

# South Molton Community Infant School

North Road, South Molton, Devon, EX36 3BA

**Inspection dates** 16–17 April 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people		are good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders and members of the governing body have improved the way the school is run. All adults have high expectations for pupils to become successful learners. This had led to improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Good systems have been introduced and pupils achieve well. They make good progress and their attainment is improving rapidly, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They have excellent attitudes to learning because teaching encourages them to think carefully about their work. Pupils are learning to explain their ideas to teachers and they are quick to help one another.
- Teachers check pupils' progress throughout lessons. They ask them interesting questions which make them think about what they understand. Pupils learn confidently as a result.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making rapid progress because of the innovative ways the school supports them. Some of them are beginning to achieve higher standards than their peers at the school.
- The curriculum is well organised to create memorable learning experiences including plenty of opportunities to learn outside.
- The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe are outstanding.
- Children make a good start to their education in the early years and they are well prepared for Year 1.
- The school has good links with other local organisations. Pupils learn how to mix well with different people and to play their part in the community.
- Parents are very satisfied with the way the school looks after their children and supports their learning.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most able pupils are not attaining as well as they could. Occasionally, they wait during lessons for work which makes them think deeply or that helps them build on their skills quickly.
- Leaders' plans do not place enough emphasis on how the school intends to raise pupils' achievement to outstanding levels.
- Pupils' skills in writing are not as good as their reading or their understanding in mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited classrooms 11 times to observe learning. Six of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, members of the governing body, teachers and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils, listened to some of them read and looked at samples of their work.
- There were 28 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the inspector took account of these and the views of the parents she met at the school.
- The inspector looked at various documents, including the records of pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its work, development plans, behaviour and attendance records and safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector took account of 13 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

## Inspection team

Juliet Jaggs, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- South Molton Community Infant School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils joining the school at various times during the school year has increased this year.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average. This additional government funding is intended to support children who are looked after and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. Most of these pupils have needs associated with speech, language and communication, and emotional and social difficulties.
- Children attend the early years provision full time. Children in Reception learn in two classes, one of which is a mixed-age class with pupils in Year 1.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club at the school which was visited as part of this inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and the rates of pupils' progress by making sure that all teachers:
  - give pupils more chances to develop their ideas and write at length, including during topic lessons
  - respond quickly to the most able pupils and children in the early years when they show that they are ready to build on their skills and deepen their knowledge.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by making sure that leaders at all levels use planning activities to focus on raising pupils' achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has dramatically improved the school ethos. Now there is a rigorous approach to raising pupils' achievement and to supporting their personal development. All staff share a commitment to making sure each pupil is well prepared for junior school. Pupils respond exceptionally well to this approach and their behaviour is exceptional. They are making good progress and staff are determined for this to improve still further.
- Staff morale is high. They have responded well to more exacting expectations about how they use assessment to plan learning activities and the quality of teaching has improved as a result.
- The school is highly innovative as it continually improves the arrangements for pupils known to be eligible to receive the pupil premium. This year, their mentor is keeping a personalised learning diary of the support provided for each of these pupils. There is an almost daily check that these pupils are receiving the targeted help necessary for them to catch up with their peers. This highly effective strategy means this group of pupils are beginning to make rapid progress. The gap between their attainment and that of their peers at the school is closing quickly. The diaries are shared with parents who take an increasing interest in their child's development as a result. Pupils feel valued by the school and this is having a positive impact on improving their attendance.
- The curriculum (the subjects taught) meets the needs of all groups of pupils well. Adults encourage pupils to discuss their work because children's language is not as well developed as their other skills when they join the school. The strong emphasis on practical learning, both in the classroom and in the outside areas, means that pupils are fully committed to learning as a positive, investigative process.
- Curriculum themes are well coordinated by all adults to promote in pupils a love of learning. For example, pupils' interest in dinosaurs was inspired as much during the planned activities at the breakfast club as it was during the lesson in the woodland area. These imaginative activities make a positive contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The breakfast club provides a safe and stimulating start to the day for those pupils who attend.
- A well-organised programme provides pupils with plenty of opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures. For example, pupils' writing reflects their knowledge of religious festivals and this contributes to their understanding of what it means to live in modern Britain.
- Sport and exercise are given a high priority and pupils are encouraged to be healthy and active in lessons and clubs as well as during break times. The primary physical education and sport premium is being used effectively to enhance these opportunities. The school is promoting competitions with other local schools and pupils enjoy football matches and cross-country races. Teachers have received training to develop their expertise and a variety of special events, such as a skipping workshop, introduce pupils to a range of different activities.
- Parents appreciate the curriculum information they receive from the school on a weekly basis. This helps them to keep up to date with their child's learning and to prepare them for the week ahead. Parents of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are pleased that the school quickly identifies how to help their children.
- Middle leaders have played a key role in setting up the systems necessary to implement changes to the curriculum. They are fully involved in monitoring routines and there is a good level of consistency in the way pupils learn number facts and writing skills as a result.
- The school has made good use of the support available through the local authority to assure the quality of procedures in school. This support includes curriculum materials, checks to ensure the accuracy of pupil assessments and guidance on introducing effective performance management procedures.
- Development plans focus on making changes to the curriculum and to establishing new ways of running the school. There is less of an emphasis on the intended impact of these procedures on raising pupils' achievement to outstanding levels.
- Senior leaders foster excellent relationships, they are determined that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and they reject discrimination of all kinds. Frequent checks on pupils' progress are used to make sure that none is falling behind. This includes pupils who join the school at various times during the school year. Their rates of progress are improving as a result, although their attainment is still behind that of their peers.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements and are effective. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities are working proactively with various external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils benefit from a well-coordinated service.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- The school responded well to the review of the governing body that followed the previous inspection. A number of changes have been introduced along with some new appointments leading to a significant improvement in its approach. Governors hold senior and middle leaders to account for the progress of particular groups of pupils, and a high priority is given to making sure that pupils entitled to the pupil premium benefit from the support they receive. Governors are working to develop their expertise so they have a more independent view of data on the school's performance.
- Governors visit the school regularly, taking a proactive role in understanding what still needs to be done to improve pupils' experiences. With the headteacher, they have tackled underperformance robustly and the quality of teaching has improved as a result. Governors know that performance management systems are now being used to create a coordinated approach to raising pupils' achievement. They know that good teaching is rewarded with pay increases where pupils achieve well.
- Individual governors take responsibility for key areas to ensure the governing body meets its statutory responsibilities well. For example, the designated safeguarding lead visits routinely to ensure that recruitment and vetting procedures are rigorous. Resources are carefully managed to ensure stability in the school's finances.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. Classrooms are calm because pupils have learned to be conscientious. They talk quietly to one another about their work, they are keen to share ideas and they help each other sensitively if they notice mistakes.
- Pupils are resourceful if they are not sure how to proceed during learning activities. They know they have a responsibility to think carefully for themselves. Some pupils develop useful habits for finding answers by checking information on the wall displays. Other pupils rely on the work in their books to guide them. These books are a valuable resource because pupils take pride in their work and their books are well presented.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility within the school community such as the Green Team which leads the recycling campaign. House captains are proud to take up their posts and they commit wholeheartedly to leading their class. They know that responsibility carries an obligation to set high standards and this promotes their understanding of fundamental British values well.
- Pupils are highly motivated by the school's various reward systems and they are keen to behave well. The school's records show that pupils' behaviour over time is excellent.
- The school makes arrangements for small groups of pupils to meet other people in the community and this is having a positive impact to reinforce their excellent behaviour. For example, pupils visit the elderly and this is helping them to learn how to interact sensitively with others.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils feel extremely safe at the school because their teachers look after them well. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn to trust adults and they feel extremely secure at the school. This motivates them to become fully involved in all activities.
- The school ensures that pupils understand the purpose of safety rules and regulations. For example, pupils recognise the importance of notifying staff of their whereabouts at all times in case of a fire alarm. Pupils know there are special arrangements for particular activities such as the levels of staff supervision when they visit the pond. Pupils are learning to recognise risks themselves, for example, they know how to check if the weather has made the climbing frame slippery and unsafe at play time.
- Information about attendance is carefully checked to ensure that all pupils attend well. Various systems to encourage good attendance are having a positive impact and levels have risen to above average.
- The school takes advantage of situations to help pupils learn about the dangers of the internet. For example, pupils know that it is unsafe to respond to invitations through social media. The school works closely with parents to make sure they are able to reinforce these important messages at home.
- Pupils are not troubled by bullying. They know that it is important to be kind to one another and they suggest they have a responsibility to keep the school safe for one another.

- The school has suitable procedures for ensuring the safety of the school site. Appropriate risk assessments are in place for the range of exciting outdoor learning opportunities.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Adults' high expectations encourage pupils to develop excellent attitudes to learning and pupils concentrate well. Pupils learn effectively together and alone and the classroom environment is calm and respectful. As a result, teachers have plenty of opportunities to support individual pupils during tasks. All pupils benefit equally from good support and guidance.
- Teachers work together effectively to plan learning activities that engage pupils' interest and promote their good understanding. This means pupils in different classes within the same year group learn consistently well.
- Teaching encourages all pupils to talk about their knowledge because teachers use technical language when introducing skills for good writing. This contributes to pupils' good understanding and they remember what they are learning about. For example, pupils in Year 2 were able to use complex sentences. They talked about including adverbial phrases correctly as they worked.
- Teaching enables pupils to write short sentences accurately. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas and write at length, especially during topic lessons. This is why they are not making as strong progress in writing.
- Teachers frequently check pupils' understanding during lessons. They are quick to address any misunderstandings and pupils learn confidently as a result.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics because teaching helps them understand relationships between numbers. For example, pupils in Year 1 made good progress learning about odd and even numbers because the time they spent putting numbers in pairs helped pupils recognise that odd and even numbers alternate.
- Teaching continually reinforces pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make and pupils remember details such as how an 'e' changes the sound of a 'g' when they appear together. Pupils use this information well when learning to read new words.
- Marking is used consistently well to support pupils' progress by letting them know what they have done well. Teachers use marking to identify targets for improvement and pupils frequently follow up on advice to correct letter formation or to recalculate a sum. This is having a positive impact as pupils are learning good habits for checking their work and making corrections themselves.
- In lessons and during other activities, adults often ask pupils questions which help pupils develop their reasoning skills as well as their ability to express themselves clearly. Pupils are learning to explain ideas well during lessons and this contributes to their good understanding. At other times, these conversations promote pupils' confidence in their ability to make decisions and to become more independent.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported. The help they receive motivates them to begin tasks successfully and further guidance means they are able to make effective choices and complete tasks well.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Most groups of pupils are making good progress. At the time of the previous inspection the school was asked to help boys engage in reading and writing as much as girls so that their attainment would improve to similar levels. Both these groups of pupils make good progress and the attainment of boys is gradually improving.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because the school identifies effective ways to help them learn in class. The school promotes pupils' communication and language throughout the school and this helps pupils with particular difficulties in this area.
- Disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding make similar good progress to that of their peers in school. This rate of progress is continuing to improve and the gaps in their attainment are closing rapidly. School records indicate that this year pupils eligible for the pupil premium are achieving higher standards than their peers in writing and mathematics. The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the school and all pupils nationally closed in the 2014 national assessments, particularly in writing. Disadvantaged pupils at the school achieved the national average in this area. They were still behind in reading and mathematics and the gaps were equivalent to four

months progress in mathematics and six months in reading. When compared with other pupils at the school last year, the gaps represented the progress made in a term in all three areas.

- Pupils' progress has been improving at the school since the last inspection but these developments were not reflected in the 2014 national assessment data. This is because pupils arriving at the school shortly before these assessments had not had time to catch up with their peers and prepare fully for the tests.
- The most able pupils make slightly less progress than their peers. In the 2014 national assessments, the proportion reaching the highest standards in reading and writing were below national levels. The rates of progress among this group of pupils are beginning to improve but they have to wait too long in some lessons for work which helps them deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils are highly motivated by the school's system for organising reading books at the right level of difficulty. Pupils understand the target sheets that show how much progress they are making and they are keen to improve and become 'free readers'. Pupils are making good progress in reading as a result.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children join the early years with the range of skills that are below those expected of children of their age. Some children have particular difficulties with language and communication which means they have had less experience of early reading and writing. The setting is well managed to account for these needs. Writing is often planned as an integral part of children's play and additional quiet reading areas have been created to give early readers space to practise and grow in confidence. The school works closely with the parents of children with particular difficulties so that they can continue to support their children's learning at home.
- Children's achievement improved considerably following the previous inspection. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2014 rose to above average levels and children are on track to achieve similar standards this year. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- School leaders have taken effective action to develop the outdoor learning area so that children's experiences are similar to those of other pupils in the school. For example, children take an interest in the natural environment and they are keen to grow plants in their own woodland area.
- Children are happy and confident because the setting is extremely safe. They behave very well and are developing excellent attitudes to learning because teaching encourages them to answer questions carefully and in detail. Other children are patient and attentive as their peers talk.
- Assessment is rigorous and teachers make effective use of this information to plan activities that develop children's skills. Occasionally planned activities do not sustain the interest of the most able children because they do not encourage them to think deeply enough.
- School leaders have established good links with local pre-schools. Children visit frequently before they begin their year in the Reception class so they settle in quickly when they join the school. These links are also having a positive impact as teachers share good practice to improve the continuity in children's experiences as they move from Nursery to Reception.

## 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>	113168
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	462489

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	138
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Shani White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tom Parkin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 April 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01769 572198
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