively to bring about rapid improvement. Additional funding is used well to help those pupils who attract it to make better progress, for example through one-to-one teaching of reading.
- Teachers use this improved knowledge of pupils' progress to set them challenging targets. Pupils, especially those in Year 6, are increasingly keen to achieve these.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about their work and are keen to improve their teaching. They make good use of the school's involvement in the Plymouth Teaching School Alliance and teaching is improving strongly as a result of the training and support available.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and keen to learn. Pupils behave well in the playground and around the school. For example, there is no evidence of litter or chewing gum and pupils themselves care for some of the many displays of their work. Parents and pupils are positive about behaviour and the school's records show that there have been few serious incidents over a long time period.
- Pupils get on well together and minor disagreements are soon resolved, often with the help of staff. This shows that school leaders foster good relationships where learning can flourish.
- The behaviour of pupils who sometimes find it difficult to behave well is managed effectively by staff. Only rarely is the learning of other pupils slowed because of poor behaviour.
- Pupils report there is little bullying and, again, the school's records confirm this. Racist and other unkind remarks are not tolerated, showing that the school challenges discrimination. Pupils understand the risks of other forms of bullying such as through the misuse of electronic media.
- On some occasions in lessons, pupils lack the drive and enthusiasm needed to make excellent progress, because the tasks they are given are not very interesting. This is why pupils' behaviour is not outstanding.
- The school council enables pupils to contribute to the school, such as by running a healthy tuck shop. Pupils also enjoy links with schools in France and Kenya with whom they communicate using email and video links.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site is very secure and all necessary checks on adults are carried out. The many outdoor activities are carefully assessed for risk. Visitors are given a card with good guidance on safety and safeguarding in the school, reflecting the school's rigorous and effective approach to these matters.
- Pupils' attendance has shown year-on-year improvements over a four-year period and is now a

little above average. Cases of persistent absence have reduced and are now below average.

- The amount of traffic in and around the site at the beginning and end of the school day requires constant vigilance by staff in order to ensure pupils' safety.
- The breakfast and homework clubs are of good quality, with effective adult support and learning activities. Pupils say they make better progress with their homework when attending the club. No charge is made for the childcare which these clubs provide.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher identified some time ago the problems that led to the poor performance of pupils in 2013. She had received little support in attempting to resolve them. Since then, major changes in staffing and in the governing body have enabled the school to improve rapidly. The headteacher's vision of excellent teaching, leading to rapid progress by pupils, is now shared by staff and by the governing body and is within reach.
- The leadership manages teachers' performance very effectively. There is regular, accurate checking of teaching quality and a staged system of support and training for any who require it. Teachers' performance is linked correctly to their pay and responsibilities.
- The headteacher has built an increasingly effective and dynamic team of senior and middle leaders. New appointments in the last year have added to the strength of the team. Aspects such as the nursery and Reception classes, and provision for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, are led well. The school is well placed for recent improvements to continue and gather pace.
- More frequent checks on pupils' progress, and analysis of the results, are leading to a very good understanding of where additional funds should be used to provide extra help. The school now also has a thorough understanding of how its performance relates to that of other schools, contributing to an accurate view of its own current performance.
- Membership of the Plymouth Teaching School Alliance has contributed well to the school's rapid improvement. The school initiated and planned much of the work that has taken place. Teaching, and hence pupils' achievement, has improved because of the contribution of National and Local Leaders of Education and others with the necessary expertise.
- The local authority has also provided good support, especially for improving governance, following a request for an external review of governance made by school leaders. The school has reached a point where it needs less external support than in the recent past and is itself becoming a source of expertise for others.
- The curriculum is increasingly effective. Improvements to the teaching, especially of reading, are bringing about rapid improvements in pupils' achievement. The extensive programme of outdoor and adventurous activities motivates pupils and encourages them to learn more. There is an ambitious programme of extra activities designed, for example, to help the most able to learn more quickly. Some routine classroom activities are less stimulating in helping pupils to learn rapidly.
- The government's additional funding for school sport is being used well to help all pupils to become more active and to help them to acquire a healthy diet and lifestyle. In a Year 5 dance session led by an outside expert, the teacher was learning how to teach the subject more effectively.
- Parents have a high level of confidence in the school, 90% saying they would recommend it to others. Parents in the playground spoke warmly of the support they had received, especially when children start school, or in making sure that homework was effective in helping their child to learn. Staff employed to develop links with parents, including those who might find working with the school difficult, are especially highly valued.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors acknowledge that in the recent past, the governing body did not provide the level of challenge, or the support, that school leaders needed, to bring about improvement. Following an external review of the governing body's work in 2013, it was reconstituted under

new leadership.

- The well-led, revitalised governing body is well trained and has a good understanding of the school's performance in relation to others. Governors challenge leaders to bring about improvement by meeting demanding targets, and support them in doing so. Governors have a good understanding of teaching quality, of how teachers' performance is managed and of how this is used to determine pay. They check the use of additional resources well, and have recently commissioned an external review of the impact of the pupil premium funding.
- Governors meet their statutory requirements, for example to keep pupils safe and to ensure there are effective arrangements for child protection.

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	135351
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	439760

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	489
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Val White
Headteacher	Karen Menis
Date of previous school inspection	30 September–1 October 2010
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