

# Culmstock Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113071
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	338086
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Watts

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	106
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fiona Collier
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cathy Noble
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Culmstock Cullompton EX15 3JP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Twelve lessons or part lessons were observed and four teachers were seen. The inspection team observed the school's work and examined its policies, assessments, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils. There were informal conversations with parents and carers. The inspectors analysed 49 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and others by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection
- how well more able pupils are challenged and extended so that they attain as well as they can
- the effectiveness of action to improve provision and pupils' performance in writing

## Information about the school

Culmstock is much smaller than most primary schools. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The nature of these difficulties includes communication, language and emotional difficulties. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in Reception. The school is popular and oversubscribed, and attracts nearly half of its pupils from outside of the normal catchment. The current headteacher was appointed soon after the last inspection

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Strong leadership and a more settled teaching force have resulted in considerable improvements since the last inspection. Culmstock Primary is now a good school. There are some outstanding aspects to its work. High quality care, guidance and support and the school's extremely positive ethos make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are confident, friendly and polite. They relate very well to adults and to their peers. Behaviour throughout the school is often exemplary. Pupils feel extremely safe and show a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They thoroughly enjoy school and their attendance levels are high.

Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and an interesting curriculum. Most year groups enter Reception with knowledge and skills broadly expected for their age. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now good. Children are making good progress in most areas of learning and outstanding progress in their personal development.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average. A range of strategies have been successfully implemented to improve pupils' performance in writing. Pupils write interesting pieces for different purposes. Teachers are enthusiastic, and they establish high expectations and very good relationships with their pupils. Instructions and demonstrations promote learning well. Assessment is used well to plan teaching and match tasks to pupils' different abilities. As a result, pupils, including the more able, are challenged well and make good progress. Pupils' acquisition and application of more advanced skills such as critical thinking and research are less well developed. While community cohesion is promoted well on a local level, the curriculum is less effective in promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures and the wider world.

An experienced headteacher provides extremely good direction. With her staff, she has created a very positive atmosphere for pupils to learn in. She has effectively delegated responsibilities among a small team of dedicated teachers. Subject leaders are fully involved in the monitoring and development of their areas of responsibility. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve. Self-evaluation is accurate and the findings are used well to inform improvement planning. Effective action is taken to bring about improvements where needed. Since the last inspection, pupils' progress, teaching and the curriculum have all improved from satisfactory to good. Care, guidance and support have improved from good to outstanding. Parents and carers are very pleased with the care and education provided, and appreciate the improvements made

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase opportunities for pupils to acquire and apply more advanced skills such as critical thinking, research and independent study
- Extend the good work on local community cohesion in order to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures and the wider world.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their experiences at school and show very positive attitudes to learning. National test results, school assessments, pupils' work and the lessons seen indicate that attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Most groups of pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more able. Any variation in attainment between boys and girls is not significantly different from the national picture

Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening because of the regular opportunities they have to discuss their learning in pairs and small groups. By Year 6, most are articulate and confident speakers. The school's focus on talking is having a positive impact on their writing. Pupils enjoy reading the wide range of books available and benefit from the focused approach to the teaching of reading. Staff have worked hard to improve pupils' writing and the strategies adopted are working well. Pupils write extended pieces for different purposes and in various styles. In a Year 1 and 2 class, pupils were fully engaged and focused on planning and writing a description of an old house in a forest. They used openers such as 'when', 'next' and 'soon'. Their writing was enhanced by imaginative words and phrases. Connectives such as 'because' and 'eventually' were used well to join their ideas. Pupils apply and develop their writing skills well in other subjects. For example, in their study of the Romans, Year 6 produced impressive newspaper articles about the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. They used computer technology to import illustrations to their writing and produce a good quality newspaper finish.

In mathematics, pupils make good progress because of good teaching and interesting tasks that are well matched to their needs. They use and apply numeracy skills competently to solve problems. In Year 3 and 4 classes, pupils used a range of strategies for solving subtraction problems. In Year 5 and 6, pupils applied their previous learning to find the perimeter and area of various two dimensional shapes.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their consideration and support for others. Collaborative working is very well developed. While satisfactory, pupils' knowledge of non-Western cultures is less strong than other elements of their personal development. Pupils feel extremely safe and well cared for at school and are confident that there is always a trusted grown up they can turn to if they are worried or upset. Pupils take on additional responsibilities such as serving on the school council. They support those less well off by raising funds for national and overseas charities and participating in local community events. Pupils are well prepared

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for the future and their economic well-being. Their personal and social skills are extremely well developed. They are making good progress in applying literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers' enthusiasm and secure subject knowledge motivates the pupils. The constructive use of humour further engages their attention. The purpose of the lesson is effectively shared with the class so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Teachers are particularly successful in modelling and demonstrating to pupils. They show how to construct interesting sentences and how to carry out mathematical operations. These promote learning well. A pupil told one of the inspectors, 'Our teachers make learning easier for you.' There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their work. Sharp assessment and good planning mean that teachers provide challenging tasks that are well suited to pupils' needs. More able pupils are extended and those who need additional support receive good guidance from teaching assistants. Pupils are set clear individual learning targets in writing and mathematics so they know

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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what to do to improve.

The curriculum promotes good progress for pupils and contributes well to their personal development. Initiatives to further develop pupils' writing are having a positive impact on pupils' performance. There are good links between subjects which add meaning and relevance to learning. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection and this is used well to support pupils' learning. The teaching of French contributes well to pupils' language and cultural development. Popular clubs such as art, football, netball, writing and rugby are enjoyed by pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument such as guitar, clarinet, flute, keyboards and saxophone

Care, guidance and support strongly underpin the school's very positive and welcoming atmosphere. The well-organised, very safe and secure environment provided is recognised by pupils, parents and carers. As parents and carers commented, 'Teachers are very caring and sensitive to a child's needs' and 'Staff are very approachable.' Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are carefully assessed and their support programmes ensure that they make good progress. Another parent wrote, 'Staff are hugely supportive and proactive in meeting my child's needs.' High expectations by all staff and consistently implemented procedures lead to outstanding behaviour. In partnership with other agencies, the school is particularly successful in supporting pupils and their families needing extra help.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has brought considerable experience to the school and has successfully steered the improvements needed with staff and governors. Under her leadership, subject coordinators have been developed and empowered. Roles and responsibilities are distributed effectively and all leaders play a full part in monitoring and improving the school's performance. All leaders are promoting high quality provision and positive outcomes for pupils.

Governors make a valuable contribution to the school's effectiveness. They are supportive and provide constructive challenge in order to hold the school to account. Members of the governing body possess considerable expertise in areas such as financial management, staff recruitment, and health and safety. This expertise is used well to benefit the school. All statutory requirements are met.

Considerable emphasis is placed on safeguarding. Policies and practice to protect and

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safeguard children are of a high quality. Staff, governors, and parents and carers are involved in rigorous risk assessments. All staff are very well trained in this area and safe practices are promoted through the school's curriculum.

Equality of opportunity is promoted successfully and the staff strive to ensure that all groups do as well as they can. The school has a good understanding of the community it serves and promotes community cohesion well. The curriculum is less effective in promoting different cultures and pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider global community. School leaders have plans to tackle this. The partnership with parents and carers is very positive and productive. Parents and carers provide good support to the school. For example, they organise and run a number of extra-curricular activities.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Effective leadership and good planning has brought about good improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good induction arrangements and the strong partnership with parents and carers and playgroup settings help children to settle quickly. They make outstanding progress in their personal and social development because of the exceptionally good relationships between adults and children and the excellent attention given to care and welfare. Children feel safe and secure, and grow in confidence. They learn and play exceptionally well together. Their behaviour and sense of responsibility are outstanding.

An interesting range of learning activities is provided in and out of the classroom. Children thoroughly enjoy their learning. Assessment information is used well to plan



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teaching and learning. Children receive good teaching and there is an effective blend of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Children have good opportunities to explore, be creative and to work independently. Some children enter Reception with limited language skills and adults successfully integrate language development into most activities so children make good progress in this area. The teaching of letter sounds receives good attention and children are making good progress in acquiring early writing skills. The outdoor learning areas are spacious and well used. The school is improving the planning of outdoor activities so they are more closely linked to the main theme. A parent summed up the views of many, stating, 'My child has been helped to gain confidence by the lovely staff. He loves school and is thriving in an exciting and stimulating early years unit.'

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

The inspection team received a good response to the survey with about two thirds of parents and carers returning the questionnaire. All parents and carers who returned them are very happy with their child's experience at the school. They are particularly pleased with safety in school, the sense of enjoyment, the quality of teaching, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the leadership of the school. The inspection team agrees with these positive views. A very small minority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire do not believe that the school helps pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle, meets the needs of individual pupils or deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the school strives to meet pupils' different needs and most pupils are making good progress. Healthy lifestyles are generally promoted well, although there have been a few conflicting messages about sweets in school. Most pupils are extremely well behaved. The very few pupils with challenging behaviour are effectively managed and supported very well by staff.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Culmstock Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school

The inspection team received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 102 pupils registered at the school

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	59	19	39	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	61	18	37	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	43	27	55	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	43	26	53	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	55	18	37	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	43	26	53	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	55	19	39	2	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	43	23	47	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	45	23	47	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	41	21	43	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	37	24	49	0	0	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	29	59	16	33	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	65	17	35	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



12 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Culmstock Primary School, Cullompton, EX15 3JP

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found. Yours is a good school. It has some outstanding features.

These are the school's main strengths

- You thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is high.
- The school is an extremely pleasant place in which to learn.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start.
- You are making good progress because of the good teaching.
- A good range of learning activities is provided.
- You get on extremely well with each other and behaviour is outstanding.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit
- You feel extremely safe at school because the teachers and other adults take excellent care of you and provide strong support and guidance.
- You make positive contributions to the school and to the local community
- The school is very well led by your headteacher and she receives good support from other staff.

We have asked the headteacher and teachers to do a few things to improve areas of the school.

- Teachers should provide more opportunities for you to learn and practise advanced skills such as critical thinking, research and independent study
- More topics should be included to increase your knowledge and understanding of different cultures and how people live in the wider world.

You can help by continuing to work hard. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector

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