

# Laira Green Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113278
<b>Local Authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	338134
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Sadler

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>	278
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kate Meredith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Daisy Bailey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	0 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Bramley Road Laira Plymouth PL3 6BP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with staff and groups of pupils, and telephone conversations with governors. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. These included records of pupils' progress, policies and planning documentation including that relating to safeguarding pupils. Questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 72 parents were analysed.

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

- pupils' attainment and progress, especially in English and mathematics across the school
- the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in communication, language and literacy, and the quality of provision for them
- the quality of teaching and learning and the impact on it of monitoring and evaluation
- the quality and impact of leadership and management, especially in relation to ambition and drive, the quality and impact of self-evaluation, and of governance and safeguarding.

## Information about the school

The school is of average size and serves a long-established suburb of Plymouth. Most pupils are of White British ethnicity. The proportion with special educational needs, mostly moderate learning difficulties, or with disabilities, is average. Few pupils are at an early stage of learning English.

The school shares its site with a children's centre and makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in its Reception classes. The governors are establishing an educational trust with other partners to provide pre-school education and childcare. The headteacher took up her post in September 2009 following a year during which the deputy headteacher was acting headteacher. The school holds the International Schools, Healthy Schools and other awards.

**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?**

**3**

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

**3**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school that is improving. It has a number of good features including pupils' good behaviour, especially in lessons. Pupils enjoy learning and, while academic progress is satisfactory overall, many make good progress, especially in English. They feel safe and have a good understanding of how to stay safe, such as when using the internet. They also have a good understanding of how to keep healthy. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and wider communities and have a well-developed understanding of, and respect for, different cultures and faiths. This is due to the school's effective work in promoting community cohesion which is reflected in the recent International Schools Award. Pupils receive good care, guidance and support, and staff know them and their parents well. The curriculum is a strength. In particular, many opportunities are provided to develop creativity skills and to learn modern foreign languages. The school works well with its many partners and takes all the necessary steps to keep children safe.

The new headteacher is already demonstrating effective leadership through an analysis of strengths and weaknesses and by taking action, for instance, to improve teaching and subject leadership. Currently, the school does not have an accurate picture of children's skills and abilities when they start school, but observations of their work by inspectors suggested that these are broadly as expected. Pupils leave at the end of Year 6 having attained standards in national tests that are average, representing satisfactory progress overall.

While the impact of teaching on pupils' progress is currently satisfactory, the quality of much of that observed was good or outstanding, especially for the older pupils. This reflects recent improvements and a situation in some classes where teachers are addressing past underachievement. Assessment is used well to promote individual pupils' progress, but analysis of data to determine the overall impact of school policies is less effective. For example, attendance has declined and is now low, partly due to the number of family holidays taken in term time. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff work hard to promote children's learning but not all are familiar with current practice designed to promote their independence. Occasionally, learning activities finish too quickly and too much time is spent, for example, in preparing for the lunch break.

While past monitoring and evaluation have seen some successes, such as improvements to standards of mathematics between 2008 and 2009, there has been insufficient precision to clearly identify all potential weaknesses. Governors and some staff have had limited input into evaluation procedures. However, the skills and enthusiasm of senior leaders, coupled with increasing rigour and understanding with which governors undertake their work, mean that the school has a satisfactory and developing capacity

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for further improvement.

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

- Improve the quality and impact of monitoring and evaluation by:
  - analysing data more thoroughly in order to identify the key issues and priorities for the school
  - involving the school community at all levels in the identification of strengths and weaknesses.
- By July 2011 ensure that targets for attendance are met by:
  - the use of appropriate strategies to encourage good attendance and in particular to discourage the taking of family holidays during school time
  - using data rigorously to identify trends of attendance by individuals and groups of pupils.
- Improve outcomes and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that:
  - staff have a clear picture of children's skills and abilities when they start school
  - all staff have a good understanding of recommended approaches to early years education
  - time is always used to best effect.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>3</b>
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In the Reception classes, children make satisfactory progress in their learning. At the end of Year 2 in 2009 pupils attained average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This was a considerable improvement on previous years, when standards at this point had been considerably below average. At the end of Year 6 in 2009, pupils attained average standards in national tests in English, mathematics and science and the targets set were met. In mathematics especially, this was an improvement on 2008 and demonstrated the success of steps taken to raise standards in the subject.

Historically there has been a view that children start school with levels of skill and knowledge below those expected, but the evidence available and inspectors' observations show this is not the case. Overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress. The current progress of pupils in Years 4 to 6 is good, but they are catching up following slower progress when they were younger. Often in classes for the older pupils, good classroom relationships and interesting tasks lead to rapid progress in lessons, as where lower attaining Year 6 pupils made rapid progress in understanding complex sentences and the use of connectives in English. This was an example of pupils' better progress in English than in mathematics. Boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, all make similar levels of progress. There is evidence of good progress in subjects such as art, music and physical education.

Pupils behave well. This is evident not only in lessons but also on special occasions, such

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as when they were asked to observe a minute's silence in the playground for Remembrance Day, which they all did respectfully. They say there is some bullying, but that it is generally dealt with effectively, although the school's policy on this issue requires updating. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, for example as school council members, prefects, playground friends, and by taking part in music and drama events with other local schools. All these activities contribute to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Exceptionally over the last year, pupils' attendance has declined to below average from its previously average level, and its improvement is now a matter of urgency for the school. While persistent absence is challenged, declining attendance within the average range is not spotted and tackled quickly enough. While this has an impact on the development of the skills pupils will need in later life, levels of literacy, numeracy, computer skills and independence are such that the overall development of these skills is satisfactory.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

<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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Teaching, while satisfactory overall, is improving rapidly under the leadership of the new headteacher. In Years 4 to 6 it is universally good, with some that is outstanding. A notable feature is that pupils' enthusiasm often grows during the lesson as their understanding develops. An example was a debate among Years 4 and 5 pupils about the relationship between the numbers 2, 5 and 8. Teachers use questioning and information and communication technology (ICT) well. They have very good relationships with pupils, using humour appropriately to engage their attention. Teaching assistants provide good support, especially where they work throughout the class supporting pupils of all abilities. Where teaching is less effective, this is because the purpose of the activity is unclear to pupils due to lack of clarity in the teacher's explanation. This leads to confusion and wasted time and happens more frequently in the Reception Year to Year 3 than in Years 4 to 6. Marking and individual targets are used well to show pupils how to improve their work and they generally have a good understanding of how to use these, especially in Years 4 to 6.

The rich curriculum is generally well matched to pupils' needs. It gives them a good variety of experience, for example through creative and sporting opportunities, trips and visits, and a selection of clubs and activities. The relative weakness is in the insufficient level of challenge sometimes offered to the highest attaining pupils in some lessons, although there is a good range of additional activities to develop their individual talents. Pupils are well cared for and this is appreciated by parents and the pupils themselves. There are effective partnerships with external agencies, although work is needed to improve attendance levels. There are good relationships with local secondary schools and the school has many examples of success achieved with pupils who have been at risk of exclusion from other schools.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</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>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Past weaknesses, especially in the quality and impact of monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, have restricted the impact of leadership and management on pupils' outcomes. Nevertheless, the deputy headteacher continued to move the school forward during his period of acting headship, and dealt successfully with major challenges. The new headteacher has brought renewed vitality, and is placing an appropriately high priority on developing the skills of middle leaders. Evaluation of the school's work is improving, although the use of data to analyse strengths and weaknesses remains

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underdeveloped.

There are good relationships with parents. The school's response to a major challenge which led to the enforced closure of the on-site pre-school, not managed by the school, has led to much praise from parents and external partners. The governing body is well led, and is reorganising to offer a better level of challenge to the school by playing a more active part in monitoring and evaluation. Rightly, a current high priority is to reinstate pre-school education on the site through the formation of an educational trust. This is strongly supported by parents who are anxious to see a rapid outcome.

The school rightly places a very high priority on ensuring pupils are safe, and all requirements for this are in place. The school has also greatly strengthened its contribution to community cohesion, especially in the local area but also more widely, as is demonstrated by its recent International Schools award. Pupils have a good understanding of matters of cultural diversity and equality of opportunity, demonstrating the school's good promotion of these issues.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</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>2</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>3</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enjoy school and behave well, but do not always learn all they could from activities as adults sometimes intervene too quickly, limiting their opportunities to explore and develop their independence. Staff give good support to individuals but sometimes when working with larger groups they lack the knowledge required to develop children's learning. Too much time is sometimes spent on low-level activities such as getting ready for lunch.



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Resources are plentiful and of good quality, and provision for children's welfare and safety is good. While individual assessment is carried out well, there is insufficient analysis to identify areas for improvement linked to improving children's progress. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

### **Views of parents and carers**

Parents have a positive view of the school. They are wholly positive about the teaching and their children's progress. A number expressed appreciation for the way the events that led to the closure of the pre-school were handled. 'The school was very supportive and understanding towards all pupils, staff and parents', was a typical comment. A minority feel the school does not deal well with poor behaviour and bullying. While inspectors found no direct evidence to support these views, they agree that policies in this area are in need of review and updating. Other areas of dissatisfaction were expressed by small minorities, and followed no particular theme.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Laura Green 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 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 278 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	53	31	44	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	51	34	48	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	44	35	50	2	3	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	41	41	59	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	47	38	54	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	40	38	54	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	45	36	51	3	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)	25	37	43	63	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	36	45	64	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	27	38	57	9	13	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	31	43	63	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	46	33	48	1	1	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	49	33	47	3	4	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.**



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Laira Green Primary School, Plymouth PL3 6BP

We enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. We would like to thank those of you who gave up your time to talk to us. Yours is a satisfactory school, with many good features. What we liked most about it was your good behaviour, especially in your lessons, which most of you obviously enjoy. We were impressed by the way you stood respectfully for the minute's silence on Remembrance Day. You know how to stay healthy and safe, and the adults look after you well.

You make satisfactory progress in your work and reach average standards by the time you leave Year 6. Some of your work is really good. I was especially impressed by some of Year 6 pupils' writing about the highwayman. You also know and understand your targets, and some of you make helpful comments about each other's work.

The teaching is satisfactory and a lot of it is good. Your teachers often make you laugh, so you listen to what they say. You have lots of interesting activities in subjects like art and music. The headteacher, staff and governors have lots of good links, especially with the children's centre and other schools, so you will feel confident when you go to secondary school. Your parents think highly of the school because the staff take good care of you and respect their views.

We have asked the school to do three things. We have asked them to find out more about what is good about the school and what could be better. They might ask what you think! We have asked them to improve your attendance, and you can help by always coming to school unless you are ill. We have also asked that some of the activities in Reception do more to help the children make good progress.

Good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler

Lead Inspector

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