

Combe Martin Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113145
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338105
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Judith Goodchild

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 of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Lawrence-Bardsley
Headteacher	Jo (Joanne) Walkden
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. During the inspection, fourteen lessons, seven teachers and an assembly were observed. Pupils' books were inspected and the school's pupil assessment data were analysed. Meetings about aspects of the school's work were held with a group of pupils, members of the governing body, the headteacher and senior staff. Inspectors also had discussions with the School Improvement Partner and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors scrutinised key strategic documents, including those relating to safeguarding, governing body meetings and reports from external partners. Inspection questionnaires were completed by 33 parents and carers. The inspectors also looked at questionnaires completed by staff and by pupils in Years 3 to 6.

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

- the reasons for the significant underachievement of pupils in Year 2 over several years and in 2009 for pupils in Year 6
- the progress the school is making in mathematics.

Information about the school

Combe Martin is a smaller than average primary school. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2009. The majority of pupils are White British. A higher number of pupils than the national average join the school throughout the school year. A pre-school and SureStart Children's Centre share the school site but were not inspected.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Pupils' attainment is low and the quality of their learning and progress is inadequate. The lack of secure information about pupils' starting points when they begin in the Reception class and shortcomings in assessment systems to track their progress mean that school leaders have inadequate and an inaccurate knowledge of pupils' learning. Attainment at the end of Year 2 has been significantly below the national average for several years, apart from 2008. Over the last three years, pupils' attainment in Year 6 has declined and in 2009 was significantly below average in mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory and assessment information is not used consistently to plan lessons to meet the range of learning needs in each class. This leads to variation in the rate of progress pupils make across the school and overall achievement that is inadequate. Where teaching does not challenge pupils, their interest wanes and behaviour deteriorates. However, when pupils were observed at lunch and break times, their behaviour and relationships were good, with older pupils acting as play buddies and supporting younger ones. Attendance levels are well below the national average.

The new headteacher, the School Improvement Partner and the governing body correctly identified that the school needed additional support to halt the downward trend. Since September 2009, the local authority has been working closely with the school. The initial focus has been on improving the quality of teaching and the management skills of subject and key stage coordinators. However, inspection evidence shows that, despite intensive support, teaching has not significantly improved and middle leaders are not carrying out their management roles effectively. Some intervention strategies are beginning to have an impact, such as booster groups in Years 1 and 6 and programmes in Years 1 and 5 designed to improve weaknesses in mathematics. The provisional outcomes of the national tests in 2010 show an improvement in reading in Year 2 and mathematics in Year 6. However, analysis of progress data shows that in some year groups, pupils do not make enough progress. The school has made insufficient progress in resolving the issues raised by the last inspection. Though the school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of its present circumstances and leaders are aware of the actions they need to take, its capacity to sustain improvement is inadequate.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring pupils' work is assessed regularly and accurately
 - ensuring that assessment is then used consistently to plan lessons at the appropriate level for pupils' age and ability, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - improving the quality and frequency of marking so that pupils are clear about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.
- Develop the effectiveness of middle leadership by:
 - ensuring they fully understand the accountabilities of their roles
 - ensuring data is accurate and analysing it more rigorously to track the progress of all groups of pupils within their areas of responsibility
 - rigorously monitoring and driving improvement in the quality of teaching in their area of responsibility.
- Improve pupils' attendance by improving monitoring and working with pupils and their families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Improve the provision in the Foundation Stage by ensuring that assessment information is accurate and used to plan activities that meet the learning needs of children.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Most pupils do not make enough progress in their learning although they are keen and eager to learn when given the opportunity. Pupils have well developed social skills and work well together in groups. While progress is satisfactory in some lessons, in others, work set is either too easy for pupils or they are unable to complete the task. This was particularly evident in mixed age classes with the consequence that their behaviour deteriorated and learning was unsatisfactory. This was not always effectively managed by teachers.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and really enjoy the after school-clubs and visits. Older pupils were able to talk with enthusiasm about their residential visit. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves safe. When given the opportunity they willingly accept responsibilities. They act as reading buddies to Reception children and are being trained as sports leaders so they can organise games at lunchtimes. However pupils do not have a forum for them to be consulted through or where they can express their views regularly about school issues because the School Council is currently inactive. Pupils sell fruit at break and make compost from the waste for the eco-garden, which gives them an understanding of the importance of recycling. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their economic awareness are too limited and this, together with weak literacy and numeracy skills and low attendance, means pupils are not well prepared for their future lives. Pupils are involved with events in the

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local community but their understanding of the different cultures within the United Kingdom is too limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Although a small number of lessons seen during the inspection were judged to be good, a significant number were inadequate. Weaknesses in teaching centre around the limited use of assessment to plan work appropriate for the age range of the class and for individual learning needs. Often tasks are not sufficiently interesting to challenge and engage pupils in their learning. Expectations of what pupils could achieve by the end of the lesson are too low, with the result that pupils do not make the expected gains in their learning. Pupils' work is not systematically marked to make sure they know what progress they are making and how to improve their work. Where teaching is good, lessons are fun and there is good consolidation of learning at the appropriate level. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed, clear about learning objectives and make a good contribution towards pupils' learning.

The curriculum is suitable for most pupils with some subjects taught through a range of

¹ 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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topic-based activities. However, planning is not monitored to ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are applied in different contexts or that other key skills, such as information and communication technology, are developed. Links with the secondary school provide additional physical education opportunities.

The introduction of new behaviour management procedures provides good support for pupils with behavioural or emotional difficulties and has successfully reduced disruption in lessons. Exclusions have also significantly reduced this year. There are good links with health professionals, other agencies and pupils' families. Despite this, there are inadequate procedures to monitor and improve attendance and to ensure that pupils catch up with work they have missed. Provision to meet the care and welfare needs of pupils is satisfactory as are the arrangements for transition to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The commitment and drive of the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is impressive. She has put in place a range of strategies to improve aspects of the school's work, such as the provision for safeguarding, which is now satisfactory. The governing body has played an active role within the school, is well aware of the decline in its performance, and is instrumental in involving the local authority to help reverse the downward trend. However, there are historical weaknesses to address. Currently the school's ability to eradicate discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all is unsatisfactory. The monitoring of teaching quality and tracking pupils' progress rests solely with the headteacher, supported by the local authority's targeted intervention and support team. The school has developed good links with its local community but is not sufficiently involved with other national and international communities and the provision for promoting community cohesion is inadequate.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3

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	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and experiences that appear to be broadly typical for their age, but these cannot be accurately validated because of inadequacies in the procedures for assessing children's attainment on entry. Children make satisfactory progress by the time they start Year 1 with 70 percent being assessed either at or above age-related expectations. However, the learning journals that record children's progress are disorganised and work is not annotated effectively, especially for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The local authority's recent moderation visit identified inaccurate assessment against the early learning goals and a need for staff to improve their observation skills. For example, teachers had been over-generous in their assessments of children's writing.

Reception children are taught alongside a group of Year 1 pupils. Planned activities are the same for both groups and do not take account of their different learning needs. Good links with the on-site pre-school group help to prepare children well for starting school. Children settle quickly into the secure learning environment, enjoy coming to school and the activities provided. Effective systems are in place to ensure the care and welfare of children. The outdoor space is very restricted and there are too few opportunities for physical play or the use of equipment such as bicycles or climbing frames. Despite these limitations, behaviour is good, children play well together and are encouraged to develop their social skills through collaborative activities.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4

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Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel their child enjoys school and is kept safe and they are happy with their child's experience. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about the progress their child is making, the information they receive about this and how they can support their child's learning. Preparation for future life is not considered to be strong. A small number of parents feel the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors agree that children are not making sufficient progress in their learning. The school is aware that it needs to re-establish links with parents and carers so they are fully informed about their child's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Combe Martin 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. Not all respondents answered every question.

The inspection team received 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 166 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	24	24	73	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	9	27	24	73	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	4	12	25	76	4	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	27	19	58	5	15	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	24	18	55	3	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	15	22	67	5	15	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	18	26	79	1	3	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)	3	9	18	55	4	12	2	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	4	12	26	79	2	6	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	21	22	67	3	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	9	14	42	8	24	4	12
The school is led and managed effectively	8	24	17	52	1	3	3	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	27	20	61	1	3	2	6

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). 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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



3 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Combe Martin Primary School, Ilfracombe EX34 0DF

I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and for talking to us about your school and your work.

Most of you who completed the questionnaire and spoke to inspectors said that you enjoy school and feel safe. You particularly like visits to places of interest and the residential trip for Year 6. A few of you expressed some concern about behaviour in class. We found that where lessons are exciting and interesting, the behaviour in class is often good but it deteriorates if you find the work too easy or the task does not interest you enough.

We found that your school is not currently giving you a good enough education and you are not making sufficient progress in your work. The standard of teaching you receive is variable. To help the school improve and make the progress it needs, we have decided that your school requires 'special measures' which means that it will be monitored and supported in the future. These are the improvements we have asked the school to make:

- make sure that staff with middle leadership roles and responsibilities ensure that all teaching is of a good standard and that assessment of your progress is used to plan lessons that help you make better progress in your work
- improve the marking of your work so you know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve
- raise the level of attendance of all pupils
- improve the quality of provision in the Reception class to make sure that the progress children in this class make is recorded accurately.

I wish you all the best in your future studies and thank you again for being so polite and courteous.

Yours sincerely

Judith Goodchild

Lead inspector

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