

# The Erme Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113254
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	325783
<b>Inspection date</b>	3 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anne Newall

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	140
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Maddaford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Hall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 May 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Station Road Ivybridge PL21 0AJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 892247
<b>Fax number</b>	01752 698568

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This small school is located in an area bordered by the River Erme, a paper mill and a park. In common with other schools in the area, it has a falling roll. The school uses the local park as a playground and for sports activities. Recent additions to the building and a newly refurbished library and computer suite have provided high quality resources. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. There is a higher than average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has an after-school club for pupils, which is managed by the governing body.

## 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. Parents describe a welcoming atmosphere where teachers are approachable and make time for them. One said, 'Both our children are very happy at The Erme and I think it is a reflection of how the staff make it a real community.' The school has prioritised making learning more enjoyable to motivate pupils. The leadership and all staff believe that this will prepare children to be more effective learners. A strength of the school is the wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Children join the school at a stage of development that is broadly in line with national expectations. Standards have improved over the past two years and are now broadly average by the end of Year 2. Standards remain broadly average by the end of Year 6, representing satisfactory progress. Pupils' personal development is good. They have good awareness of how to stay healthy and keep safe. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good, and their spiritual development satisfactory. Attendance is average, and is promoted by effective school procedures and links with the education welfare officer.

Lessons are well managed and enjoyable and most pupils participate enthusiastically. However, some pupils, particularly higher attainers, are not always provided with enough challenge to move them on in their learning. Recent improvements have led to a varied and stimulating curriculum which contributes well to pupils' development, and initiatives such as 'big writing' and 'enjoying reading' have helped to raise standards, indicating that the school has the capacity for further improvement. Care and support are good, and staff provide sound guidance to pupils on how to develop personally and as learners, ensuring that they feel secure. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, due to the prompt identification of their needs, the involvement of external agencies, and the provision of good, tailored support.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has been successful in establishing good links with a range of other professionals and organisations to ensure that pupils who need additional help receive it. The school has a satisfactory knowledge of its strengths and areas for development. However, monitoring and evaluation systems are underdeveloped because information available is not used systematically or rigorously enough by teachers, in their areas of leadership responsibility, to improve provision, especially the quality of teaching and learning. Good arrangements exist for tracking pupils' progress, although this information is not used to set targets which really challenge the pupils, particularly those who are higher attaining. The majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire hold positive views of the school. Parents are particularly pleased with the quality of care and their children's enjoyment of school. Initiatives such as 'family learning' have helped to engage parents with learning, to the benefit of their children. Governance is good, and governors are involved closely with the school, demonstrating a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. The after-school club, which is managed by the governors, is a valuable part of the school.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are enabled to settle quickly and securely as a result of the effective transition arrangements with the local pre-school and the warm relationships forged between school and parents. Close observation and assessment of children enable their individual needs to be met, and parents are encouraged to be closely involved in

their children's learning, for example in the 'post-it note' system of celebrating achievement and through regular sharing of the 'Learning Journey'.

Children join the school with skills and abilities broadly in line with nationally expected levels for their age, although there is considerable variation between children, and between different years of entry. Generally, the level of children's social and emotional skills and their communication skills are lower than expected. Well-planned and exciting activities capture the children's imagination, and are matched well to their interests and abilities. Together with good teaching and support from teaching assistants, this ensures that many children make good progress in their learning from their different starting points, and some make very good progress. Standards by the time they enter Year 1 are broadly average. The learning environment is well organised into different activity areas and promotes children's independence, and there is a good mix of adult-led activities and child-initiated work, with good use of the outdoor area. The children enjoy working together and display good behaviour and positive attitudes, which are reinforced by effective use of praise, although opportunities are sometimes missed to intervene and encourage them to choose appropriate activities and develop their use of language.

The children are well cared for, and careful consideration is given to promoting the children's safety, and to developing their own sense of safety and understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They make good progress in their personal development due to supportive, happy relationships. Good leadership is focused upon improving the provision further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Accelerate pupils' progress by improving the level of challenge in lessons, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Make better use of progress information to ensure pupils are set more demanding targets.
- Develop the role of leaders at all levels to include systematic monitoring of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and satisfactory progress overall by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. The standards reached at the end of Key Stage 1 are improving and are now in line with national averages. The steps taken to improve writing and reading have led to better progress in these areas and, although few children attain the higher level in reading and in mathematics, the proportion achieving the higher level in writing has increased and is broadly average. By the end of Key Stage 2, achievement is satisfactory and standards are again broadly average. Not all pupils reach their targets despite close tracking of their performance, and this is due primarily to a lack of challenge for the more able pupils and expectations of what pupils could achieve not being high enough. The school recognises that it should be aiming for higher standards, particularly for the more able pupils. Pupils with learning disabilities and/or difficulties already make good progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' social and moral development is promoted well by the school's family ethos. Their cultural development is strong, aided by active links with other schools in Europe and Africa, together with an interesting variety of visitors, such as the recent guest from the Middle East who spoke to the children about his country's traditions. Pupils say that bullying is rare and they feel safe in knowing who to turn to if they need help. They know about staying safe when using the internet. Although some parents commented that they thought behaviour was poor, there was no evidence in the inspection to support this view. Pupils now behave well in lessons and during playtimes. Pupils enjoy school, commenting that they would recommend it to other children. They mostly eat healthily, and all participate in physical activity for at least two hours each week. The school council is an effective means by which pupils are involved in decision-making and the local community, for example when deciding how to raise funds for their chosen charities. Pupils' satisfactory key skills mean that they are adequately prepared for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers plan lessons well and use a variety of styles to engage the children. Pupils are given opportunities to work together and help each other in their learning. Lessons are well supported by teaching assistants. Marking is helpful to children and most know what they need to do to improve. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was often good, and progress is improving, but learning overall is satisfactory because expectations of what pupils could achieve are not sufficiently challenging. Where teaching is strongest, work is well matched to pupils' needs and fully engages all pupils in learning; however, work samples show that children are not always challenged to make such good progress, especially those who are more able. Pupils' work does not always show sufficient care in presentation, and much use is made in some subjects of worksheets which do not require pupils to produce their own work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers have implemented a more thematic curriculum which is paying dividends by motivating and interesting the pupils. Although still in the early stages of development, links between subject areas are making learning more exciting and relevant. Well-targeted tasks and good support help pupils with learning difficulties to progress well and to enjoy full access to all the school does. Pupils now have more opportunities for writing, speaking and listening, and these are helping to improve their literacy skills. For example, a recent study about settlement on Dartmoor has sparked the pupils' interests and has helped to develop their skills in history and geography as well as providing opportunities for imaginative and descriptive writing. Recent developments in information and communication technology (ICT) are also beginning to raise standards. A particular strength is the wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities which enrich provision. The school has gained the International Schools Award, with modern languages and an understanding of the wider world being central to its work. There is a good programme for personal and social development.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Pupils feel well looked after because of good relationships with adults throughout the school. The quality of pastoral care and individual support is strong. The high quality support and guidance of the coordinator responsible for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities contributes to their good progress. There are effective strategies for promoting the social well-being of all pupils. The school has worked successfully with parents to encourage a greater partnership in their child's education through initiatives such as a homework programme using the internet. The school works well with external agencies to provide additional support when needed and has suitable policies for the safeguarding of pupils. Health and safety procedures are also effective. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle well and this has been recognised in the Healthy Schools Award. Academic guidance and support are satisfactory, but assessment and tracking procedures do not always lead to sufficiently challenging targets for some pupils.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher has been effective in creating a caring team of staff and governors who share a common sense of purpose and a commitment to developing motivated and confident children. They have gathered information to contribute to self-evaluation and used this to identify strategies for improvement that are beginning to result in better progress for pupils. For example, the emphasis on reading in the curriculum has raised attainment and enjoyment. However, self-evaluation does not fully involve all staff, and although the school has identified appropriate actions to raise standards, these are only recently beginning to show an impact. In particular, there is not enough evaluation of the day-to-day learning in classrooms to enable the leaders to maintain a focus upon its quality and spread best practice. The senior staff are aware that they need to raise the level of challenge and expectation, particularly for the higher attaining pupils, in order to raise standards further. Target setting is based on an analysis of the pupils' attainment and progress, but has not been sufficiently challenging to raise outcomes at the end of Year 6 above a satisfactory level. Governors fulfil their statutory duties; they bring a range of skills and are knowledgeable about the school. They are supportive of the headteacher and staff but do not provide sufficient challenge to raise standards. The school shows strong leadership in its provision and care for the more vulnerable pupils, and for the youngest children. Links with outside agencies are strong and the teachers are well supported in further training programmes. The school has a very inclusive nature and its contribution to community cohesion is good. Pupils make a good contribution to their local community and the school has valuable involvement with overseas communities; there are fewer opportunities for pupils to learn about life in a culturally diverse United Kingdom.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

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

4 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Erme Primary School, Ivybridge PL21 0AJ

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me and the other inspector when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed visiting you in your classrooms, and talking to you about your work and the things you like doing in school. Many of you told us how much you like your headteacher and the staff at school, and said you think they help you to learn. You particularly like the variety of visits and visitors, and the extra-curricular clubs. We agree with you that the curriculum is interesting and enjoyable, you get lots of exercise, and those of you who had a school dinner said it was delicious (I thought mine was very tasty).

We have judged your school to be satisfactory, which means that some things are good but some could be improved. We think you are well looked after at school, and learn how to play sensibly together and behave yourselves. The youngest children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although the progress of older pupils in the school is not as fast as it could be because you are not always given enough challenge in your work. Your teachers plan lessons which are interesting, and recent new ideas like the 'big writing' and 'enjoying reading' have helped you to improve your work, although we think you could present the work in your books more neatly. Those of you who have learning difficulties or disabilities are well cared for and make good progress.

To help all pupils to make better progress, we have asked your headteacher and staff to do the following:

- Make your work more challenging, especially for the more able pupils.
- Give you more demanding targets.
- Keep a close eye on teaching and learning so that they know exactly how well the lessons are helping you to progress.

You can help by making sure that you always do your best, showing that you take pride in your work by presenting it neatly, and by asking for harder work if you find things too easy.

With best wishes, and good luck for your future.

Yours faithfully

Anne Newall Lead inspector