

Ermington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113249
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311176
Inspection date	28 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Knightley
Headteacher	Jane Byrne
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2003
School address	School Road Ermington Ivybridge PL21 9NH
Telephone number	01548 830459
Fax number	01548 830459

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated and evaluated the following aspects: achievement and standards; personal development and well-being; teaching and learning; the curriculum; care, guidance and support; and leadership and management. The following areas emerged from the school's pre-inspection documentation as specific areas to be explored:

What are the factors in leadership and management and in educational provision which have contributed to the consistently high standards by the end of Year 6, particularly in mathematics?

What action is being taken and how effective is it in raising achievement and standards in Years 1 and 2?

Description of the school

Emington is a smaller-than-average primary school. The vast majority of pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and none of these is at an early stage of learning English. The school provides for pupils from a wide rural area, including some from Traveller families. About 70% of the pupils come from outside of the school's normal catchment area. During 2005 and 2006, the school experienced staff absence through illness. The staffing is now more settled.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ermington Primary is a good school with outstanding aspects to its work. Pupils achieve well overall because of good teaching and an imaginative curriculum. Excellent care, guidance and support and the very positive school climate lead to outstanding personal development and well-being for pupils. The vast majority of parents hold positive views about the school and are pleased with both the care and education provided for their children. Typical comments from the parental survey were, 'My children are really happy at school and are making good progress'; 'Different abilities and needs are acknowledged and catered for'; 'A well-managed and organised school'; and 'The school is very welcoming and staff are approachable'.

Good leadership and management are key factors contributing to the school's success. The headteacher, senior staff and governors successfully create effective educational provision and this leads to favourable outcomes for pupils. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and her vision and drive have led to a more exciting curriculum. Teamwork in the school is strong and the headteacher is well supported by other leaders, who all make a valuable contribution to the school's effectiveness. The school's performance is systematically reviewed and findings are used well to guide planning for improvement and to set challenging targets. Leaders are not complacent and are aware that there is more to do to raise achievement and standards in Years 1 and 2. The governing body is actively involved in the life of the school. Governors are committed and supportive and provide constructive challenge. Accurate self-evaluation, an improved curriculum and the maintenance of high standards by Year 6 demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve.

Outstanding care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal development. The school has established effective systems to assess and track pupils' attainment and progress so teachers have a good overview of how well each pupil is doing. Pupils are set clear individual learning targets in English and mathematics so that they know what to do to improve. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their enthusiastic participation in lessons and other activities. Pupils are very friendly and polite and show considerable care and respect for others. The school works hard to monitor and promote good attendance. Most pupils have high levels of attendance but a small number of families have children with poor attendance because of extended periods of absence. High expectations by staff and outstanding relationships between staff and pupils lead to behaviour which is often exemplary. Pupils show an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating, taking regular exercise and keeping safe. They thrive on additional responsibilities such as being house captains or prefects. Members of the school council take their duties seriously and are currently working on a travel plan project. Pupils contribute very well to the wider community by raising funds for national and international charities. High standards in literacy and numeracy by the end of Year 6 and outstanding personal and social skills prepare pupils extremely well for the future.

Pupils make good progress because of the effective teaching they receive. As they remarked, 'There are lots of good learning experiences' and 'We learn something new every day'. Teachers' demonstrations and explanations are clear and informative. Skilful questioning is frequently used to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who respond well to their teachers. They work well together in pairs and in groups. Occasionally, the pace of instruction and questioning is not brisk enough and the rate of progress pupils make slows down. Activities and tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities and

needs. As a result, they are challenged well and make good gains in their learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly to that of those with learning difficulties. The marking of pupils' work is effective because it identifies why a piece of work is good and provides constructive comments on how to improve.

Standards by the end of Year 6 are consistently well above average and test results in 2007 indicate that standards are exceptionally high in mathematics. Pupils in Year 6 achieve well from their above-average attainment on entry to the school. Their writing is exciting, accurate and imaginative as they write in a range of styles and for different purposes. Pupils use and apply mathematical skills extremely well to solve problems. They possess a good knowledge of science and apply a range of skills competently when carrying out investigations. During the last two years, standards by the end of Year 2 have declined from above average to average. Two factors have contributed to this situation. First, the overall attainment of children on entry has changed from above average to average. Second, the school experienced staffing difficulties in Year 2, which adversely affected the quality of teaching. Teaching is now more consistent across the school and the range of reading and writing strategies to raise achievement has been extended. Effective assessments indicate that pupils are now making better progress in Years 1 and 2.

The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now outstanding. It makes a considerable contribution to pupils' progress, and their enjoyment and to their personal development. While there is a clear emphasis on English, mathematics and science, art, music and sport are also great strengths. There are good links between subjects, which adds meaning and relevance to pupils' learning. For example, in Year 6, pupils' high quality journalistic writing about 'Flash Floods in Dartmoor' was enhanced with equally impressive watercolour painting of the Dartmoor landscapes. Themed weeks for art and science and visits to the theatre and the Eden Project enrich the pupils' experiences. A wide range of high quality pupils' art work is displayed around the school. The teaching of French and a visit to Paris contribute well to pupils' language and cultural development. Pupils in Year 4 acquire new outdoor skills on a residential visit. The provision for physical education (PE) and sport is very good and the school has experienced considerable success in this area. They are currently Devon 'tag rugby' champions. One pupil commented, 'We have excellent PE here'. More recently, participation in a Specialist Pilot Music project with local schools is providing good quality musical opportunities for all.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception with knowledge and skills expected for their age. Good teaching and a well-planned curriculum help to ensure that children get off to a secure start and make good progress. Children are keen and excited learners and make good progress in all areas of learning. Independence is promoted well and children benefit from an effective blend of direct instruction and good opportunities to explore and be creative. There are clear plans to improve the outdoor learning equipment and facilities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in Years 1 and 2 so that pupils attain above-average standards or better by the end of Year 2.

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Annex A

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed my visit and would like to tell you what I have found. Ermington is a good school with some outstanding features. This is a school you can all be very proud of.

These things are strengths of the school:

- You enjoy school and take part in activities with great enthusiasm.
- The school is a very friendly, caring and pleasant place to be.
- Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start.
- Teaching is good, which is why you make such good progress.
- An excellent range of learning activities is provided for you.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 are exceptionally high.
- You show an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe.
- You show considerable care and respect for other pupils and adults.
- You are successful at sport and your artwork is fantastic.
- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and other senior staff.
- Staff know you very well; they take excellent care of you and give you outstanding support.
- Your parents are pleased with the school and give it good support.

There is one area that the school has been asked to improve:

- Some of you in Years 1 and 2 could make even more progress and your teachers are working hard to make this happen.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the best for the future.

28 November 2007



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Ermington Primary School, Ermington, Devon PL21 9NH

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With kind regards,

Derek Watts

Lead inspector