

# Stoke Damerel Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113287
<b>Local Authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	325789
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Karl Sampson HMI

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)	305
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>	Blanca Del Cerro
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Marsh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 January 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>	Collingwood Road Stoke Plymouth PL1 5PA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 567686
<b>Fax number</b>	01752 500331

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a large primary school which has provision in the Reception Year for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and only a small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups are at the early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average. They mainly comprise those with speech, language and communication difficulties. Since the last inspection, two new assistant headteachers have been appointed to the leadership team.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement, especially for those who are higher attainers, and to the quality of teaching and learning.

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. When children join the school their standards are broadly in line with those expected for their age. As they progress through the school, pupils' achievement fluctuates and not all make the expected levels of progress when their starting points are taken into account. As a result, pupils' achievement is inadequate. Recent changes in the way that the school is led and managed are beginning to improve performance. For example, teachers are beginning to plan more closely together. Consequently, the rate of progress for some pupils is improving. However, the quality of teaching is inconsistent and is inadequate overall. In just under half of lessons seen, teachers did not use well enough what they knew about pupils to provide them with work that was sufficiently challenging. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they might. This is particularly evident with the higher attaining pupils who do not make enough progress between Years 1 and 6. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. A particular strength is the good pastoral care pupils receive which encourages them to develop their self-esteem and promotes their good social and emotional development. The school has a caring and inclusive ethos which helps those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. The curriculum is satisfactory and is supported by a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Despite recent improvement, senior leaders do not yet have a sufficiently precise understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are over generous in their evaluation of the school's performance. The senior leadership team is now more effective in gathering detailed data on pupils' performance and using it to raise teachers' expectations of pupil progress. However, it is not yet analysing information sharply enough to check that all the recently introduced strategies are successful in raising standards. In addition, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet sufficiently robust to ensure high quality teaching across the school. Governors are increasingly challenging the school to improve. Recent improvements in some aspects of teaching and the work of subject leaders to support more regular monitoring of teaching and learning are beginning to have a positive effect and demonstrate that the school has the capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children enter the school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for their age and the provision meets their needs satisfactorily. Satisfactory leadership ensures that the Early Years Foundation Stage runs smoothly on a daily basis. Children are happy, feel safe and secure, and enjoy the range of activities throughout the day. However, the lack of a secure outside play area restricts opportunities for children's physical play and development. Behaviour is good but on occasions, inappropriate behaviour from boys disrupts the learning of other children. Staff are committed to ensuring the well-being of children and relationships are good.

Children are given the opportunity to explore a range of activities that help them to make satisfactory progress in all areas of their learning.

The school is developing its procedures to assess children's attainment on entry and to track their progress, although these are not yet embedded fully across all areas of learning. The planning of activities generally matches tasks and activities to learners needs and abilities. However, in the case of a few children, often boys, this is not always as effective as it could be. Although there are planned opportunities for boys to sit still and develop their concentration, on occasions there is insufficient adult intervention to make sure that these opportunities are not missed. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those initiated by children, although at times opportunities are missed to reinforce the learning objectives of the task. Children's personal development is satisfactory and they are encouraged to become independent and take responsibility for themselves and their learning.

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

- Use assessment information more effectively to raise the level of challenge in lessons, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Monitor teaching and learning more thoroughly to ensure that they are of a consistently high quality across the school.
- Use data effectively and strategically to evaluate the impact of actions being taken to check they are raising standards.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Pupils make a satisfactory start in Reception and by the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly in line with the national averages. However, too few pupils gain the higher levels in writing and mathematics in teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1. This is especially true for boys. By the end of Year 6, results in national tests have fluctuated in recent years and are generally below average. Given pupils' starting points, this represents unsatisfactory progress. Although there has been recent improvement, the school is not able to demonstrate that satisfactory progress is sustained in all classes. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from the carefully planned extra support they receive and make good progress. Particularly noteworthy is the progress made by pupils with speech, communication and language difficulties as a result of the support they receive from highly trained teaching assistants. However, more-capable pupils do not achieve as well as they might and too few gain the highest levels, particularly in English.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are encouraged to discuss how their actions affect other people and understand the importance of valuing others. Pupils are able to share their problems and feel confident that any concerns they have will be dealt with. They are aware of the importance of different cultural traditions, although this is generally a weaker area of their development.

Most pupils enjoy their education and their behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance is good and pupils say that they like coming to school. In general, attitudes to learning are good although a significant minority become disengaged when the level of challenge in lessons is insufficient.

Pupils clearly understand how to keep themselves safe and use equipment sensibly. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and many take part in the sporting activities they are offered in extra-curricular clubs.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the community through the school council and by carrying out a range of responsibilities within the school. For example, they develop their roles as leaders through acting as 'peer mediators' and helping other pupils to resolve problems. The school council is proud of its work in introducing 'buddy benches' where pupils who feel lonely can show they would like to be included by others. Pupils develop their self-confidence through discussion and group work in lessons. This contributes to the acquisition of work-based skills and gives pupils a satisfactory preparation for their life beyond school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

Whilst there has been some recent improvement, for example, in the development of marking and feedback to support pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and learning is not consistently strong enough to tackle the legacy of underachievement. Teachers are working together more closely to plan lessons, and arrangements for individual assessment and tuition have been introduced. This is beginning to produce lessons that are more closely matched to pupils' individual needs, leading to higher levels of engagement, concentration and learning. However, these changes are not applied consistently in all lessons and in some classes, pupils do not build on what they have learned previously. In addition, there are still too many lessons where pupils are not engaged and challenged sufficiently, especially the higher attaining pupils who often find the work too easy. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together, with the result that those pupils who need additional help receive well planned and focused support during lessons and in special small support groups.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Curriculum planning has improved and is now satisfactory. The recent creation of planning teams for mixed-age classes, supported by a member of the senior leadership team, has strengthened the coordination of English, mathematics and science across the school. The curriculum provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop their enquiry skills through the use of computers to support learning in lessons.

The curriculum is enriched by a good range of clubs, visits, visitors and special events, although some pupils said they would like to go outside school more and make visits further away. The school uses local events, such as Hidden City Plymouth, to involve itself with local events and its community. Visits to local places of interest also feed into the curriculum, although they are not used enough to provide realistic contexts for pupils' research and writing. Visitors to the school contribute to pupils' personal development. For example, two Hindu visitors contributed successfully to broadening pupils' social, cultural and religious understanding through a range of engaging activities.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Procedures for safeguarding pupils, including health and safety policies and procedures, are in place and meet statutory requirements. Incidents of bullying are rare, but pupils know who they can talk to if such incidents arise.

The pastoral care and support provided by the school ensure that pupils are well cared for. There are good links with external agencies to support the wide range of pupils' needs. The arrangements for pupils to move to secondary schools are carefully managed. The use of a parent support adviser has been very effective in working with families, particularly in improving the attendance of some pupils who have a history of absence.

The recent changes to the school's arrangements for academic guidance are beginning to have an impact on pupils' progress, although inconsistencies remain. The marking of pupils' work in their books is often good, with clear feedback given to pupils and helpful suggestions on how they can improve their work. This is supported by the introduction of 'conferencing' sessions in which pupils engage in one-to-one discussions with teachers to talk about their progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leaders are focused on raising standards and work hard to ensure that the school's caring and supportive ethos is maintained. This is evident in their successful work to promote inclusion, as shown by the good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has adapted its work to meet the needs of its local circumstances and provides a satisfactory range of activities to promote community cohesion.

The school has only recently been successful in tackling pupils' academic underachievement. Senior leaders have previously held an over-generous view of the school's performance but, by improving effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, they are developing a more realistic view of its strengths and areas for development. They have introduced strategies that are beginning to improve learning and to help groups of pupils to catch up. Senior leaders monitor teaching and learning regularly, although its impact is limited as the focus is too often on what is being taught in lessons rather than what pupils are learning. Targets are now appropriately challenging and are now being used to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils' should achieve. However, data are not yet analysed thoroughly enough to check that the new strategies are sufficiently effective in raising standards quickly.

The governing body provides a satisfactory level of support and has a broad understanding of the school's work, which is recently reinforced by more frequent contact with teachers and a greater involvement in monitoring. They are now more focused on improving pupils' progress and is beginning to hold the school to account for its work.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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>	4
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

## 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	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

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

12 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stoke Damerel Primary School, Plymouth, PL1 5PA

- Thank you for making us so welcome on our recent visit to inspect your school. I thank those of you who talked to us about your work and life at the school. You were very polite and helpful. I am writing to let you know what we thought about your school.
- Your school is a friendly place, you enjoy coming to school and feel well cared for.
- You play your part in helping the school, for example through the school council.
- Your headteacher and staff care for you well and get help for you if you have a problem.
- You enjoy working on the computers and taking part in the sporting activities that are available.
- You have good opportunities to take responsibility and support each other, for example as peer mediators.
- You are given helpful suggestions about how you can improve your work.
- In some lessons, some of you are given work that is not hard enough.
- In classes throughout the school, some of you are not making fast enough progress to achieve the highest levels in your work.
- Because of the need to ensure that you all make the progress that you should in all classes, I have given the school what is called a 'notice to improve'. I have asked the headteacher and other school leaders to do three things to make it better.
- Use information on your progress to set your work at the right level.
- Check more closely how well you are learning in lessons, and make some of the good things that the school is doing happen in all classes.
- Use information about your progress to find the best ways to help you do as well as you can.

Inspectors will visit the school to check on progress. You can help by working hard and making the most of the learning opportunities offered to you.

Yours faithfully

Karl Sampson

Her Majesty's Inspector