

College Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113276
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	311186
Inspection dates	6–7 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Tom Simpson

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	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Warwick
Headteacher	Jim Wallace
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2004
School address	College Road Keyham Plymouth PL2 1NS
Telephone number	01752 567660
Fax number	01752 605236

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving a largely urban area. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and only a small minority are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language (EAL). The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is above average. The percentage entitled to free school meals is also above average. Attainment on entry is well below the level expected nationally. More pupils join or leave the school during the year than is normally found. The school has received the International Schools' Award in recognition of its close links with other schools around the world. A new headteacher and a newly constituted senior leadership team have been in place since September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has some significant strengths as well as areas of relative weakness. A particular strength is the effective pastoral care it provides for its pupils. All staff are very committed to further raising academic standards while developing a curriculum which is interesting and relevant for the pupils. The pupils are well known to staff and this contributes successfully to their good personal development. The pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and feel safe there. Most parents comment positively on the provision the school makes for their children. One parent wrote, 'Since the day my child started school, he has never once said he did not want to go, and when he was ill he cried because he couldn't.' Another commented, 'I am very happy with my daughter's improvement since being at this school. She has learned very well.'

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but it is not consistent throughout the school. This is largely because the quality of teaching, though also satisfactory overall, varies too widely. It does not ensure that pupils do as well as they should. For example, teaching and achievement are good in the Foundation Stage but there are examples of pupils making unsatisfactory achievement in Years 3 to 6, particularly in writing and mathematics. As a result, although standards are rising, they are still below average by the time pupils leave the school.

The new headteacher and senior leadership team have a clear vision for raising standards and improving the school's provision. As a result of a thorough assessment of the current situation, they also have a very good appreciation of what needs to be done to achieve this. A number of promising strategies for improvement have already been put in place and more are planned for the near future. As yet, these have not had a full impact on raising achievement and standards. Leadership and management are currently judged to be satisfactory.

Curricular provision is satisfactory and, through recent adjustments, fully meets statutory requirements. A good range of enrichment activities is provided. However, the current curriculum is not engaging pupils enough, nor is it stimulating them to reach for higher standards. The school has recognised this and has identified it as one of its targets for improvement.

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Academic guidance has been strengthened in the recent past by the introduction of targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy but, again, these are only just beginning to have an impact on standards. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection and the school has a sound capacity to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good overall progress from low starting points across most of the areas of learning during their time in the Reception class. Their progress in personal, social and emotional development is particularly strong, but by the time they reach Year 1 their skills in writing are below expectations. The children enjoy being at school and work and play well together. They are well taught and there is a good level of support from both the teacher and the non-teaching staff. The curriculum provided for the children is relevant to their needs and is made interesting for them. The senior staff have a good appreciation of the strengths of the provision as well as its areas for improvement, such as extending the use of targets in order to raise standards in writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Years 3 to 6
- Develop a curriculum that is more relevant and stimulating for the pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good progress in the Reception class and by the start of Year 1, apart from weaknesses in their writing skills, they are largely well prepared to embark on the rest of their education. In the most recent national assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2, results were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's own data indicate, however, that results this academic year are likely to be a little lower. The 2007 test results for pupils in Year 6 were significantly below average in English, mathematics and science and pointed to insufficient progress made by this group of pupils. There were a number of reasons for this, including a high level of pupil mobility, some poor behaviour among the pupils and staff turnover. Evidence from the school's tracking system and current work indicates that achievement and standards in Year 6 are higher this academic year, but still below average. There are particular weaknesses in writing and mathematics. Although most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and the very small number of pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL), make satisfactory progress, there is inconsistency across Years 3 to 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils are friendly, behave well and have positive attitudes towards their work. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and attendance is now satisfactory, an improvement since the time of the last inspection. There is a warm ethos throughout the school which enables pupils to develop both self-esteem and confidence. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Some parents and pupils point to a small number of pupils misbehaving in lessons and in the playground. The situation is now improving significantly and this is reflected in what the pupils told inspectors. Pupils have adopted safe and healthy lifestyles and have positive views on healthy eating. Good links with schools in other parts of the world, through the school's international programme, help the pupils to have a broad cultural understanding. The pupils make a good contribution to the school community, for example, through the school council, and feel that their views are listened to. Members of the school council were involved in the recent appointment of a new headteacher. The pupils enjoy supporting a number of charities, such as 'Children in Need'. Given their sound basic skills, the way they are prepared for the next stage of their education and later life is satisfactory overall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The pupils are generally well managed and as a result most lessons are positive and productive learning experiences. Praise, for example, is regularly used well to support the development of pupils' self-esteem. Planning is thorough and teachers often use probing questions well to

extend pupils' thinking and keep them focused on their tasks. Tasks are often interesting and motivate the pupils well. In a few lessons, however, activities proceed at too slow a pace, which means that some pupils lose interest. There is also some inconsistency in the use of marking to guide pupils as to where they should go next in their learning. Occasionally, behaviour is not managed effectively enough. There are now extensive procedures in place to assess and track the pupils' progress, but the information gained is not always used effectively enough to improve the achievement of the pupils. For example, by tailoring the work in lessons to ensure that pupils of different abilities are appropriately challenged.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has been adjusted recently and is now broadly appropriate. It is enriched by specialist music lessons and the recent introduction of modern foreign language teaching. The curriculum for children in the Reception class is good and contributes well to their progress. More could be done to make subjects more interesting and relevant, so as to inspire the pupils and to promote higher academic standards. Good links with other local schools include a contribution from the local secondary school to the programme for providing French in Years 3 to 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The relationships between staff and pupils are strong throughout the school. Staff, including the learning mentor, have a good knowledge of pupils' social and emotional needs. This knowledge is having a positive impact on pupils' personal development. The school also makes good use of outside agencies such as the educational psychology service to support vulnerable pupils. Pupils with LDD are generally well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. The small number of pupils with EAL are also provided with good support from school staff and outside agencies, although there is room for this to be developed even further. Robust procedures are in place for child protection, health and safety and safe staff recruitment. The school has recently introduced the setting of academic targets to support pupils' academic guidance. Although these are beginning to be used well, they have not been in place long enough to have had a sustained and measurable impact on achievement and standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides visionary and inspirational leadership. He has a very clear idea of how to improve standards and the quality of the school's provision, and of what to do to achieve this. With his similarly proactive deputy and senior leadership team, whose work is very focused on raising standards, he has already put in place a good number of new strategies for improvement. There is some evidence that these are already beginning to have a positive effect on several aspects of school life, including behaviour and pupils' attitudes and standards. It is too soon, however, for their impact to be fully realised. Current provision has been thoroughly evaluated by staff at all levels. As a result, the school is very clear about its development needs. For example, the setting of academic targets for pupils was recognised as an area which would support the raising of standards and a system for this has been successfully introduced. Informal monitoring of teaching indicated variability in teaching skills and in the use of assessment data

and so a more formal monitoring process has now been introduced and action planned. The provision for pupils with LDD and for children in the Reception class is effectively managed.

The members of the governing body are keen, committed and supportive, but their role in formally monitoring the quality of the school's provision is underdeveloped.

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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?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

7 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of College Road Primary School, Plymouth, Devon PL2 1NS

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your work. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the things we found:

- Most of you are well behaved and you are developing good personal skills that are important for later life; for example, you know how to lead healthy lifestyles.
- You are well cared for by the adults at the school.
- You are provided with a satisfactory curriculum and given lots of interesting things to do outside lessons.
- You are soundly taught and are making satisfactory progress in your work.
- The headteacher and other staff are working very hard to make the school even better.

Here is what we have suggested the school does now:

- Ensure that you reach higher standards, especially in writing and mathematics, in Years 3 to 6.
- Make sure that the teaching and curriculum is more relevant and stimulating for you.

We hope that those of you in Years 3 to 6 especially will work very hard to improve.

Thank you again for your help.

With best wishes

Tom Simpson Lead Inspector