



Chulmleigh Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113142
Local Authority Devon
Inspection number 289522
Inspection date 6 November 2006
Reporting inspector Helen Barter

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Beacon Road
School category	Community		Chulmleigh
Age range of pupils	4-11		EX18 7AA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01769 580535
Number on roll (school)	142	Fax number	01769 580535
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	R Mohun-Kemp
		Headteacher	Richard J Sampson
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school is located in a small town serving a rural community. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than average. The number who have statements of special educational need is higher than average. The school roll is falling and a significant drop is predicted in the next two years. The Partnership Foundation Stage Unit (PFSU) opened in 2004. It caters for children from the ages of three to six, including Reception children and a small group of Year 1 pupils. Children enter the PFSU with skills and experiences which are generally below those expected for children of their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pupils receive a very high quality education in this outstanding school. Parents similarly describe the school and say 'we wouldn't want to send our children anywhere else because it is the best.'

Pupils' achievement, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is outstanding. Pupils build on the solid foundations laid down in The Partnership Foundation Stage Unit (PFSU). Excellent teaching, which stimulates pupils' imagination and excitement in learning, ensures pupils make rapid and consistent progress in Years 1 to 6 to reach standards which are exceptionally high by the time they leave the school.

The PFSU gives children a good start to their education. It develops their personal and social skills very well and gives them confidence to learn. This experience means children continue into the Reception year with skills and abilities which are broadly in line with those expected for their age although a significant number still have speech and language difficulties. Reception children make good progress overall although some younger ones still struggle with their writing skills and need more time to develop these in the Year 1 group. All children make very good progress in their personal and social development.

Not only are academic standards high, but the school is exceedingly effective in helping pupils to grow into confident and mature young people who are well prepared for life ahead. Pupils' outstanding personal development is testimony to the value the school places on helping pupils to develop independence, to take responsibility and to care for and respect others. Their behaviour is exemplary because they know what is expected of them and would not want to let themselves or their school down. Pupils' description of their school as 'our favourite in the whole world' shows just how much they enjoy their education.

There are other significant reasons why pupils do so well. High quality care, support and guidance are sustained throughout the school. Pupils receive very careful academic guidance so that all know what they need to do to reach their goals. The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve and makes sure they get there, not only in their class work but in drawing out their skills and talents in other areas of activity. This is done through an outstanding curriculum which promotes a love of learning in every pupil, develops their enjoyment of sport, music and dance, helps them to learn to care for their environment, and significantly builds their aspirations for the future.

The excellent leadership and management is the driving force behind the school's continued success. It strives to build on its track record of achievement and, through robust self-evaluation processes, quickly pinpoints and irons out any weaknesses. The development plan clearly identifies the short-term priorities for school improvement but, as it enters a period of change, it needs to build on early plans to form a long-term view for future school re-organisation.. Nevertheless, the school is highly committed to continuing to provide the best possible education and has outstanding capacity to overcome this challenge and improve even further. The development of the PFSU to

help develop children's early skills and create a seamless transition into formal schooling is a prime example of the school's ability to be forward-thinking and thoughtful about how it meets the needs of local children and their families.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the school development plan extends beyond the current year and plans a long-term strategy for change and further improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards at the end of Year 6 are consistently well above average and have risen even further in the last two years. From their starting points to when they leave the school, pupils' achievement is outstanding and they exceed the challenging targets which are set for them each year. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also make exceptional progress because of the very high quality support and sensitive guidance they receive.

The introduction of the PFSU has meant that the children are now entering the Reception year with improved skills and abilities to those seen at the last inspection. Stimulating activities enable children to make good progress in all areas of learning. They become confident learners and have extremely good personal and social skills. Focused support for a small group of Year 1 pupils in the PFSU is helping them to develop their writing skills well although some still do not find it easy to hold a pencil correctly. The impact of the PFSU has yet to be reflected in assessments at the end of Year 2 but examples of pupils' writing and their work in mathematics indicate that they are working at above average standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They are growing into mature, responsible and thoughtful young people who possess a good range of skills to ensure their future well-being. Behaviour is excellent in all areas of the school. Pupils say they are 'very happy' and thoroughly enjoy their education. Their attendance is good and they appreciate everything that is on offer to them. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school and wider community. Their ability to take responsibility is shown in the school council, where they are very careful to ensure that everyone's views are heard when making decisions about how to improve the school. Through the eco-committee, pupils have a strong understanding of the need to improve their environment and are proud of their green flag which recognises their work in helping others to do so. Pupils have a very well developed awareness of the importance of being fit and healthy and of keeping themselves and others safe. Pupils' high level of care towards others is shown through their special charity work for people within and beyond the school community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is of consistently outstanding quality across the school. There are strong relationships and a real sense of fun and enjoyment in learning shared between pupils and staff. Pupils know what they are aiming to achieve because the purpose of lessons is always made clear to them. Teachers use innovative methods to capture pupils' attention. For example, the high quality animated video produced by Year 6 pupils demonstrates how well information and communication technology (ICT) is used to engage interest and to support learning. Pupils have high levels of involvement and concentration. They are enthusiastic and independent learners and want to do as well as they can. While expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining are high, much attention is also given to focusing on the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to help them reach their potential. Teaching assistants play an important role in this respect and are highly valued by the school and pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The exceptionally wide and creative curriculum brings learning alive for pupils and contributes significantly to their achievement and personal development. Throughout the school, there is a focus on developing a love of learning and the skills needed for life ahead. This is achieved not only through everyday lessons, but also through an excellent and varied range of activities after school, during residential visits and participating in exciting projects such as the 'Coast Dance' performances with the National Trust. The school ensures that pupils receive a rich education in the arts, music and sport. In the PFSU, children experience stimulating and imaginative learning activities that entice them to explore and to learn.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The exceptional care, guidance and support for all pupils, including the more vulnerable, results in pupils achieving high standards, both academically and personally. Every pupil is valued and cared for as an individual. Pupils and parents alike comment on the sensitive and caring way pupils are helped to settle in the PFSU and when they join the school later. The outstanding support for those who need additional pastoral care, or help with their work, gives pupils confidence to learn and helps them to make the same excellent progress as others. Pupils really value the help they receive to improve their work. They say that 'teachers really make sure you understand before you move on'. Marking of pupils' work is exemplary in the feedback it gives and pupils greatly appreciate the guidance it gives for the next steps towards improvement. The skills that pupils are gaining in independently assessing the quality of their own and others' work prepare them extremely well for future study.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher, supported by a very able and efficient deputy, provides an extremely effective and clear educational direction for the school. All staff work exceptionally hard and have high aspirations for the school, yet are often modest about its work because they want to do even better for every pupil. The school's effectiveness is carefully evaluated and action is taken to further improve even the areas that are already strong, such as the high quality curriculum. With a period of change ahead caused by changes in pupil numbers, the school's development plan does not yet have a sufficiently long-term strategic view of the options available for re-organisation. The school is outward looking and makes the most of its strong partnerships with the nearby community college, parents and the community to broaden pupils' learning as much as possible. Governance is excellent. While being supportive of the school's obvious strengths, it is well informed enough to challenge plans and decisions being made in the best interests of pupils.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

As you know, I spent a day at your school recently to find out how well you are getting on. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. I really enjoyed hearing about all the things that you think are great about your school. Chulmleigh Primary is an outstanding school and you are right to be so proud of it. These are some of the things I found:

- You all learn extremely well and reach very high standards. This is because you are taught exceptionally well and the teachers really want you to do your best.
- You are growing up into really sensible and mature young people who know how to behave well, act responsibly and take care of yourselves and other people.
- You are given lots of interesting things to learn in the classroom and in all your other activities outside school. I think the Year 6 Coastal Dance was really fantastic.
- Your school really knows how to care for you so that you lead healthy and safe lives and are well prepared for moving on to the community college. You told me how adults really know how to help you make your learning better and I agree with you.
- Your headteacher, the other adults and governors all make sure the school is run really well. I agree with you when you said that the school is well organised. Everyone wants you to do as well as you can and works really hard to make sure this happens.

When you were talking to me, you found it really hard to find anything that the school could do to be even better. Your school knows exactly what needs to be done at the moment to improve your learning even more. I have asked the staff to start thinking a bit more carefully about what their plans will be for the next few years, so that your school keeps on shooting forwards.

It was a pleasure to meet you and I wish everyone all the very best for the future.