



Hyde Park Infants' School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113275
Local Authority Plymouth
Inspection number 289569
Inspection date 30 January 2007
Reporting inspector Paul Sadler

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Hyde Park Road
School category	Community		Mutley
Age range of pupils	4-7		Plymouth PL3 4RF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01752 225493
Number on roll (school)	266	Fax number	01752 252294
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Keith Scott
		Headteacher	Elizabeth Hill
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated near the centre of Plymouth. It shares a large Edwardian building with a junior school, and playing space is limited. Proportions of pupils with learning difficulties are average, as are those who speak a language other than English at home.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. To quote a parent, 'The leadership is inspiring and very responsive to the needs of both children and parents'. Children start school with broadly average levels of skill and by the end of Year 2 they attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above average for their age. The school meets challenging targets which it sets for itself. This is excellent achievement. All pupils achieve equally well; for instance, those who start school with a limited knowledge of English attain similar standards to other pupils by the end of Year 2. Pupils' personal development is also outstanding. They behave very well and their attendance is above average. They have a very good understanding of the importance of exercise and a healthy diet and are developing a good understanding of how to stay safe. They also make an excellent contribution to the community by taking responsibility for the welfare of younger children and by collecting for charity.

This success is achieved through excellent teaching which is characterised by the very high expectations that teachers have of their pupils. A good example occurs in the Reception year, where pupils are introduced to technical terms such as 'adjective' and 'noun', and which they use routinely and with confidence. Teachers have a very good understanding of each pupil's progress and attainment, which is used to plan work that stretches them. Targets are set for each pupil and are shared with parents on a regular basis through the excellent and well-used home-school liaison book. The curriculum is good. Reception pupils benefit from a mixture of structured play and more formal activities and older pupils study a wide range of subjects, all of which they say they enjoy. Problems with the resources for information and communication technology are being sorted out, but there is still room for improvement in this aspect of the curriculum. The nature of the school site limits the range of physical activities available to pupils. Pupils are cared for very well and there are good arrangements for child protection. The excellent team of lunchtime supervisors enables pupils to stay safe and enhances their learning by organising playground games. When linked to the excellent academic guidance that pupils receive, this leads to outstanding care, welfare and guidance.

Leadership and management are excellent. Leaders and managers have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have made very good improvements since the last inspection. The Foundation Stage (Reception classes) is led very well and provides high quality education for the youngest children. The governing body is experienced and is excellent at both supporting the school and in holding leaders and managers to account. The school is very well placed to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' access to information and communication technology (ICT) through increasing the number of computers.
- Extend the range of outdoor physical activities available in order to further raise standards in these areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children start school with average levels of skill and knowledge in most areas, although their mathematical understanding is above average. They make very good progress in the Foundation Stage, by the end of which almost all attain the goals set for children of their age, with many exceeding this level. By the end of Year 2, their standards of reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. Pupils' achievement is excellent as all make very good progress in relation to their abilities. Standards of writing fell somewhat in 2005, but the staff identified the reasons for this and adapted their teaching so that in 2006 previous high standards were exceeded. Many pupils can write accurately in paragraphs and correctly punctuate speech. Standards of spelling and handwriting are especially high. In mathematics, pupils can solve problems often considered challenging for older pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They respect the wide range of cultures and religious beliefs represented in the school and appreciate music and art. Their understanding of right and wrong is very good; for instance, they can distinguish bullying from normal childish behaviour. As a result, they behave very well. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy, as shown by their knowledge of the need for exercise and for which foods promote good health. They very much enjoy school, as shown in their good attendance and enthusiasm for learning. Pupils' development of the skills needed in later life is also excellent, especially in their social, literacy and numeracy skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is excellent. Skills such as reading and handwriting are taught using the same approach in all classes, which enables pupils to make consistently very good progress; for instance, they enjoy working with the teacher to plan a story about the adventures of a boy living on a Caribbean island. Work is matched well to pupils' individual needs because these are well known to staff. Teachers believe their pupils can achieve their best and, because of this and being challenged appropriately, they do so. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, and those who are at an early stage of learning English, are supported very well. The skills of the excellent team of support teachers and teaching assistants are used very well to help all pupils to learn more quickly and to individualise their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage have a good variety of activities that enables all their skills to develop well. For older pupils, teaching of subjects such as the geography and culture of the Caribbean are linked well to the development of skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. There is a good range of extra activities, both during and after school. Problems over pupils' access to computers have been solved in part by the very recent purchase of laptops but more resources are required. The school has worked hard to overcome the restrictions of its outdoor play space such as by setting up a 'Maths Trail', but the opportunity for pupils to take part in a range of outdoor activities remains limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are cared for very well. Child protection and security arrangements are very good indeed. Staff know pupils' needs very well through the very good communication that exists with almost all parents. Children are prepared well for school through excellent links with pre-school settings and through home visits. Very good opportunities for personal development through, for instance, assemblies enable pupils' social skills to develop rapidly. Pupils get excellent academic guidance that is based on careful and accurate assessment, setting challenging targets that are shared with pupils and parents and monitored regularly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school has made excellent progress under the leadership of the headteacher, who is supported very well by other staff and governors. There is meticulous analysis of the school's performance, identifying strengths and weaknesses and taking carefully planned action to improve the latter. Teaching and pupils' progress are monitored accurately and action is then taken to improve them, for example, by using teaching assistants to rectify weaknesses in pupils' understanding. Very good communication has ensured a high degree of support from parents. As one said, 'The parent partnership is very strong and the headteacher acts on views and concerns promptly'. However, a small minority feel aggrieved over matters such as the allocation of teachers to classes. The Foundation Stage in particular is very well led. There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection, for instance, in response to recent guidance on the curriculum, and the school is very well placed for this to continue.

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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	1
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	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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?	2
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

I very much enjoyed talking and listening to you and seeing your work when I visited your school recently. I want to thank those of you who told me about how good the school is. This letter is to tell you what I thought of your school.

Your school is excellent. These are some of the best things about it.

- By the end of Year 2 your work is much better than that of most children of your age and you make excellent progress. Some is as good as children do later in junior school. I especially enjoyed watching Year 2 plan their stories.
- Your teachers are excellent because the teachers know what each of you needs to learn, and how to teach it to you.
- Your behaviour is very good and you work well together. You enjoy your playground games.
- You know a lot about how to be healthy.
- Older children help younger ones. You do good things for other people like collecting for charity.
- The staff are very good at telling your parents how you are getting on in your work. The home-school book is a very good idea.
- You receive excellent care from all the staff.
- The headteacher and the other teachers run the school exceptionally well.
- Your parents agree with us that it is an excellent school.

To make the school even better I have asked that you get more computer equipment and, if possible, you are given more opportunity for outdoor sport and games.