

# Plymtree Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 113361           |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Devon            |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 311227           |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 14 November 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Clive Lewis      |

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

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|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary                            |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary controlled               |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11                               |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                              |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                                    |
| School                                    | 92                                 |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                 |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Philippa Bushell                   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Pat Fay                            |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 March 2003                       |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Plymtree<br>Cullompton<br>EX15 2JU |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01884 277294                       |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01884 277294                       |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a small school with a very good reputation for the successful inclusion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and behaviour problems. As a result, the proportion of pupils joining the school other than in Reception is higher than average and the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is significantly higher than average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Plymtree is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides a wellbalanced education for its pupils, outstanding pastoral care and equality of opportunity that leads to outstanding personal development and has a positive impact on all aspects of their development. Pupils make good progress because of the consistently good teaching, good leadership and management, and the good contributions of the governing body. Achievement is good and standards are above average by Year 6. Because of the very small cohorts, levels of attainment on entry vary significantly from year to year but are typically broadly average. Children make good progress because of the good provision in the Foundation Stage, and, for a significant proportion, standards at the start of Year 1 are above average. Improvements to planning and curriculum have removed past fluctuations in pupils' rates of progress in Years 1 and 2 and as a result, pupils are making better progress. However, although progress through Years 1 and 2 is now satisfactory, it is not yet as good as in Years 3 to 6, where pupils make good progress. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and, as a result, attendance is above national levels. Relationships are very good and play a key role in the outstanding progress pupils make in their personal development, including their excellent behaviour. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are provided with a good curriculum that includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Although the school's tracking systems have improved, assessments are not undertaken regularly or analysed rigorously enough to enable prompt interventions. There is room for more consistency in marking of work and in the setting of individual targets to improve pupils' awareness of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The responses to the parents' questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive, one parent commenting, 'The school has demonstrated that it can open its arms to all children in a kind and caring way'. Since school self-evaluation is good and effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection, the school has a good capacity to make the necessary improvements.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Due to good leadership and teaching, children make good progress in their Reception Year so that most reach the levels expected for their age by the start of Year 1 and a significant proportion exceed these levels. Relationships between staff and children, and provision for children's care, well-being and safety, are also good. Children clearly enjoy learning and make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. This is because there is an appropriate balance of adult-initiated activities and those that children select and a good range of opportunities for firsthand experiences.

## What the school should do to improve further

- raise achievement in Key Stage 1
- improve the rigour of systems for the assessment and tracking of individual pupils' progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

School tracking data confirms that levels of attainment vary considerably from year to year due to the small cohorts. Generally, children enter the school with levels broadly in line with those expected for their age and they make good progress overall as they move through the school. Children in the Foundation Stage class achieve well because of the good planning and the high adult-pupil ratio. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. In the latest 2007 national assessments, standards in Year 2 were in line with national averages although the number of pupils achieving the higher levels was below average. This was a significant improvement on the previous two years. Pupils make better progress in Years 3 to 6 and standards in Year 6 in 2007 were significantly above national averages overall. In some years, the school has significantly more pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is found nationally. A significant proportion of these pupils do not start at the school in Reception, moving from other schools where they have often encountered difficulties. These pupils quickly settle into school and make very good progress towards their targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' very positive attitudes are reflected in their enjoyment of learning in lessons and in their excellent contributions to the life of the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Effective steps have been taken to improve attendance, which is now good. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and show this as they talk knowledgeably about the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating. They have a mature awareness of how to keep safe and are very confident in knowing whom to talk to should they encounter difficulties. The school council is very active and gives the pupils a real opportunity to be involved in decision-making. Pupils are particularly proud of their work toward 'eco-school' status. For example, an 'Energy Action Team' ensures that lights are turned off when they are not needed! Pupils take very good care of each other, work well together and behave very well. The very effective 'buddy' system enables older pupils to provide support to those who need it at playtimes and when walking to church services. Pupils' mature social skills and their good basic literacy and numeracy skills mean they are well prepared for future education and eventual economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching in all classes, including the Reception Year, is good. Lessons are typically lively and full of pace and challenge, so that pupils are motivated and learn well. As a result, attitudes and behaviour are good. Tasks are carefully chosen to appeal to boys as well as girls and teachers work hard to ensure pupils understand basic mathematical and writing concepts. Teachers provide good support for pupils joining the school part way through their education and this helps these pupils to quickly begin to make good progress. They organise teaching groups in the mixed-age classes carefully so that all pupils get work at the right level to help them achieve as well as they can. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from good support from teachers and teaching assistants so that they are helped to make good progress. However,

although marking is up to date and thorough, it does not consistently provide pupils with enough information about what they could do to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is well suited to pupils' wide range of capabilities, needs and interests. The curriculum is enriched by regular educational visits and themed events such as 'India Day'. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities that stimulate pupils' greater interest and excitement in learning and these are very well attended. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good and this is evident in the good progress children are making. The lack of a hall places constraints on the physical education curriculum but the school compensates effectively by making use of the village hall, providing a good range of sports activities. The development of music and modern foreign languages is a particular strength of the school. Although provision for information and communication technology has improved, there is a need for more cross-curricular use of ICT to support and extend learning across the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support is good overall. The quality of pastoral care is excellent, with all adults in the school knowing the pupils very well. Pupils feel safe and know that they can talk to staff if they have any worries. Child protection procedures and health and safety checks are very thorough. Effective transition arrangements help children to settle into the Foundation Stage and prepare Year 6 pupils for their next stage of education. The excellent care and support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enable them to make very good progress. Pupils receive sound support and guidance for their academic development. Although systems for tracking individual pupils' progress have improved, there is room for more rigour in the collection of data and in the use of data obtained to inform planning. Pupils' understanding of their own targets for learning is inconsistent and marking of pupils' work does not always give appropriate guidance on how they can improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher leads a very well motivated team of colleagues who provide a clearly shared vision for the whole school. The headteacher is rightly proud of Plymtree's reputation as a very inclusive school and the school's promotion of equality of opportunity is outstanding. Teamwork is evident in all the school's initiatives and all staff members contribute to their planning and development. Subject leaders have a satisfactory grasp of how lessons are taught and how pupils' learning needs to be supported in some areas. The school, however, recognises that it could make better use of its systems for assessment and tracking pupils' progress to more sharply identify areas for improvement. The school takes very good account of the views of parents and other stakeholders. This is reflected in turn in the very positive view that parents have of the school. One parent wrote: 'As my children have progressed through the school, they have thrived in a happy, stable and stimulating environment'. Governors question and challenge where needed and have a very clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Resources, including staff, are deployed well in order to achieve best value for

money. The school works very hard to overcome the limitations of its cramped accommodation, particularly the lack of a hall or playing field for physical education, by utilising its very good links with the local community. The school is well placed to improve further.





## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

### 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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 2 |
| 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                              | 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 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? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | 2 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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                     | 1   |
| 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**

- 16 November 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of Plymtree CofE Primary, Cullompton EX15 2JU  
I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleague and I very much enjoyed our visit. Plymtree is a good school. Your headteacher and staff care for you very well and give you good support to enable you to learn and enjoy your lessons. Teaching is good and as a result, you make good progress and standards by the end of the juniors are above average. Staff make sure that you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe and you do this well. You told us that you like school and there are lots of things to do and enjoy. I agree with you. Your behaviour is very good and you work hard and try to succeed in all that you do. I have asked your school to do two things to make it even better:
- help you to do better in maths and English in Years 1 and 2
- improve teachers' use of information they have about your work to make sure that you all make better progress. I am confident that, with your help, the school will improve still further. I wish you well in your future education. Yours sincerely Clive Lewis Lead Inspector