

Lipson Vale Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 113298 |
| Local Authority | Plymouth |
| Inspection number | 338139 |
| Inspection dates | 30 June –1 July 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Mark Lindfield |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 5–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 375 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jill Straw |
| Headteacher | Diggory Vowles |
| Date of previous school inspection | 23 May 2007 |
| School address | Bernice Terrace Plymouth PL4 7HW |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons, observed 12 teachers, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's assessments of pupils' progress, improvement plans, minutes of meetings and other documentation. Inspectors took into account the views of 72 parents and carers as expressed in parental questionnaires. In addition, 20 staff questionnaires and 100 pupil questionnaires were analysed.

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

- the current levels of achievement of pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging
- the effectiveness of the monitoring of teaching and assessment in identifying areas to develop and in leading to improvements in the quality of teaching
- the effectiveness of the school's actions to address the lack of identification of pupils' underachievement in English and in raising attainment in reading at Key Stage 1 and in English at Key Stage 2
- the impact of the school's actions to improve community cohesion in its links with others across the United Kingdom and globally

Information about the school

Lipson Vale is a larger than average primary school. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Their needs mostly relate to language, literacy and communication and emotional and behavioural difficulties

Reception children are taught in two Early Years Foundation Stage classes.

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

Lipson Vale Primary school's strong leadership has successfully addressed areas of weakness and continues to build on the strengths of the school. Senior leaders and subject coordinators are an integral part of the leadership of this improving school. Leaders at all levels consistently communicate high expectations and are actively involved in monitoring teaching and learning. With the strong support of governors the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school and the local community. The very large majority of pupils, parents and carers report that children feel safe in school. Pupils behave well, are polite and courteous to others and develop excellent social and moral skills. The school has successfully reduced the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent but, overall, the attendance of pupils is broadly average. Pupils' positive attitudes in lessons help them to make the most of opportunities and to make good academic progress. Pupils have an exceptionally strong appreciation of being healthy and actively seek to develop healthy lifestyles. Their good behaviour extends to a thoughtful appreciation of others so that the school is an inclusive and welcoming environment. Pupils' spiritual development includes a good understanding of the range of faiths represented in the school community and is enhanced by visitors and trips. However, pupils' understanding of other cultures is not as well developed. In part this is because the school has only recently implemented actions to address and improve community cohesion across the United Kingdom and the world.

The school reacted swiftly to an unexpected dip last year in pupils' attainment in English at Key Stage 2. It has introduced a range of effective actions which have resulted in raising attainment in reading at Key Stage 1 and increasing pupils' progress in writing across the school. However, while children make good overall progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage, there are limited opportunities to apply and reinforce their learning of letters and sounds through focused reading and writing activities. The school's most recent assessments provide evidence that pupils are making better progress and have exceeded the challenging targets set in English and mathematics in Year 6. Pupils' writing skills have improved because teachers explain the criteria of a good piece of writing and expect pupils to check their work accordingly. This helps pupils to improve their writing and gain a clear understanding of the next steps they must take. This approach has been introduced in mathematics, but as yet is not used consistently across the school or in other subjects.

Senior leaders' rigorous monitoring has led to improvements in the quality of teaching. Teachers are given clear and accurate feedback which identifies strengths and

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development points. Consequently, the majority of teaching is good with some which is outstanding. Leaders have introduced effective systems to track pupils' progress across the school. This new system provides detailed information on pupils' current progress. However, it has not been in place long enough to gauge which support programmes are the most effective in raising the attainment of underperforming pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils make even better progress and further raise attainment by:
 - embedding the use of success criteria across all subjects
 - using tracking data to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of intervention and support programmes
 - raising pupils' levels of attendance.
- Develop pupils' understanding of other communities and contribute to the cohesiveness of the wider community by working more actively to develop stronger links with other countries around the world.
- Increase the opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to participate in focused activities aimed at developing their early reading and writing skills and understanding.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' progress has risen sharply over the course of the year due to a combination of effective actions, careful monitoring and better teaching. As a result, the proportion of pupils gaining higher Level 3 results in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2, and attaining Level 5 in English in Year 6, has risen significantly. The school's assessments provide evidence that the overwhelming majority of pupils make expected or better progress and the school exceeded challenging targets in both English and mathematics.

Pupils are keen ambassadors for the school and are proud of the undoubted contribution that they make to the school and local community. Their participation in a wide range of fund-raising activities, and particularly their involvement in the school travel plan and local community improvement projects, is exceptional. All pupils from the earliest age show positive attitudes in lessons and their willingness to work cooperatively and to share resources and ideas helps them to make the good progress that they do. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils because they are well supported. Teaching assistants are well trained and work closely with teachers and the coordinator to ensure that pupils' needs are met.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about being healthy and many participate in sporting clubs and activities. They develop a strong spiritual understanding through the good opportunities to reflect and participate in assemblies. This is enhanced by close links with local churches and through visits and visitors from people with other faiths. Pupils show a good understanding of others and value the diversity of faiths and cultures within the school and local community. However, their awareness of diversity across the

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world is more limited.

Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and all pupils expressed clearly that they felt safe. They know that there are adults who will listen and act if necessary and this makes them feel valued. Pupils show a good understanding of how to use money through charity fund-raising and a week of activities to develop their enterprise and economic understanding. Pupils use computers and laptops confidently, and with their good academic progress and growing confidence and independence they are well prepared for their next stage in education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is improving and is good overall with some outstanding practice. Planning of lessons is good and is sequenced well to build up pupils' knowledge and understanding over a series of lessons. Teachers are increasingly confident in adapting plans for the week to closely meet the needs of pupils. They use questioning skills effectively to encourage pupils to participate and explain their ideas; this increases the progress that pupils make in lessons. Time spent explaining clearly the characteristics 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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a good piece of writing ensures that pupils know what is expected and how to improve and modify their work. This successful technique has recently been introduced in mathematics, but is not yet consistently applied across the school or used in other subjects.

The curriculum provides well-organised and effective opportunities for learning. It is enhanced by a broad range of trips and visits which help to engage pupils and make topics more interesting. Strong partnerships with other schools and settings help to increase opportunities for sport and to extend more-able pupils in a range of subjects. The curriculum has clear strengths in music with an orchestra who play a range of instruments with obvious enjoyment and to a high standard. Pupils make good progress in French and are able to speak with good pronunciation and to write confidently about their likes and dislikes. The learning environment around the school is enhanced by a range of attractive artwork and provides stimulating displays of pupils' work.

The school provides focused support for pupils linked closely to their identified needs. Targets for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are specific and used in lessons to ensure that they make good progress. Teaching assistants develop pupils' trust and a supportive approach which helps to improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning. Staff working with small groups of pupils show secure subject knowledge and use appropriate resources confidently.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders communicate a clear sense of direction. They routinely make good use of a range of monitoring procedures to identify and address areas of weakness. They have reacted quickly to introduce a range of effective actions which has led to improvements in teachers' planning and in English across the school, although children's early acquisition of letters and sounds is less secure. Improvements in writing have resulted from steps taken to explain more clearly to pupils what is required and in providing regular opportunities for pupils to discuss and review their progress. Standards of teaching have improved across the school and teachers are given clear guidance on areas to improve.

Literacy subject leaders have been actively involved in rigorous monitoring which has helped to drive improvements. The school's new system to track and evaluate pupils' progress has freed subject leaders from lengthy collating and analysis of a range of

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data. The system allows leaders to chart more closely the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. It provides evidence of the school's success in narrowing the gap in achievement of boys and girls and of the good progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Its detail provides a sound basis for evaluating the effectiveness of whole-school initiatives and support programmes for pupils but, as yet, is too new to be fully effective.

Governors are strongly supportive of the school and ensure that all safeguarding arrangements and health and safety procedures are regularly reviewed. They provide good levels of challenge and evaluate and monitor the school's progress. They have responded to the views of parents, carers and the school council and made changes to the school as a result. A parents' and carers' group meets regularly and the school has clear lines of communication. Governors have produced a sound analysis of the school's local community and have agreed a number of actions to improve the links with other countries.

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 | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

A very high proportion of parents and carers responded positively with most full of praise for the school and their children's education. Nonetheless, a few raised concerns about the extent to which the school helps them to support their children's learning, the school's approach to dealing with unacceptable behaviour and the extent to which the school takes account of their suggestions. Inspectors found that there are clear and consistently applied strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and that this results in

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courteous and polite behaviour around school and positive attitudes in lessons. Inspectors found that pupils' behaviour is a strong and distinctive feature of the school. The school has presented a number of activities, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where parents and carers have been involved in learning about the school's approach to teaching reading. Parents and carers would like to have more opportunities to attend other activities aimed at helping them support their children. The school has reacted positively in implementing a 'parents voice' group to seek views and opinions of a wider group of parents and carers. However, representation on this group is comparatively small.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lipson Vale 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 375 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 39 | 54 | 29 | 40 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 45 | 63 | 25 | 35 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 31 | 43 | 37 | 51 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 29 | 40 | 36 | 50 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 39 | 54 | 30 | 42 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 35 | 49 | 28 | 39 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 3 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 31 | 43 | 35 | 49 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| 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) | 28 | 39 | 32 | 44 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 34 | 47 | 24 | 33 | 10 | 14 | 1 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 27 | 38 | 30 | 42 | 8 | 11 | 1 | 1 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 24 | 33 | 37 | 51 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 4 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 33 | 46 | 33 | 46 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 34 | 47 | 29 | 40 | 6 | 8 | 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). 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.



2 July 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Lipson Vale Primary School, Plymouth, PL4 7HW.

I would like to start by thanking you for the warmth of your welcome and the friendly way that you behaved to us. All of the team of inspectors were impressed by the way you behaved around the school and in lessons. We noticed that you are proud of your school and that you play a big part in making it the place that it is. You spoke to us in lessons and completed a number of questions on paper that helped us to gain a clear picture of your school

You told us about the good things that happen in your school and that you enjoy coming to school. We agree with you on many things. We noticed that you and the school do a lot of things well.

- You make good progress in your reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- You are well cared for so that you develop into thoughtful and kind people and feel safe in school
- The school helps you to be healthy and to develop healthy lifestyles with plenty of opportunities to take part in physical exercise.
- A wide range of visitors and trips helps to make school interesting.
- You help out around the school and are involved in a number of activities, such as the orchestra and developing the local park, which help your local area.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors keep a careful eye on how you are getting on and have acted quickly to make the school better.
- You are making better progress in your writing because you have a clear idea of what you need to do and are given time to make your writing better.

We talked to your headteacher, staff and governors and asked them to improve a number of areas in the future:

- make sure that you continue to learn and get good results by letting you know in each lesson what you will need to do to produce a good piece of work and by closely watching how your progress
- make sure that their plans to develop links with other countries around the world help you to learn about other cultures
- give more opportunities for children in the Reception classes to work with adults to

develop their reading and writing.

We think that you can help the school to get better by coming to school as often as you can.

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield

Her Majesty's Inspector

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