

High Street Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113273
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	289568
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Alexander Paul Baxter

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Samuels
Headteacher	John Lynch
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001
School address	High Street Stonehouse Plymouth PL1 3SJ
Telephone number	01752 225649
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small primary school includes a purpose built Nursery. Children's attainment on entry varies from year to year and is mostly well below that expected for their age. Often attainment on entry, particularly of boys, is very low in communication, language and literacy. A well above average number of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well and learn very happily. There are significant strengths, not least the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent and reflect the high quality of the care, support and guidance they receive. The pupils' wholehearted enjoyment of school, seen in the multitude of smiling faces around the school, also mirrors the outstanding curriculum and range of learning opportunities provided for them. The headteacher, colleagues and governors share a united and very effective commitment to nurturing a love of learning within each child and this permeates the day-to-day life of the whole school. Links with parents and other agencies are also very successful in sustaining the pupils' well-being. A parent reflected this by saying, 'My children love this school.' Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is good. Children make a good start to their education and progress very well in their personal development. Standards from Year 1 to 6 are below average overall, but this generally reflects good achievement from low starting points when they first entered the school. Achievement is very good in mathematics. Pupils also develop their speaking, listening and independent learning skills very effectively as they move through the school. Writing has been identified as an area for development, but initiatives have yet to lift standards fully. Pupils' writing skills, especially imaginative writing, and, in Year 2, pupils' handwriting skills are still too low. Leadership and management and self-evaluation are good. Effective teamwork underpins the work of staff with responsibility and of governors. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good. Data showing pupils' achievement are not always analysed sharply enough when setting strategic school-wide targets. Teaching and learning are consistently good throughout the school. Their consistent quality is a strength that enables the pupils to make good progress. Teaching is lively and interesting. Pupils know what is expected, enjoy learning and respond positively to the challenges presented to them. The curriculum is considerably enriched by well-attended clubs and good use of information and communication technology (ICT). It is extremely well matched to pupils' needs and interests. As a result, pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and contribute enthusiastically to the school and wider community. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school is well placed to continue this into the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' achievement and standards in writing, especially imaginative writing, and in Year 2, handwriting.
- Strengthen the analysis of data showing pupils' progress when setting long-term strategic targets to raise achievement and standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils achieve well at this school but, given low starting points, standards in Year 6 are below average. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children do best in their personal, social and emotional development, particularly in developing self-confidence. Given their limited skills on entry, many do not achieve the goals expected on starting Year 1. Progress through Years 1 to 2 is mainly good as pupils extend their speaking and listening and cooperative learning skills. Good progress continues in Years 3 to 6 and many pupils, especially boys, increase their progress in Years 5 and 6 by using their developing communication and literacy skills more effectively to support their learning. Most pupils do

best in mathematics where standards are closer to average by Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing skills. Imaginative writing is a weaker aspect and pupils in Year 2 often lack sufficient handwriting skills to present their work effectively. Pupils achieve well to acquire appropriate speaking, listening and independent learning skills by the time they leave the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children make outstanding progress in their personal development as a result of excellent provision for this area of learning in the Nursery and Reception. This is continued very effectively throughout the school, enabling pupils to develop confidence and very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils show great pride in their school and enjoy sharing their achievements, both in their work and in the wide range of additional activities that the school provides. Attendance is satisfactory and is improving. Behaviour and relationships are exemplary throughout the school. Pupils show a high level of consideration for others and act safely in school. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community. They work together exceptionally well in problem-solving tasks and this contributes to their good achievement. Pupils respond well to opportunities for taking responsibility as school council members, peer mentors and house captains and develop skills that will help equip them for their future economic well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as seen, for example, when performing in the newly formed school 'Marching Band' and in their relationships with friends from other countries and cultures. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, making more informed choices in eating and enjoying school activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Consistently good teaching and learning throughout the school have a cumulative and beneficial impact on pupils' achievement. Teachers are skilled at making clear connections with previous learning and share learning objectives closely with pupils. As a result, pupils know what is expected and respond enthusiastically to the challenges presented to them. This was evident, for example, in a lesson in Years 4 and 5, when pupils measured the viscosity of liquids in an experiment that simulated molten lava flowing down a volcano. Teachers and their assistants know the pupils well and adapt strategies to meet the pupils' differing needs. This is clearly evident in the good balance between practical activity and adult led learning. Teaching is lively, interesting and relevant. Very occasionally, during parts of lessons, whole-class discussions are too long. The pupils' speaking and independent learning skills are promoted very effectively. Teachers and their assistants encourage very warm relationships with the pupils and value pupils' contributions. Good questioning is a consistent feature in all classes, where pupils' ideas are used to develop new learning. Teachers' marking is good and provides pupils with useful information about how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum throughout the school is innovative and is very well planned to meet the individual learning needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

As a result, pupils enjoy lessons and achieve well. The curriculum is enhanced by the excellent links with parents, other schools and supporting agencies, as well as the extensive range of enrichment activities and clubs. The school's emphasis on developing pupils' independence in learning and applying their skills practically has given pupils confidence in tackling new work. The strong links made between subjects and, in particular, the use of ICT make learning relevant and accessible. The provision for personal, social and health education is outstanding and not only develops pupils' awareness of the need to make sensible choices for mental and physical health but also provides the foundation for their positive attitudes to learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Provision for pupils' care, support and guidance is outstanding because the headteacher and all staff know and care for each pupil individually. Pupils' wellbeing is safeguarded very effectively. The school has excellent arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Links with parents and local agencies are very strong and ensure that pupils develop confidence and self-esteem and achieve well. Pupils with learning, behavioural and physical difficulties are clearly identified and supported well through individual programmes of work. As a result, a number of pupils who found difficulty at schools elsewhere have achieved personal and academic success at High Street Primary School. The pupils' behaviour and their consideration of others are excellent because they are included and supported extremely well. Pupils receive good academic guidance. Pupils know what they are expected to learn in lessons and are given good opportunities to evaluate what they have achieved and how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an outstanding leader. He is particularly skilful in developing his staff as an effective team. The headteacher receives good support from staff and governors. Colleagues at every level of responsibility fulfil their duties diligently and collaborate effectively. They share a wholehearted commitment to sustaining a school community where every child is valued, becomes an effective, confident learner and does well academically and personally. This is evident in the stimulating range of activities provided at the school and is seen in the pupils' enjoyment of school. Parents, local organisations and outside agencies are fully consulted and involved in pupils' learning. These strengths ensure that the pupils' personal development and well-being are nurtured extremely well. Self-evaluation is good, especially the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. However, the school is not always precise enough in analysing data to evaluate and set school-wide strategic targets. Writing is being targeted, but actions need more time to lift pupils' skills. The school's proven track record of bringing about improvement, especially in embedding consistent quality in provision, shows that it has a good capacity to continue this into the future.

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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>	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?	1
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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?	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.

Annex A

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	1
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	2
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

- My colleague and I really enjoyed our visit to your school. We would like to thank you all for your welcome and your willingness to talk to us. Many of you told us that your school is a good school and we agree with you. These are the main things we found out about your school:
- Your behaviour, eagerness to learn and the care you give to each other are outstanding.
- You make good progress. Some of you are doing even better in mathematics, but, because many of you enter the school with language skills that are below those usually expected, standards in Year 6 are below average.
- The learning activities provided for you and the way you are cared for at school are superb. As a result, you know how to live healthily and safely and you support your school well.
- Your school is led and managed well and the leadership of your headteacher is outstanding.
- Teaching is good and teachers and their assistants work very carefully with your parents and other adults to make sure that you learn well. I have asked the headteacher and staff to improve your writing, especially your story writing, and by Year 2, your handwriting. This is because some of you could progress more quickly than you do at the moment. I have also asked them to check your progress and use targets more effectively to help you to improve your skills. Please continue to show the same enthusiasm for learning, that way you will help yourselves and the school to become even better. Thank you once again and good luck in the future.