

# Combe Martin Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113145
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	289523
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Faysal Mikdadi

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	174
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Bacon
<b>Headteacher</b>	George Oreshko
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2001
<b>School address</b>	Hangman Path Combe Martin Ilfracombe EX34 0DF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01271 883226
<b>Fax number</b>	01271 883226

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Combe Martin is a smaller than average primary school. Almost all pupils are White British with a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. Attainment on entry is broadly average in most areas but children's communication and social skills are exceptionally low. The school has had a new senior management team, including a new deputy headteacher, since last year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Combe Martin offers a satisfactory education. Over the last two years it has been successful in making what one parent typically calls 'vast improvements' in behaviour and creating a safe environment, which lead to pupils saying that they like coming to school. The result is a school with happy and safe children. Standards are currently in line with national expectations as a result of pupils' satisfactory achievement. However, standards in writing and mathematics, although improving, are slightly weaker than in reading and science. Reception children arrive with exceptionally low social and communication skills. The provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory although children make good progress in their social and communication skills. By the time they start Year 1 the standards they reach are similar to those expected.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There have been significant improvements in the way pupils are managed and this has resulted in improved behaviour. Lessons are interesting and enjoyable but a few weaknesses are hampering pupils' progress. These include a lack of consistency in telling pupils how to improve their work and lessons that do not always challenge all pupils. These weaknesses have led to a small group of pupils underperforming especially in mathematics and writing. Standards in reading and science have been the main beneficiaries of the strong focus on improving standards.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Whereas leaders' focus on improving pupils' behaviour has paid off, there are still occasional instances of pupil underperformance. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, with a particularly successful focus on ensuring that they feel safe, understand healthy lifestyles and contribute to their community. They are soundly prepared for their future economic well-being.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is well supplemented by a good programme of enrichment activities. These have been particularly successful in getting pupils to work together, be considerate, establish good relationships, take care of each other and behave fairly as members of a group.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in mathematics and writing across the school.
- Improve the quality of marking to the extent that all pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Ensure that lessons consistently challenge all pupils to do their best. A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain broadly average standards. Reception children make good progress in improving their exceptionally low social and communication skills. Consequently, by the time that pupils join Year 1, their overall attainment is average.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make sound progress and this results in standards that are close to the national average. Particular improvements have been made in reading, science and, to a lesser extent, in mathematics, but writing skills remains weak. Standards in Key Stage 2 have also

improved to close to the national average in reading and science. Standards in mathematics are also broadly average although slightly weaker than standards in reading and science. Writing standards remain below average.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make equally satisfactory progress and a few make good progress because of the effective support given in reading and writing.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy their lessons because, as one pupil typically said, 'many of our teachers make them fun'. Attendance is satisfactory and improving as the school continues to discourage parents from taking term time holidays.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Successful emphasis is placed on pupils' emotional and social development. Parents are given opportunities to work alongside their children with the result that they are now in a better position to help with homework. Pupils' feelings are successfully explored through music and dance. The school invites visitors to demonstrate African and Indian cultures and this, together with good use of multicultural artefacts, broadens pupils' cultural awareness. Pupils make good contributions to their local community through fund raising and taking part in many local festivities and concerts. They have a good knowledge of the importance of healthy lifestyles.

Pupils feel safe in school and know they can go to an adult if they are worried about something. A 'buddy bench' is well used in the playground and the youngest pupils are given a Year 6 buddy to 'look out' for them. All pupils readily take on classroom responsibilities and older pupils set up equipment for assemblies and playtimes. Although behaviour seen during the inspection was satisfactory the school still has a well above average number of exclusions. These have been generated by the zero tolerance of a small number of persistent offenders. The new policy and approaches to behaviour management are beginning to work and the number of exclusions of persistent offenders has been more than halved over the past year. A lunchtime nurture group has reduced incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour and also helped in reducing exclusions.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and relationships between pupils and adults are positive. There are good features in lessons, for example the sharing of what is to be learned with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Pupils are encouraged to work in pairs which helps them to learn from each other. They are also given opportunities to improve their ability to solve problems and answer questions quickly. However, occasionally, the work does not challenge all pupils sufficiently. Some pupils expressed the dislike of occasional rude behaviour that occurs in some lessons, but they said that this had improved significantly in the last year. Whereas marking is accurate, regular and full of encouraging comments, teachers do not always tell their pupils what they need to do next to improve their work further, especially in writing and mathematics.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported in small groups, with good support from teaching assistants. Work is matched to their needs and successfully helps them to achieve their learning targets.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum has a sound focus on pupils' basic skills. In the Reception class, social and communication skills are specifically targeted successfully so that children make good progress in these areas. Across the school, there is an over reliance on using worksheets. This limits pupils' chances for independent learning and takes away opportunities for creative work. It also reduces the pupils' opportunities to write which impact on their progress.

The rich variety of extra-curricular activities in which many children participate is particularly good. Sporting activities are successfully used to help pupils learn important social skills through collaborative games and enjoyable competitions. This is supplemented by the successful lunchtime nurture club and the early morning breakfast gathering aimed at improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to others.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The care and support for pupils are satisfactory. The school has a very caring ethos. Over the last two years, behaviour has improved dramatically because of measures such as the provision of a daily nurture group for identified pupils and because the school community worked together on maintaining its positive ethos. The school's first aid, health and safety, risk assessment and child protection procedures are all rigorous. Statutory procedures meet all requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and there are good links with outside agencies which complement the work of the school in supporting pupils who need extra help. The quality of academic guidance is inconsistent. All pupils have target sheets at the front of their workbooks showing how they can reach the next level of their work. These are, however, too complicated and pupils do not always find them helpful. They often struggle to explain what they need to do to reach the next level. In some classes, pupils' work is well marked with comments that indicate the next steps in learning. In other classes, work is merely praised and does not give pupils enough guidance about how to improve their work or what they have to do to reach their targets. This diminishes the potential impact of pupils having targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

As a result of the strong focus on improving behaviour, the school has been successful in creating a safe and settled environment, which the pupils say that they like. Consequently, the pupils' progress has begun to improve.

Governance is satisfactory. The school has successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection including the curriculum, improving the Reception outdoor play areas, and strengthening information and communication technology and library provision.

Now that unacceptable behaviour has been effectively dealt with the school is setting about improving standards and is beginning to have some success. However, the school's own

self-evaluation has been somewhat generous. For example, the monitoring of teaching and learning set clear targets for improvements but failed to gauge quality consistently accurately. Improvements to the monitoring programme have been made, with the new senior management team working closely together to observe lessons, scrutinise pupils' work, oversee planning and check on assessment. Teachers' collaborative planning has been helpful, particularly in preparing lessons for mixed-age groups.

Although standards are rising the school fully recognises that there are pockets of underachievement caused by inconsistent assessment practice and lack of consistently high expectations. With the new senior management team and the increasing involvement of governors, the school has a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

24 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Combe Martin Primary School, Ilfracombe, EX34 0DF

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views.

You told us that you liked coming to school. We can understand why. Your school gives you a satisfactory education.

This is what we liked about your school:

- You make satisfactory progress because of the satisfactory teaching. This means that your standards have begun to improve, although they can improve even more.
- Behaviour has improved a lot and it is now satisfactory and relationships around the school are good.
- The curriculum is satisfactory and you have good opportunities to do a lot of extra activities outside the classroom.
- Your headteacher has succeeded in improving behaviour which has helped you to improve your work in the classroom.
- You are taken care of in a way that means that you feel safe and happy in school.

We have suggested that your school makes the following improvements:

- Improve standards in mathematics and writing.
- Improve marking so that teachers tell you exactly what to do next in order to improve your work further.
- Ensure that teachers always challenge you so that you can do as well as you are able to.

Once again, thank you very much for making our visit such an enjoyable one.

Faysal Mikdadi Lead inspector