

South Molton Community Primary School

North Road, South Molton, Devon EX36 3BA

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- South Molton provides a warm and welcoming environment in which pupils make good progress, both academically and personally, to develop into confident young people.
- Leaders and governors have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's work.
- Relationships between the staff and pupils are strong. This leads to pupils rapidly settling into the school in a positive manner.
- The curriculum is well planned and highly stimulating so that pupils enjoy learning and progress well. It is enhanced by a wide variety of enriching outdoor adventure activities that promote pupils' independence, determination and resilience very effectively.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They speak articulately about how leaders and teachers keep them safe.
- Children get a good start to their education in the Reception Year. Effective teaching means that children, including the most disadvantaged, make rapid progress.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They work and play very supportively together. Parents and carers confirm that pupils are polite, courteous and work hard.
- Developments in the quality of teaching have improved pupils' learning, especially in reading and mathematics. However, in key stage 2, teachers do not have consistently high expectations and do not use assessment well enough to match work to all pupils' needs. This restricts some groups of pupils' progress.
- Gaps in pupils' understanding of spelling patterns and rules are not consistently identified. This means that pupils repeat their mistakes and poor spelling is having a negative impact on the standard of their overall writing. Pupils do not consistently apply their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Pupils who are falling behind in their work make rapid progress because they receive effective support from an early stage. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with that of other pupils nationally. Where absence rates are higher, for example in the case of disadvantaged pupils, leaders are proactive in promoting good attendance.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the accountability of leaders by ensuring that teachers:
 - use assessment information to match work to pupils' needs and build on their prior knowledge, so that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress
 - in key stage 2 have higher expectations so that pupils make even more progress from their starting points.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers:
 - develop pupils' ability to use their knowledge and skills in writing across the curriculum
 - improve the teaching and assessment of spelling across key stage 2 so that pupils understand spelling patterns and rules and spell words correctly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's calm and ambitious vision to do the best for all of the pupils is supported fully by governors and staff.
- School leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively to ensure that they are supported to make rapid improvements in their learning. Carefully considered individual plans help ensure that pupils thrive both academically and in their confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Highly skilled teaching assistants provide effective and personalised support for individuals and small groups of pupils who need to catch up. Consequently, these pupils are making good progress.
- Leaders also make good use of the sport premium. This gives pupils access to a broad physical education curriculum enriched by an extensive range of additional, optional sporting activities. Participation in sport is closely monitored to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to represent their school. Leaders use clubs and monthly themes, for example 'daily dance' and 'wicked walkers', to promote the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle through increased activity and a nutritious diet.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of the curriculum closely. There is a wide range of additional activities such as music and animal care as well as residential visits for older pupils. This adds to their enjoyment of school as well as promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Bright and vibrant school displays showcase the rich and varied curriculum on offer.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe at school are robust. All adults visiting school are thoroughly checked, and arrangements to protect pupils are secure. All policies and procedures relating to safeguarding pupils are fully up to date.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well catered for at the school. The special educational needs coordinator has a detailed knowledge of pupils' personal and pastoral needs. Well-targeted support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is successful in promoting good progress from the pupils' starting points. The personalised provision for pupils with emotional needs ensures that these pupils are fully included in school life.
- Parents are positive about the work of the school. They praise the approachability of staff and the increased opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. The substantial proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the usual time settle in quickly and make good progress due to effective induction systems.
- The school's monitoring systems have been improved and are now more precisely focused on enabling leaders to rapidly identify, and address, gaps in the rates of progress for specific groups of pupils. However, leaders recognise that extra precision will enable them to hold staff to account with greater levels of rigour.
- Middle and senior leaders have taken decisive and appropriate action to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the whole school. However, despite providing challenge and support, they have not been able to completely remove some inconsistencies in teaching.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a broad range of skills which they use well to support and challenge leaders to evaluate and improve the school. For example, the safeguarding governor regularly checks the school's single central record and other child protection documents. She produces detailed and informative reports for the governing body each term. Governors visit the school regularly to check the standards for themselves, asking leaders pertinent questions about the learning.
- The governing body has ensured that resources are made available to improve facilities and enhance the quality of the school's work. For example, it acted swiftly to create a purposeful outdoor adventure area. This has strengthened provision for all pupils significantly.
- Governors are ambitious for all pupils and the community as a whole. Currently, the school teaches pupils from Reception class to Year 4. Governors understand the school's future development needs and the challenges that face the school as it expands to accommodate Years 5 and 6.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All members of staff understand that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. They have a secure understanding of the signs of abuse and are clear about the school's procedures for reporting any concerns. Staff training and vetting checks are up to date and in line with current legislation.
- The school site is safe, clean and very well maintained.
- Nearly all parents who responded to Parent View, the inspection questionnaire, agreed that their children feel safe and are well looked after. Parents were also overwhelmingly positive about their children's education and care, and the way that staff go out of their way to communicate with children and families.
- Pupils learn how to stay safe online, through activities in class and special assemblies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. Teaching assistants ask challenging questions to develop pupils' understanding of reading comprehension further.
- The rigorous implementation of a daily phonics programme is rapidly improving pupils' phonics knowledge and reading. Consequently, the number of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is consistently above the national average.
- Teaching across the school inspires a love of reading. Once pupils have mastered basic reading skills, they are encouraged to read widely and tackle challenging books. Consequently, reading records reflect the high priority given to reading. They show

that children share their books with adults in school and read regularly at home. This, together with the effective teaching in phonics, is helping children to get off to a good start in reading and writing.

- Pupils do not consistently apply the writing skills they learn in English in other subjects. Pupils do not write in depth across different subjects. Consequently, pupils' writing in subjects such as science and history is not well presented and is of a lower standard than in their literacy books.
- Mathematics teaching is successful in developing arithmetic skills across the school. Pupils are given learning phases to work at in order to allow them to develop their skills at an appropriate level. Nevertheless, leaders acknowledge that the school's new approach to mathematics 'challenges' is not yet fully embedded in some classes. As a result, on occasions, some teachers do not set work that meets the needs of all pupils. Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that there is also greater scope for extra focus on developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Teachers' use of assessment information, especially for the middle-attaining pupils, is weak. Consequently, work is not consistently well matched to pupils' needs and this prevents them from building effectively on prior knowledge, especially in writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation is not consistent in key stage 2. The application of spelling patterns and rules is not routinely insisted upon to ensure that the standard of pupils' descriptive writing improves. Consequently, pupils often repeat mistakes in the spelling of common words.
- Teaching for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective. Additional adults provide a range of caring and nurturing support in most classes. Their support is largely effective in ensuring that pupils' independent learning needs are met. Consequently, pupils have the resilience required to tackle the tasks on offer.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's nurturing environment is based on clear values. From an early age, children clearly show that they want to please their teachers and learn effectively. They work well together with high levels of concentration. As a result, pupils demonstrate care for each other.
- Creativity and sport are strengths of the school. Opportunities exist to compete in team sports against other local schools, alongside inclusive outdoor adventure activities where all pupils take part. Pupils enjoy physical activity and they know how to keep themselves healthy.
- Pupils learn about how to take care of the planet through extensive work on protecting the environment. Termly 'No Electricity' days are an essential part of the school curriculum. Pupils explore how to reduce the school's carbon footprint through inspiring learning activities such as reducing plastic waste, recycling and reducing pollution.

- Pupils were adamant that there is no bullying in the school, nor any homophobic or racist name-calling. The school's records show that poor behaviour does occur, but is rare. A small minority of parents had concerns about behaviour. Evidence seen during the inspection indicates that when pupils' behaviour does not meet the high standards the school expects of them, it is followed up and dealt with appropriately.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' general conduct and behaviour in and around the school help maintain a calm and happy environment. Pupils and staff agree that the good behaviour seen during the inspection is typical and is a positive factor in pupils' learning.
- Pupils' behaviour in classes is, in the vast majority of cases, very good. They listen attentively to adults, as well as to each other. They take responsibility for their own actions and realise that hard work and application will bring their own rewards.
- When work is not precisely matched to their needs, a few pupils do not maintain complete concentration and their progress slows. Some pupils do not take enough pride in their work. In addition, where teachers' expectations are not consistently high, pupils do not take sufficient pride in their handwriting and presentation of their work.
- Leaders' work to improve attendance has been effective. The overall attendance of pupils has improved to be in line with the national average. However, a small minority of disadvantaged pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This reduces valuable learning time for these pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Many children join the school with skills and abilities at levels that are below those typical for their age. From these starting points, pupils make rapid progress. As a result, by the time they leave the Reception class their achievement is often higher than typical for their age.
- In 2016, at the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. This improved rapidly and in 2017 the proportion of pupils achieving both the expected and the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average.
- Not enough of the middle-ability pupils, including the boys who left the Reception Year in 2015, achieved the level expected of them in the 2017 tests in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 2 show a higher level of achievement, as shown in their books.
- Most-able pupils make especially strong progress across key stage 1. In the 2017 key stage 1 tests of reading, writing and mathematics, all of the most able pupils reached the higher standard.
- The school has consistently supported pupils' strong achievement in phonics. The proportion of pupils meeting the national standard has remained above the national

average. However, pupils in key stage 2 do not consistently apply their knowledge of phonics to their writing.

- Teachers' expectations across key stage 2 are not consistently high enough, which leads to some groups of pupils not reaching the standards of which they are capable, including the middle-attaining pupils.
- Very effective use of the pupil premium enables most disadvantaged pupils to achieve at least as well as others from similar starting points.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their individual starting points due to well-adapted activities to meet their specific learning needs and effective support from adults.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children start school with skills that are below typical for their age. Some children have significantly lower levels of development in speech and language. In 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of early years was above the national average. Children also made good progress towards the early learning goals for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Observations of learning for children currently in Reception highlight that provision and outcomes for these children continue to be good, especially in writing. Most children can write complete sentences using correct letter formation. The most able children use sophisticated language in their writing, using their phonics knowledge to help them spell words accurately.
- Leaders consistently make good use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged children in the early years. Teachers make regular and accurate assessments to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have the right learning experiences to support their development. In particular, speech and language support has been effective in improving children's communication and language skills.
- Adults make regular assessments of children and plan learning in response to this information. Activities are carefully planned and learning is checked frequently to make sure that children are achieving well. Adults interact skilfully with children to develop their language, as well as skills and understanding, across the early years curriculum.
- Children's behaviour is good. They know the routines well and they are good at listening to each other and to adults. Children are able to take turns and share equipment. The Reception class is a purposeful, cheerful environment where children are curious, polite and respectful. Parents contribute to the successful early learning outcomes as a result of strong relationships forged with the school. Consequently, children flourish.
- Although children get off to a good start in the early years, leaders recognise the need to work more closely with Year 1 teachers so that activities can be even better matched to children's needs when they start key stage 1.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are effective. There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	113168
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10052973

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Quayle
Headteacher	Mr Tom Parkin
Telephone number	01769 572198
Website	www.southmoltonprimary.devon.sch.uk
Email address	admin@southmoltonprimary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school and some pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes.
- The school is part of the Dartmoor Teaching School Alliance. It has not previously been inspected. When its predecessor school, South Molton Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.
- There is provision for children in the early years in the Reception class. These children attend school full time.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, the team held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the literacy leader and the special needs coordinator. We met school governors and held a discussion with the local authority adviser.
- The views of parents were gathered through parents' texts and 51 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Visits to all classrooms were conducted. Senior leaders accompanied the inspection team during most observations. These observations were used to help to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, to review the quality of pupils' work over time and to talk informally with pupils about their experiences of school.
- A range of documentary evidence was evaluated, including documents relating to the curriculum, safeguarding and governance.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils to talk about their views of the school. Pupils' books from all year groups and all curriculum subjects were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Susan Costello, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Nash

Ofsted Inspector

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