

Pilgrim Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113282
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	338135
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Pope
Headteacher	Susan Jones
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documents including the school's records of pupils' progress and its monitoring activities, school policies and notes of procedures, teachers' plans and 122 parental questionnaires.

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

- the attainment on entry and progress made by different groups of pupils, particularly between those who arrive as older pupils and those who have attended from the Early Years Foundation Stage
- standards and progress in writing across the school
- features of pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support received, to check whether they are good or outstanding
- the consistency in the quality of teaching between classes
- the rigour of checks the school makes on its own performance and how well the information gained is used to raise standards.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average although numbers are rising steadily. Many pupils arrive and leave throughout the school year and only a small minority stay in the school for all their primary years. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than usually found as is the proportion of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is greater than average. The majority of these needs relate to speech, language and communication difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught together in one class. Older pupils are mainly in classes of one age group except in Year 4, where they share a class with either Year 3 or Year 5 pupils. There is also a nurture group four days a week for five pupils from this school and five from other local schools. There have been significant staff changes in the last two years, including within the senior management team. The school has a Healthy Schools award.

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

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving and has many good features but also some areas that need to improve. The outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils are tangible in every aspect of school life. Pupils and their parents recognise this, with unanimous agreement on this aspect by pupils in the inspectors' survey. The staff team works very effectively to meet the particular needs of children whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Throughout the school, pupils' personal development is good, with almost all pupils behaving well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and a harmonious, caring family atmosphere pervades the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress from their often low starting points but this masks a complicated picture as progress is frequently good in lessons, but is not sustained over time on account of high levels of pupil mobility and associated disruptions to learning. There is an upward trend in standards but they remain low at the end of Year 6, particularly in writing but also in mathematics. Very few pupils attain standards above those expected for their age.

There is much good teaching, but although it is improving, a few inconsistencies remain and expectations are not consistently high. In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not match work closely enough to the full range of pupils' abilities and more able pupils in particular are insufficiently challenged. Marking of work and feedback to pupils about their learning are improving significantly but are not totally consistent in quality. Pupils told inspectors that their teachers help them, as indeed they do, and much marking is becoming good. However, in some classes feedback lacks sufficient clarity or detail to explain the next steps in learning or how to improve. In a few classrooms there are insufficient displays of pupils' good writing or tips on how to improve writing. The good curriculum is carefully planned and is enriched well to extend pupils' experiences. While children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress overall, the lack of an all-weather outdoor shelter limits the range of experiences and opportunities for these children to move freely in and out of doors.

Leadership by the headteacher and the recently configured leadership team is good with a clear focus on raising standards and promoting pupils' well-being. Considerable attention is given to managing the high rate of pupil mobility and specific pupils' special educational needs. The careful deployment of staff helps minimise disruption to learning for the whole class. Appropriately high expectations of staff and pupils and frequent checks on practice are enabling leaders to make a significant difference to the quality of provision. This, in turn, is leading to accelerated progress by pupils, despite their low starting points and high levels of mobility. The school has an accurate view of its performance and has worked resolutely to address previously identified weaknesses.

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New initiatives, for example assessment techniques and the way progress is shared with pupils, are being carefully introduced and the school is well placed to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of pupils who attain and exceed average standards in writing and mathematics by at least ten percentage points in each of the next two years in all year groups.
- Ensure teaching in the majority of lessons is good or better in all classes and that teachers consistently:
 - match work to the full range of abilities so that all pupils, but particularly those who are more able, are consistently challenged and extended in their learning
 - provide detailed feedback to explain how pupils can improve
 - ensure classrooms contain examples of high quality writing and clear guidance on how to improve writing.
- Provide an all-weather outdoor shelter in the Early Years Foundation Stage to extend the range of play and learning experiences and opportunities for independent free flow in and out of doors.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Standards are rising. Nevertheless they remain low, especially in writing, but also in mathematics and to a degree in science. No pupils exceeded national expectations at the end of Year 2 in the last two years, and very few by the end of Year 6. However, work seen during the inspection in Years 2 and 6 is closer to national expectations, especially in reading and writing in Year 2, and in mathematics in Year 6. Progress by most pupils is frequently good in individual lessons, for example in Year 2 pupils competently used describing words to improve their writing and in Year 6 they skilfully identified features of fiction. Over time, although satisfactory, progress is accelerating securely as a result of effective planning and carefully targeted support. The skilled teaching assistants are deployed well, often with small groups of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enabling many of these pupils to progress well. Many of the pupils who are at an early stage of learning English also make good progress. Frequent arrivals and departures of pupils have an adverse impact on overall progress, and those fairly new to the school generally make less progress than pupils who stay at the school for their entire primary education.

While achievement is satisfactory, pupils enjoy much of their work in school and the special activities. Attendance is improving and is now average. Nearly all pupils take pride in the many ways they contribute to the school and wider community, for example as school councillors or buddies. They take a lead in researching options for improvements to the playground, deciding which charities to support, and participating in local events such as Plymouth's Respect Festival. These real-life experiences, pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their good personal development help ensure pupils

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are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education despite relatively low literacy skills. Pupils are at ease in the culturally diverse school community and celebrate their differences. They sensitively embrace new arrivals, who value their mentors, and protect those perceived to be vulnerable or needing support. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and are keen to participate in active sport. They all report feeling safe in school and are very clear about the high levels of care and support they receive from the extensive staff team.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The excellent care, guidance and support for all pupils reflect the absolute commitment to the school being fully inclusive. Governors and leaders deploy a well-trained staff team in response to the pupils' needs, for example through the very effective nurture group, learning mentor, school counsellor and extensive team of assistants. The school works very effectively in partnership with external professionals to meet individual pupils' specific needs, and supports parents and families well in this process. Despite the presence of pupils with challenging behaviour and social and/or emotional problems,

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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sensitive yet firm management avoids exclusions and integrates these pupils well into school life.

Teachers and their assistants work well together to establish good relationships and a working atmosphere in lessons, managing behaviour well. Innovative approaches are being developed to plan a broad curriculum with themes linking subjects and carefully charted skills designed to secure progress over time. The curriculum is carefully adapted to offer good opportunities for drama and to extend speech and language skills. Computers are used well across the curriculum in teaching and learning. Pupils are encouraged to help plan what it is they will learn and this further boosts their positive attitudes.

Teachers frequently motivate pupils through stimulating activities such as when using signs and actions to help re-tell a story in English, or sorting and classifying materials in pairs in science. Teachers regularly assess pupils' learning, and frequently plan different activities for various groups according to their abilities. However, this is not sustained sufficiently throughout lessons in all classes. This slows the progress at times, especially of the more able, often during lengthy introductions and review sessions. These more able pupils are not fully extended or given the opportunity to take more responsibility for their learning. Most, but not all, teachers are implementing the school's policy on marking and providing clear feedback about how to improve. New strategies are being introduced to promote writing, including the display of prompts and ideas as well as examples of good writing. They are making a difference to pupils' progress but some are too new to have made a substantial difference to standards. The curriculum is adapted well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities but there has been less focus on adaptations to meet the needs of the most able. Ongoing staff training includes how best to support those pupils who speak little English, and resources to support this group are being strengthened. The school is committed to widening pupils' horizons and an extensive programme of visitors, visits and special events enriches the curriculum.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction and ensures a strong drive towards improving the school. She makes astute judgements when monitoring teaching and is robust in the way she follows up issues in need of improvement. The headteacher is supported well by other leaders, several of whom are new to their roles, and together

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they are determined to raise standards. The staff work effectively as a team and share a common set of values. There are frequent checks on the school's performance, increasingly involving a broad cross-section of staff. Pupils' progress is tracked systematically and analysed. Targets set are appropriately challenging given the pupils' starting points. There is a clear and well-structured plan of how to tackle the main priorities to improve standards and teaching. Governors receive regular reports on how this plan is being implemented. However, they sometimes focus too much on the impact of frequent pupil mobility rather than on how to quicken pupils' progress and raise standards. Discrimination is not tolerated and all pupils are equally valued and cherished. The school has carefully considered the needs of its diverse community and together with other organisations works well to promote community cohesion locally and on a wider scale. The arrangements designed to safeguard pupils are excellent. All the governors' policies and procedures related to safeguarding are fully in place and implemented robustly.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Attainment on entry is particularly low in language skills, especially among the boys. Careful induction programmes enable children to settle quickly and begin learning. Good progress made in all areas of learning helps reduce the gap between boys' and girls' attainment by the end of the year. Nevertheless, standards are still below average at the end of Reception. Children listen attentively during class discussions and when peers are sharing their work, and behave calmly and sensibly. They learn to take responsibilities,

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for example by self-registering, and move confidently around the classroom and designated outdoor area. The teacher and teaching assistant work well as a team, carefully observing and assessing children's interests, and adapt planning well in response to children's needs. They plan a good range of activities and experiences in and out of doors. Children enjoy riding bikes and blowing bubbles on a breezy day outside, but the lack of an outdoor sheltered area restricts the range of activities and opportunities for children to choose or initiate their learning, especially during wet weather. The relatively new class teacher, in partnership with the headteacher, provides clear and effective leadership.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Many parents responded to the inspectors' survey. Almost all were supportive of all aspects of the school covered in the questionnaire. Typical comments received included: 'My child is happy and confident in school,' and 'a real family feel to Pilgrim Primary'. The area that attracted the most disagreement, albeit by a very small minority, related to the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour although no parents made any additional comments about this. However, inspectors judged that the few instances of unacceptable behaviour are well managed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pilgrim 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 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 155 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	57	48	39	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	72	59	45	37	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	66	54	48	39	7	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	46	53	43	9	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	49	58	48	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	51	52	43	7	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	43	67	55	1	1	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)	47	39	63	52	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	44	61	50	5	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	46	47	39	16	13	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	40	58	48	7	6	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	56	46	62	51	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	52	49	40	7	6	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">■ 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.



18 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pilgrim Primary School, Plymouth PL1 5BQ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing some of your work, spending time in lessons and walking around the school. You were very helpful in answering our questions. We are pleased you like your school. It is a satisfactory school, where many things are good but some things could be better.

Here are some of the highlights we found.

- You are thoughtful and caring towards one another, for example in the way you welcome new children and help them feel at home and part of the Pilgrim family.
- Many of you have jobs to help around the school and we were impressed by your school councillors and eco-committee and your plans to improve the school grounds.
- You know a lot about how important it is to eat healthily and take regular exercise.
- We are pleased that you feel safe in school. You told us about the way all the adults take such good care of you. We agree and think this is excellent, and so do your parents.
- Your teachers encourage you by planning interesting activities in lessons. You listen to your teachers and try hard to do well.
- Your headteacher and other leaders are always thinking of ways to give you more opportunities and how to help those of you who experience difficulties.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on three things to make the school even better. We want them to:

- help you to do even better work, especially in your writing and mathematics
- ensure teachers carefully match the activities to the different groups in your class so that they are not too hard or too easy for you and, when looking at your work, they give you lots of ideas about how you can improve
- provide an all-weather outdoor shelter for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so they can play and learn outdoors throughout the year.

We are sure you will have your own ideas about how to improve the school and will want to talk about these with your school councillors.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly

Lead inspector

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