



Plympton St Maurice Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113316
LEA Plymouth
Inspection number 279143
Inspection dates 17 October 2005 to 17 October 2005
Reporting inspector John Carnaghan RISP

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Plympton Hill |
| School category | Community | | Plymouth |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 | | Devon PL7 1UB |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01752 337427 |
| Number on roll | 135 | Fax number | 01752 331568 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mrs Lisa Sherwin |
| Date of previous inspection | 19 June 2000 | Headteacher | Mrs Sue Soper |

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|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. It serves the small Devon town of Plympton which is close to the city of Plymouth. When children start at school their standards of attainment are a little below average. More pupils than usual have special educational needs. Above average numbers of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and almost all speak English as their first language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Plympton St Maurice Primary School provides a satisfactory education and gives sound value for money. The pupils reach average standards and make satisfactory progress. Provision in the Foundation Stage gives children a sound start to their schooling. The school works effectively to generally raise standards in all subjects. Test results in recent years have improved steadily and match the national picture. The teaching and learning are satisfactory.

Pupils and parents see the school as a safe and caring place. Learners like their school, attend regularly and find it a warm, friendly environment. Learners behave well and have good relationships with their teachers and one another. They are encouraged and supported by both teachers and teaching assistants. They are keen to influence the school, but do not have a forum to make their voices heard.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher works well to promote good relationships between learners, staff and parents alike. Standards have risen since the school's last inspection but the school still has not addressed two of the issues identified then. The monitoring of teaching is not used effectively to bring about improvement, The school does not use assessment well enough to make learning better, especially for the more able pupils. The school's procedures for self-evaluation are not sharp enough, and the school knows this. Staff and governors have identified relevant priorities for the coming years. The school's capacity to further improve is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- monitor teaching to give it a sharper focus on promoting the best ways to develop learning
- use information from assessment to set clear, simple and challenging targets for learners and so promote better progress, particularly for the more able pupils
- set up an effective forum to help pupils express their views.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards and achievement are satisfactory. Standards in the Foundation Stage are average and all children make satisfactory progress.

Test results in recent years have improved at about the same rate as those nationally, with some ups and downs due to the small size of the groups who take the tests. In 2005 this trend continued, except that in Year 2 results in reading and writing fell. In this case, unforeseen staff changes meant that learners' continuity of study was interrupted, so their work suffered. Subsequently, the school has acted to improve opportunities for this group of pupils to help them catch up. Learners grow in confidence and aptitude in their time at school. They make satisfactory progress. The 2005, Year 6 test results maintained the average levels of 2004. Teachers promote the

basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT well, so that learners make good gains in these areas.

The progress of boys and girls varies very little. Those pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities get good support so are able to keep up with the pace of lessons. The most gifted and talented pupils benefit from an interesting programme of challenging activities but, in some lessons, they are not stretched enough.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development is satisfactory. Learners are sociable, they develop good work habits, and the good attendance figures show that they enjoy coming to school. They behave well in and around the school. The pupils' involvement in the local community is satisfactory. They take part in fund raising activities and delight in welcoming visitors to school and going on trips. However their enthusiasm to become involved in school life is limited by the lack of a forum, such as a school council, to express their views.

The pupils' moral and social development is good. This helps to ensure that behaviour in and around the school is good. Their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory and relationships are good at all ages, both between pupils and with adults.

'Multicultural Week' helps develop learners' understanding of different cultures and peoples. Knowledge of other faiths and beliefs is well developed in religious education lessons.

The school has responded well to helping learners develop a healthy lifestyle. A nutritious menu is provided. Lessons help to inform good choices and all learners – and staff! – benefit from starting each day with energetic aerobic activities.

Grade: 3

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory, including in the Foundation Stage. Teachers question learners well, offering praise and encouragement. This supports the pupils' learning effectively. Resources, particularly interactive whiteboards, are plentiful and usually well used, adding variety and motivation to lessons. Teaching assistants are well informed and know when and where to offer help to those who need it. In contrast, some lessons can lack the flair required to excite the learners and get them strongly interested. Some of the most able learners are not sufficiently challenged, so that they do not do as well as they should. When their lessons are monitored, the teachers get supportive feedback but lack clear advice on how they might improve.

Learners enjoy lessons and are keen to learn. Teachers promote skills of independent learning but sometimes learners are unsure how to develop their work, because they have few targets to guide them. The written targets they get in English are most useful for older pupils, but the practice is inconsistent in other subjects.

Regular assessment of pupils' work means that their progress is well tracked across the school. The teachers predict test outcomes but these can vary in accuracy so their usefulness is limited.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is carefully planned and monitored to ensure that it includes all that is required. Learners cover the full range of subjects of the National Curriculum. The use of ICT, which was a weakness at the last inspection, has improved and the pupils now get good opportunities to develop their skills in working on computers. Learners are well prepared for the future because the school keeps a consistent emphasis on improving their basic skills in literacy and numeracy and also works well to develop their abilities to work collaboratively.

The school is aware of the need to broaden learners' experiences. To meet this, there are a number of trips to places of educational interest and a residential visit for older learners. Further enriching activities lie in the good range of clubs and societies, which many pupils greatly enjoy.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support of learners are important to the school and are satisfactory, overall. There are a number of strengths. The school has a most welcoming ethos and the adults work hard to ensure learners enjoy a secure environment. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. Learners feel safe and they know who to turn to if they have any problems. The pupils who have either learning difficulties or disabilities are supported well and make satisfactory progress. Their individual education plans have sharp targets and both parents and outside agencies are fully involved in the progress these pupils make.

However, the guidance received by many learners is inadequate. Their targets for learning are insufficiently focused to help them make rapid enough progress and they do not always fully understand what they need to do next.

Grade: 3

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is a caring leader who knows learners well and has created a supportive team spirit which parents respect and value. The headteacher, senior staff and governors are fully committed to raising standards. Governors are very supportive of the school and analyse the pupils' test results well to ensure that planning for the future is relevant and well directed. Improvement has been steady since the last inspection and there is a satisfactory capacity for the school to improve further.

The school's self-evaluation has limitations. It has identified areas where the school's practice needs to improve. This has been achieved recently by thoroughly revising the staffing structure and specifically linking staff appointments to raising standards. Analysing information gathered from tests to determine what and where improvements are needed has also been a useful part of this process.

Teaching is regularly monitored, but the school has yet to focus sufficiently on evaluating the way children learn and make progress. A lack of rigour and consistency in the monitoring means that findings do not always lead to improvements in lesson quality. Discussions and documentation indicate that these weaknesses are starting to be recognised and the school is poised to make the necessary changes.

The school is well regarded by parents, who have few concerns about their children's education. Everyone, including parents, is involved and committed to providing an inclusive ethos in which all learners are well cared for and thrive. The accommodation is adequate and the school makes satisfactory use of resources.

Grade: 3

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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 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 3 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | 3 | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 4 | 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? | 3 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 3 | 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? | 3 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 | 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? | 3 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 4 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 | 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 | No |
| 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

Plympton St Maurice Primary School Plympton Hill Devon Plymouth PL7 1UB

18th October 2005

Dear Learners

Thank you very much for welcoming us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. We were very pleased to see that you liked your school so much.

These are some of the things we liked best:

the school is a caring and friendly place where you are well looked after

you get on well with your teachers and with each other and behave well

there are good clubs and societies after school.

There are some ways in which the school can get even better:

the school should set up ways to help you make your views better known

we feel that the school should give teachers clear advice to help them improve the way lessons are taught

there should be simple targets to help you improve your work in all subjects.

Once again, thank you for helping us during the inspection.

Best wishes for the future.

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector