



Ford Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113270
Local Authority Plymouth
Inspection number 279132
Inspection date 3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Barron

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cambridge Road
School category	Community		Ford
Age range of pupils	3–11		Plymouth PL2 1PU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01752 567661
Number on roll (school)	140	Fax number	01752 605194
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Karen Bloodworth
		Headteacher	Chris Benson
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2004		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ford Primary School is a smaller-than-average school situated in the inner-city district of Plymouth in an area of high social and economic deprivation. The school roll has recently declined steeply. About 40% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above the national average. A small number of pupils have a first language other than English. An above-average number of pupils leave or join the school each year within term time. The school environment, criticised in the previous inspection report, has been improved and modernised in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ford Primary is a good school that gives pupils a good start to their education. The school has effectively reversed the decline in standards reported by the previous inspection because it has made very effective use of the guidance and support it has received in the last two years. This has resulted in a significant improvement in pupils' achievement and a good improvement in their attainment.

Children enter the school in the Foundation Stage with well-below-average skill levels. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception class but most do not reach expected standards in the areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils make good overall progress throughout the rest of the school. However, boys do not yet achieve as well as girls, especially in developing writing skills, and the work set for pupils of higher ability does not always challenge them enough to ensure that they do as well as they could. Even so, by Year 6, overall standards are now similar to those attained nationally. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. They display good attitudes to learning and behave well. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the good range of activities the school provides. They feel safe and relate to other pupils and adults well. Procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils are good and contribute to their progress, sense of well-being and their enjoyment of learning.

The quality of teaching is good and is an important factor in bringing about good achievement. Teachers and teaching assistants work well in teams to ensure that pupils get the most out of lessons, which are briskly paced and enjoyable for learners. As a result, lessons engage the attention of pupils and they work well.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, governors and staff share a common vision and a commitment towards raising standards and placing pupils' needs at the heart of the day-to-day life of the school. They have been the driving force in bringing about much-needed improvements in a relatively short space of time. They display the enthusiasm and determination to ensure the school continues to improve. As a result, the school's capacity to further improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in writing, especially boys' writing.
- Ensure higher-ability pupils attain their full potential.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils in all year groups now achieve well. Children's standards on starting school are consistently low. Whilst the standards attained by Year 6 pupils in the 2006 national tests were below the national average, standards in the present Year 6 have risen and are now broadly average. However, throughout the school, standards are better in mathematics and science than they are in English, especially in writing, and boys' writing in particular. The school recognises that this is an area in need of improvement

and has developed a range of strategies to help bring this about, including, for example, linking writing topics more closely to boys' interests.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress in learning because of the effective level of support they receive, both in and out of the classroom. Most other pupils also make good progress, but the school has still to develop effective strategies to ensure that all potentially higher-attaining pupils consistently make the progress they are capable of.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils respond well to the school's efforts to improve attendance because they enjoy school and are keen to learn. Attendance is now close to the national average but there is still room for improvement. Pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and relationships contribute to their well-being. They appreciate the fact that their views are taken into account through, for example, the School Council. They feel safe in school and say that bullying is not a problem. Most pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy through the school's healthy eating initiative and extended sports programme. They are beginning to make informed choices about how they exercise and what they eat. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their spiritual development is fostered through assemblies and strong links with a local church. They have a good understanding of right and wrong. Their social development is enhanced through visits, visitors and community links. Cultural development is good. Pupils' understanding of the multi-cultural nature of modern British society is enhanced by visits from representatives of the Buddhist and Hindu faiths and celebration of religious festivals.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The consistently good teaching starts in the Foundation Stage, where activities are exciting and interesting and reflect a sound balance between independent learning and teacher-directed tasks. Teachers in all year groups display good subject knowledge and use a wide range of methods in order to make lessons interesting and keep pupils stimulated, but there are occasions when more-able pupils are insufficiently challenged by the tasks they have to complete. This affects their overall progress.

Pupils behave well in class. They are keen to learn, attentive and work hard. The quality of marking is good and gives pupils a firm understanding of how to improve their work. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly when supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum has a strong emphasis on developing personal and social skills, such as citizenship and living a healthy lifestyle. This, coupled with good progress in key skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT, means that the pupils are well prepared for their future life. The support given by external agencies makes a very good contribution to pupils' achievement and enjoyment. Pupils have regular opportunities to take part in a wide range of additional activities, including out-of-school clubs. In addition, interesting visits and visitors to school further develop pupils' understanding of the wider world and their enjoyment of learning. Pupils speak appreciatively of a recent visit to the Eden Project. The curriculum is planned well to incorporate and celebrate a diversity of cultures. The school has good plans to extend creative opportunities for all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection procedures are understood and followed by all staff. Pupils feel safe and know who to approach if they have a problem. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place. The school has established a Single Central Record in line with government requirements for screening personnel. Good induction and transfer arrangements help pupils to settle quickly into new routines. Good links with outside agencies safeguard the interests of the most vulnerable children, including those with learning difficulties. The arrangements for academic support and guidance for more-able and gifted and talented pupils, whilst established, are not always effective. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who are in the early stages of learning English, however, make good progress because of the good level of support they receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection, when they were judged to be unsatisfactory. The headteacher, governors and staff together have effectively analysed and evaluated provision and have developed a clear understanding of what needs to be improved in order to raise achievement. As a result, the school has introduced comprehensive systems to check and review the progress of individual pupils and now uses these to good effect when planning further work. This has resulted in improvements in the progress of pupils throughout the school.

Resources are used effectively and the quality of teaching and planning is monitored on a regular basis. Partnerships with outside bodies effectively extend pupils' learning experiences beyond the school environment. However, whilst equality of opportunity

is high on the school's agenda, the school is aware that not enough has been done to ensure that more-able pupils reach their full potential.

The governing body supports and challenges the school well. Governors have a good idea of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are fully involved in all major decisions. The school works closely with parents, seeking and taking account of their views regularly. Links with external agencies support pupils' learning well, particularly those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us feel very welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our day at Ford Primary School. We especially enjoyed talking to you about your school, having little chats in lessons and looking at the work you do.

Here are some of the things we particularly like about your school:

- We were impressed by how friendly you were to us.
- You were well behaved and very polite and worked hard in lessons.
- We liked the way teachers made your lessons interesting.
- We liked how your headteacher and teachers take good care of you and work really hard to make sure you enjoy coming to school.

We think your headteacher and teachers can do some things to make your school even better. We have asked them to:

- Help you to improve your writing, especially boys' writing.
- Make sure that more-able pupils amongst you actually do the best they can!

You can help them by continuing to work hard in lessons.

We wish you the very best for the future.