

Glen Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113326
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	311213
Inspection date	21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	David Townsend HMI

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	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louise Mole
Headteacher	Anne Newall
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2004
School address	Glen Road Plympton Plymouth PL7 2DE
Telephone number	01752 339073
Fax number	01752 336575

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of teaching on pupils' progress; the impact of leaders and managers on improving standards, especially in English; and the quality of personal development and care, support and guidance. Evidence gathered included lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Glen Park is a larger-than-average primary school. Most pupils are White British. There are notably fewer girls than boys. Few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and very few pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than that usually found. Pupils generally start school with entry levels of attainment that are below those usually found, especially in the areas of communication, language and literacy.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Glen Park Primary is a good school with many strengths. As many of the parents who returned questionnaires rightly observed, the school provides a caring and positive learning environment in which each child is valued and nurtured.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers know what pupils need to learn in lessons and convey these objectives clearly. Relationships are good and so pupils concentrate well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most use this well to provide good challenge through their questioning so that pupils reflect carefully on and extend their learning. The curriculum is broad, balanced and rich in first-hand and extended learning opportunities, such as the specialist teaching in modern foreign languages and the range of popular after-school clubs. The school is reviewing its curriculum structure and is intending to develop further its effective themed approach to learning, which pupils like. It accepts that planning for progression in skills and understanding in each subject is underdeveloped. As a result, the level of challenge set for pupils is sometimes insufficiently precise. Boys and girls of all attainments are now making good progress. From their below-average starting points on entry to school, pupils reach average standards by the time they leave. This good progress is due to the consistently good teaching and close tracking of the pupils' learning over time. In all year groups, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given very effective targeted support and make good progress. For younger and older pupils alike, the staff have worked successfully to overcome barriers to learners' achievement. In Years 1 and 2, highly structured phonics teaching and additional support groups have helped the increasing number of pupils, especially boys, whose basic skills are weak upon entry to school. These pupils are now catching up at a more rapid rate.

In 2007, the results in the national tests for Year 6 in mathematics improved and pupils made good progress. This is because the school had successfully targeted the weaker calculation skills of pupils at risk of not reaching the expected levels. However, progress in English as measured by the 2007 tests was satisfactory. Close analysis led the school to identify that boys and pupils capable of reaching the higher levels in writing were underachieving. Effective targeted support has been put in place for most pupils through the flexible use of groups organised by their ability in literacy and the introduction of more creative writing topics that have motivated boys to write well in a range of styles. Most pupils are now making good progress towards the challenging targets set for them. Boys are more motivated and an increasing number of pupils are already reaching the higher levels as writers by the end of Year 6. However, for some pupils in Years 3 to 5, the writing targets and guidance they receive remain insufficiently precise to help them make accelerated progress.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, is good, with outstanding features. Pupils are very aware of what constitute a healthy lifestyle and safe practices and they act on this knowledge. They also make an excellent contribution to school life and activities within the wider locality. These outcomes for pupils are outstanding because the school's extra-curricular programme affords pupils many opportunities to be active in sports clubs, events and daily activities such as 'Wake and Shake'. Strong links forged with the wider community ensure regular visits from the police, health visitors and the fire brigade, which have deepened pupils' understanding on themes such as road safety, the dangers of fire and the importance of a good diet. Pupils report that they enjoy school. They readily take on responsibilities in school as peer mediators, school councillors and monitors.

Behaviour is good both in class and around school. All staff use effective strategies to promote positive behaviour. Consequently, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards others and focus well in lessons. Staff closely monitor and support the small minority of pupils who misbehave, and any incidents that occur are managed well. Attendance is good. It has improved because the school is using good strategies to reduce absences and promote punctuality. The school does well in equipping pupils with the basic literacy, numeracy and computing skills they will need in later life.

Care, guidance and support are good, with outstanding features. Dedicated staff provide excellent pastoral care. Pupils appreciate the close attention given by the adults to monitoring behaviour and rightly report that measures to tackle the very few instances of bullying are effective. Procedures for safeguarding children are robust. Arrangements for supporting pupils at risk are excellent. Through its close links with external agencies and the high quality work of its support staff, the school is able to plan and provide for these learners' individual needs very effectively. There is good academic guidance. Teachers carefully profile each pupil's learning over time and pupils requiring specific advice and support rightly appreciate the periodic conferences they are offered with teachers to discuss their progress in more detail. However, at present, approaches to helping pupils know how to improve their work through teachers' day-to-day marking are inconsistent. Written feedback in books is constructive but, although individual learning targets are set, teachers do not regularly mark to these targets and give pupils specific advice in relation to them.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and there is a capable senior team. The governors, whilst providing active support, are also effective in their challenge to ensure the school focuses on raising standards further. Self-evaluation procedures are accurate and identify key priority areas. Actions taken to tackle barriers to improvement and address underachievement have met with success. There is no complacency. The school recognises that standards need to rise further and challenging targets for pupils' achievement are being set and, increasingly, met. The school promotes equal opportunities well, as shown by its success in supporting pupils at risk and raising attainment for boys. These factors signify the school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle well into the Reception classes. Their skills and experiences are generally below the levels expected when they join the school. They make good progress and most meet the learning goals for children of their age by the time they start Year 1. One reason they make good gains over time in their learning is the strong emphasis placed on spoken language. Because of the rich range of resources on offer and teachers' careful planning, children learn well through both adult-directed and self-initiated play. The strong structure of routines and high expectations of the adults ensure good progress in children's personal and social development. Provision in the Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Teachers are given and capitalise on the many opportunities afforded to them to reflect upon and develop their own practice together and so the provision is continually improving. The progress children make is carefully assessed. The teaching team has established close links with the pre-school on site and has ensured that the transition for children from pre-school to the Reception class is well handled.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen the link between teachers' marking and the use of individual learning targets so that pupils understand better how to improve their work.
- Plan for progression in skills and understanding in each subject to ensure a closer match between all pupils' capabilities and the challenge offered to them.

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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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
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?	2
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Glen Park Primary School, Plymouth PL7 2DE

I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed my visit to your school. It was a pleasure to talk to so many of you and I very much appreciated the help you gave me during the day. You will be pleased to know that I agree with you in considering Glen Park Primary to be a good school. Indeed, there are many strong features to report. Here are a number of things I like about your school.

- You get a good start to school life in the Reception classes.
- You are making good progress now in your reading, writing and mathematics because teaching is good. You reach the standards expected for your age by the time you leave school.
- You are keen to come to school, enjoy learning and almost all of you behave well in and outside lessons.
- You have a very good awareness of how to live a healthy life and stay safe, and you make an excellent contribution to the life of the school.
- Your teachers and all staff are dedicated to helping all of you succeed and care for you very well, especially those of you who may have extra worries and concerns.
- Your headteacher leads your school very well.

The challenge is to reach higher standards by helping you make even more rapid progress in your learning. I have asked your teachers to

- let you know how well you have met your learning targets when marking your work
- plan how best to help each of you develop and apply the skills you are learning in lessons at the level that is right for you.

Thank you, once again, for all the help you gave me during my visit.

David Townsend Her Majesty's Inspector

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