



Pilgrim Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113282
LEA Plymouth
Inspection number 279135
Inspection dates 6 December 2005 to 6 December 2005
Reporting inspector Laurie Lewin AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Oxford Street
School category	Community		Plymouth
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Devon PL1 5BQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01752 225319
Number on roll	143	Fax number	01752 252 318
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Sarah Pope
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Sue Jones

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school. Most pupils are White British, but with 35 coming from a mixture of other cultural backgrounds. Eleven pupils currently have asylum seeker and refugee status. Twenty-eight pupils speak English as an additional language and six of these are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The school has an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the normal time of admission is well above average. A significant proportion of these pupils join the school between Years 3 to 6 and mostly show below average attainment on arrival. The school's catchment area is one that is identified as having a high level of social deprivation. The attainment of children who start in the reception class is well below average. Over recent years, the proportion of lower attaining pupils and pupils with learning difficulties either starting school or joining different year groups has increased.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than, in all the circumstances, it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2 and in mathematics and science by Year 6.

This is a rapidly improving school. The headteacher, who began at the school two years ago, has done tremendous work, putting in place initiatives to halt declining standards of work and achievement by the pupils. The green shoots of these initiatives are now evident with very good quality provision for reception age group pupils now enabling them to progress very well and reach above the expected levels. Pupils now achieve well in English and reach average standards by the end of Year 6 because of the improved use of assessment and better planning for lessons. Also, the staff are successful in helping pupils with particular learning needs to progress well. However, the school is not yet fully effective in helping most other pupils reach the levels of which they are capable, with standards remaining well below average in mathematics and science. Pupils' progress in mathematics is poor. Good training for staff has helped improve teaching to a satisfactory level, with much good teaching seen during the inspection. The school provides outstanding support, care and guidance for all of its pupils. Staff are especially skilled at helping pupils learn to behave well and become confident learners. Strong leadership and management ensure all members of the school community are effectively involved in evaluating how well the school is doing. The school has a reasonably accurate view of its own performance. All the right ingredients are now in place to maintain the current momentum of improvement. Whilst improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, improvement over the last two years is very good. Although the school is not currently providing satisfactory value for money, the staff is working effectively to ensure it does so as soon as possible.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to drive forward the current initiatives to improve the achievement of all groups of pupils, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2 and in mathematics and science by Year 6.
- To help improve standards, make full use of the successful model of using assessment in English, in other subjects.
- Improve the teaching of calculations and problem solving to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards have been steadily declining in recent years. Over the last two years, many effective initiatives put in place by the leadership and management have begun the process of reversing the decline.

For example, by focusing on better use of assessment information and effective training for teachers, the school has improved pupils' achievement in English to a good level so that pupils now reach average standards in this subject by the end of Year 6. Similarly, improved provision for reception age group children means they make very good progress and reach above the expected levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress due to the strong support they receive, as do pupils who speak English as an additional language who need extra support. However, although improvement is on track, the school's initiatives have not yet made enough impact on improving standards and achievement. Standards remain well below average in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2 and in mathematics and science by Year 6. Overall pupils' achievement is therefore unsatisfactory. The school has rightly recognised that pupils' skills in mathematical problem solving and calculation are particularly weak. The school sets reasonably challenging targets for pupils' performance by the end of Year 6 and is successful in reaching these in English but not in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is good. They have positive attitudes to learning. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils form good relationships with each other and very good relationships with staff. They feel safe, know how to work and play safely, and say they are confident to talk to adults if they encounter any difficulties. Pupils spoken to were especially appreciative of the many opportunities they have to express their ideas and feelings in class discussions and through the school council. They feel that the school takes their views fully into account and cite many changes that have been made as a result of their suggestions. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils benefit in particular from the good opportunities provided for them to learn about the cultural backgrounds of those in the school who have come from other countries. The school's strong emphasis on pupils involving themselves in sports activities and encouraging healthy eating means pupils have a good understanding in these areas. Pupils' full involvement in charity fund raising projects gives them a good awareness of the value of making a contribution to the community. Generally, pupils gain a sound awareness of the skills they need to cope with the practicalities of everyday life, although the limited basic skills they gain in mathematics hampers them in this respect.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The decline in standards and unsatisfactory achievement of the pupils indicate that teaching has not been good enough in the recent past.

The school has made much progress with strengthening the quality of teaching over the last two years and it is now satisfactory. There are clear signs of continuing rapid improvement, for example, with much good teaching seen during the inspection. In particular, teachers are now making much better use of assessment information in English to help plan work that matches pupils' needs precisely and this now enables pupils to progress well. For example, in one good Year 2 literacy lesson, effective planning meant that the skills of the nurture group teacher, the learning mentor, teaching assistant and class teacher were all very successfully deployed to support the needs of pupils of differing attainment. Teachers are not yet using assessment information as skilfully in other subjects as they do in English. Staff are successful in getting pupils with specific learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language and who need extra support to achieve well. Teaching for reception age group children is very good.

Amongst its priorities, the school has also rightly identified the need to improve the way in which problem solving and calculation skills are taught in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Staff have worked effectively together over the last two years to improve the curriculum, to ensure it is covered in full and presents pupils with interesting topics and activities. Very good curriculum provision for reception age group children helps them get off to a great start at school. The school responds well to the requirements of its pupils, for example, ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language and need extra support have work that is adapted to their needs. Also, the school ensures that gifted and talented pupils are involved in activities to extend their skills wherever possible. Pupils' learning is significantly enhanced through initiatives such as teaching modern foreign languages, the good use of visits and visitors to the school and the good range of extra-curricular activities provided by the staff.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school makes the fullest possible use of all external support agencies and specialists to support pupils. Provision is exceptionally well geared to support the particular needs of pupils at this school. For example, the use of learning mentors and the establishment of a nurture class facility is highly successful in promoting the social and emotional well-being of pupils who sometimes experience difficulties coping in a classroom situation. Teachers say this support is very successful in helping them to develop a strongly positive atmosphere in lessons. All arrangements for ensuring the safety of the pupils are fully in place, including very good procedures for child protection. The main strength of the school's care and support is the excellent relationships established between staff and pupils, which ensures that all pupils feel fully encouraged. For example, older pupils told inspectors how much they like and admire their teachers

... 'our teacher's really stylish ... she doesn't speak posh or lose her cool and always understands what we mean.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has worked very effectively over the last two years since she arrived. She has set the school on a course of recovery from a situation where standards and provision were declining. She stabilised the staffing and has established an atmosphere in which staff work together as an effective and enthusiastic team. All areas of provision have been strengthened and in particular, good training for teachers and the establishment of clear assessment procedures have improved teaching. A rigorous shake up of the way in which the provision for the reception age group was organised has resulted in good quality and standards being established for this age group. In a school like this, where many of the pupils have very challenging needs, the road to recovery is inevitably a long one, but there are clear signs that the full scale improvement is well underway. For example, pupils now achieve well in English. Governors work effectively alongside staff and monitor the performance of the school closely. The school does excellent work to engage parents and all available external support to promote pupils' learning. All members of the school community, including the parents and the pupils, are fully involved in the processes of evaluating how well the school is performing and planning the next stages of improvement. Well established action plans and the plentiful energy and enthusiasm of the headteacher, staff and governors means the school has a full 'head of steam' to ensure its continued rapid improvement. The message laid down by the school is clear 'watch this space!'

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed coming to visit your school. Thank you for making us so welcome and helping us during the school inspection. We especially enjoyed hearing about your school council and how good it is at helping the school improve. Here are a few of the most important things:

- You try hard in lessons and show interest in the work.
- You make good progress in English but your achievement in mathematics and science is not as good as it should be.
- Your behaviour is good.
- We think that you are good at expressing your views and thinking of ideas to help the school improve.
- You like your teachers and all of the staff and say they encourage you and help you to learn. We agree with you.
- We feel that the school does an excellent job of taking care of you.
- We think your headteacher does really well in helping everybody work together as a good team.

We think the school can develop further by improving the standards pupils reach in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In particular, teachers need to find ways of helping you to improve your calculation and problem solving skills in mathematics.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Lewin Lead Inspector