

Ernesettle Community School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 134802 |
| Local Authority | Plymouth |
| Inspection number | 294173 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 March 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Alexander Paul Baxter |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 340 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Joyce HARRIS |
| Headteacher | Barry Coppins |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Biggin Hill Ernesettle Plymouth PL5 2RB |
| Telephone number | 01752 201177 |
| Fax number | 01752 201178 |

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

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This relatively newly amalgamated community primary school is above average in size. The school includes a Nursery class. Children's attainment on entry is well below that expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average. At the time of the inspection, several senior teachers were on long-term absence.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school does not provide an effective education for its pupils. Results in the national tests in 2006 represent inadequate achievement. Standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science and pupils' speaking and independent learning skills are particularly weak. Teaching and learning and the curriculum in Years 1 to 6, and care, guidance and support are inadequate because pupils are not able to learn consistently in ways that meet their needs. Assessments are not used consistently to challenge pupils at the right level and to make clear how they can improve. In contrast, the quality and provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) are good. This is because the curriculum is planned and taught consistently well and meets the personal, social and emotional needs of the children.

Many children start school with well below average skills. The children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes but, because of their low starting points, most do not reach expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. The progress made by pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 is inadequate. By the time they leave the school, standards remain well below average.

The headteacher and his colleagues work hard to develop a caring community ethos and pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils say that behaviour has improved and that adults give effective support to those who need help. The pastoral support for vulnerable pupils, including those with complex learning needs, is particularly effective. The pupils know how to live healthily and safely and support their community appropriately. Attendance is satisfactory and most pupils enjoy school, but they do not always show it in lessons. Too many pupils lack the key literacy and numeracy skills needed for their future economic well-being.

Leadership and management are inadequate. The headteacher is developing beneficial links with support agencies and knows what has to be done. Unfortunately, long-term absence of several senior teachers and ongoing concerns about the school's accommodation represent significant barriers to improvement. Managing these issues continues to deflect attention and constrain efforts to develop effective structures for evaluating and improving provision. As a consequence, the school is not able to show that it has the capacity to make the necessary improvements.

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of provision, improving particularly the way teachers engage pupils' interest and make learning relevant to the needs of individual pupils.
- Use assessments of pupils' progress more effectively to lift teachers' and pupils' expectations, set appropriately challenging targets and show pupils how to improve.
- Strengthen leadership and management to make sure that strategies introduced to raise achievement are monitored and are successful in bringing about the necessary improvements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are well below average in Year 6 and pupils' achievement is inadequate. Most children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with well below average standards in most areas of learning, especially in communication and mathematical skills. Children generally make good progress in these classes, especially in co-operating with others. Nonetheless, pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 is still below that normally expected. Pupils' progress slows through Years 1 and 2 because of the variable quality of the teaching. By Year 2, standards are well below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Inconsistent teaching and learning, weakened at times by strategies and activities that fail to interest pupils, and by low expectations, continue in Years 3 to 6. As a result, most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make inadequate progress. Standards remain well below average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6. Because their interest is not stimulated, too many pupils, increasingly boys as they grow older, do not apply themselves well enough to their work. National tests in 2006 showed that most pupils underachieved. That underachievement continues. Pupils' speaking skills and their ability to learn independently are significant weaknesses.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The school has devoted significant attention to improving standards of behaviour. This was evident in the pupils' generally satisfactory behaviour in and out of classrooms. The pupils themselves still make reference to a few pupils who misbehave, but they express confidence that staff are correcting this more swiftly than in the recent past. A minority of pupils, especially boys, do not apply themselves sufficiently to their work, especially when teachers fail to enthuse them. Nevertheless, most pupils enjoy school. This is seen in their satisfactory attendance.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. There are, however, weaknesses in pupils' cultural development because many pupils lack sufficient awareness of multicultural Britain. Pupils work co-operatively in a friendly manner when required. They say they would like more practical work and have to listen too much. Most have a satisfactory understanding of healthy, safe living and contribute appropriately to the school, local and wider communities. Pupils undertake responsibilities enthusiastically, for example, on the school council. Such opportunities are very limited, however, especially with regard to their learning. Because of this, many pupils lack the confidence and skills to learn independently. Pupils' low basic numeracy and literacy skills, especially their speaking skills, do not prepare them sufficiently for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Inconsistent practice reduces the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Teaching is good in the Nursery and Reception classes, where children learn in interesting ways. Across the rest of the school, too often teaching fails to stimulate pupils, who then lose interest. Too many pupils are expected to learn by listening to adults. This is especially the case in literacy and numeracy where the level of challenge is often wrongly pitched. In some lessons, not all

pupils are encouraged to respond fully in discussions. Boys often form the majority of the underachievers because they are not stimulated to come forward. They remain passive, not speaking, allowing others to participate. This slows their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties often receive effective close support. However, as with their peers, their learning across the school is inconsistent.

Teachers promote warm relationships and generally manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Several teachers are beginning to challenge pupils more. With guidance from the headteacher and support agencies, these teachers are introducing targets to raise pupils' expectations. These strategies are not yet implemented sufficiently in lessons across the school, limiting pupils' progress. Pupils show more interest and enthusiasm and learn better when doing practical work. This was seen, for example, when pupils were playing football or responding to the skipping led by a visiting specialist coach.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is adapted through rigorous assessment and matches children's needs. The curriculum offered to other pupils is not consistent in meeting their learning needs. Many pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn through practical enquiry or to develop independence in learning, especially in numeracy and literacy. As a result they are ill-equipped for their future economic well-being. The school is encouraging the use of assessments of pupils' work to target pupils' needs more effectively, but this is not established sufficiently across the school. Enrichment through local links, including library visits and work with a theatre group, brings beneficial learning experiences. These contrast with work in class which too often lacks relevance, fails to interest pupils and constrains learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

The care, support and guidance given to pupils do not ensure that they make enough progress. The school provides appropriate care, support and pastoral guidance for its pupils. Parents appreciate the way their children are looked after. Links with parents and other agencies are beneficial, especially in supporting children with complex learning needs. Parents of these children said, 'Our children are understood'. Child protection procedures and other statutory requirements are in place. The school ensures that pupils behave appropriately and adopt healthy, safe lifestyles. The academic guidance given to pupils is inconsistent. Improving this is crucial to raising pupils' achievement. Many pupils do not have high enough expectations. They are not given enough responsibility for their own learning and are not always clear about what they need to do next to progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leaders and managers have not been effective in establishing consistently good enough teaching and learning throughout the school. This continues to have a constraining influence on pupils' achievements. With increasing assistance from the local authority over the last year, the headteacher has developed a more accurate awareness of the challenges that exist. However, the degree to which initiatives are implemented to improve provision is still inconsistent. It has

not had enough impact in raising achievement and standards. The headteacher is strongly committed to establishing a caring community ethos. He receives effective support from staff, governors and parents in promoting pupils' personal development and well-being. Unfortunately senior management has been weakened by the long-term absence of key personnel. This has hampered the monitoring of standards. In addition, the headteacher and governors have had to spend an inordinate amount of time maintaining outdated buildings and unsatisfactory outdoor facilities. These barriers to improvement are impairing their ability to use self-evaluation effectively to raise pupils' academic achievements.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 4 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 3 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 4 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 4 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | NA |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 4 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 4 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 3 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 4 |

The quality of provision

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|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 4 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 4 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 4 |

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 4 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 4 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 4 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 4 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 4 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 4 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | Yes |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Ernesettle Community School, Ernesettle, Plymouth PL5 2RB

Thank you for welcoming us, and special thanks to those of you who took the time to talk to us about the school. We were very interested to hear your views. Unfortunately we found that your school is not as good as it should be and needs to improve a lot. In particular, although adults care for you well, the school is not successful in helping you to achieve as well as you should. These are the other main things we found out about your school:

- Many of you in Years 1 to 6 do not make enough progress and do not reach the standards in English, mathematics and science that you are capable of achieving.
- Many of you make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes where the teaching is good.
- Your headteacher and the staff are trying hard to create a community where you can learn better, but the school management needs to be more effective.
- The quality of teaching, the range of learning opportunities given to you and the guidance you receive vary too much. As a result many of you find it difficult to learn.
- The school works closely with your parents and other people to look after you. Because of this you live healthy, safe lives and contribute appropriately to the community.

I have asked the headteacher, staff and other adults with responsibilities to do these things to help you make better progress:

- Improve your achievements in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that the way you are taught, the things you do and the way you are guided interest you and help you to make better progress as you grow older.
- Check your work better, expect more of you and show you how to improve so that you can reach challenging targets and improve your progress.
- Strengthen the way the school is led and managed to bring about improvement more quickly.

Remember that if these improvements are to be made, you all need to play your part. Please do your best and look after each other.

Thank you once again and good luck in the future. With best wishes

Alex Baxter Lead inspector