

# North Molton School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113163
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	357277
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Laver

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	106
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sean Pepper
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Grant
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Fore Street South Molton EX36 3HL
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. During the inspection nine lessons were observed and four teachers were seen. Inspectors observed the school's work, and held meetings with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, minutes of governors' meetings, reports from the School Improvement Partner and an Ofsted monitoring visit, and assessment data on pupils' recent and current progress. An inspector attended an assembly. In addition to observing the school's work, inspectors analysed 45 parental questionnaires, 62 pupil questionnaires and nine staff questionnaires.

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

- the effectiveness with which the school is raising attainment and improving the achievement of pupils, particularly in writing
- how effectively teaching and the curriculum are raising pupils' attainment and the quality of their learning
- how effectively the school's leaders and managers at all levels are monitoring the school's performance and addressing areas for improvement
- how well the school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and how much progress these children are making.

## Information about the school

All pupils in this smaller than average village school are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which include learning, behavioural and emotional needs, is slightly above average. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in a class which also contains some Year 1 pupils. The school set up pre-school provision one year ago, managed by the school governing body, and for much of the time the pre-school children are taught alongside children in Reception. Pupils are also taught in mixed-age classes in Years 2 to 6. The school has Healthy School Status.

**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

North Molton School provides a satisfactory standard of education. During the last year, with support from the local authority and other outside agencies, the school began to tackle areas of underperformance, which existed particularly in the standard of pupils' writing. The headteacher, staff and governors are all committed to sustaining and furthering the improvements that have taken place in recent months. Pupils' attainment and the rate of progress have improved in all subjects, although this progress has been slower and more variable in writing compared to other subjects. Some developments, for example in the use of assessment to improve pupils' learning, are not yet fully embedded. Leaders evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately. The positive advances since the previous inspection and the commitment of all staff to raising the level of performance show that the school has a satisfactory and developing capacity for sustained improvement.

A notable success of the school has been the creation of a vibrant pre-school setting, which functions as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children in the pre-school and Reception classes make good progress. Another success, evident throughout the school, is the good progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils benefit from very good support, so that they make good progress not only in their personal and social development but also in developing basic skills. Most of these pupils are on track to meet challenging targets, in some cases exceeding national expectations for their ages. Other pupils in the school make satisfactory, and in many cases, improving progress, reaching broadly average levels of attainment by the time they leave school. A minority of the more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should because teachers do not give them consistently challenging work. Teaching is satisfactory overall because it is variable in quality, with pace and challenge not sufficiently high. The school has made better use of assessment information since the previous inspection, mainly in recording pupils' progress and targeting underachievers. However, teachers' marking, other forms of feedback and the use of pupil targets on an everyday basis do not give pupils a clear understanding of exactly how they can improve their work. Teachers have begun to encourage a wider range of writing in order to improve pupils' literacy skills, but there are still missed opportunities to help pupils apply these skills in subjects other than English.

The good quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is a strength of the school. It has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. As one parent put it, 'The school has a lovely family atmosphere'. Pupils enjoy coming to school, feel safe, behave well, usually attend school regularly, get on very well with each other and enjoy taking on responsibility. They also enjoy the good range of activities inside and out of school,

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including imaginative and challenging work in music and art. Pupils make a strong contribution to the life of the school and the local community, although many have a limited awareness of wider UK and global issues.

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

- Improve pupils' progress in writing, ensuring that a higher proportion leave school with average or above average standards, by giving pupils in Years 2 to 6 more varied opportunities to develop literacy skills in subjects other than English
- Improve the overall standard of teaching in Years 2 to 6 by ensuring a greater level of pace and challenge for the more able pupils so that they more consistently reach above average standards
- Give pupils in Years 2 to 6 a better understanding of how they can further improve their work by more precise marking, giving more specific feedback to pupils and by using their targets more effectively in the classroom.

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

Attainment of pupils in Year 6 is close to the national average. The nature of year groups in this small school varies considerably from year to year in relation to pupils' prior attainment. Achievement has improved, mainly because of initiatives to raise levels of attainment in writing and mathematics for all pupils, and provision of extra support for underachieving pupils. However, despite these improvements, progress remains only satisfactory because the more able pupils are not fully challenged in their work. Sometimes pupils work on skills in which they are already proficient and so their learning is not sufficiently extended. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have particularly benefited from good support and achieve above the expected levels. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from some additional learning opportunities such as advanced classes provided by local schools.

Pupils enjoy school. Their positive attitudes towards learning are reflected in good behaviour, their feeling of being safe in school, and their ability to get on very well with each other. Attendance levels, which have been above average, have fallen recently, because of bouts of illness. Pupils show a good understanding of why a healthy lifestyle is important. They enjoy activities in their 'family groups', and older pupils are enthusiastic about their responsibilities as 'family group seniors' in supporting younger pupils. Although attainment in key areas like literacy and numeracy is broadly average, pupils feel well prepared for the next stage of education, as a result of good transition procedures between schools. Pupils are polite, friendly and develop as articulate, confident young citizens. Their moral and social development is another strength of the school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<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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<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	2
<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>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Although there are some well-taught lessons, teaching overall is satisfactory, because it does not sufficiently accelerate the progress of some of the more able pupils. Teachers plan well and make particularly good use of teaching assistants, who help pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress. Teachers also provide some good opportunities for pupils to work independently. When the teaching is less effective, lessons are too teacher-led and there is insufficient pace and challenge to stretch the more able pupils. Pupils have targets and check their own progress and that of their classmates. But the feedback given to pupils by teachers, including marking, does not give enough guidance on exactly what pupils need to do in order to proceed to the next level of work.

Pupils enjoy the curriculum, which has been developed to focus on particular topics such as 'The Victorians' and 'Around the World'. There is a good range of enrichment activities for a small school. Pupils enjoy a good standard of music and art and are enthusiastic about the clubs and visits such as those to an activity centre and Paignton Zoo. The good quality of care, guidance and support is particularly effective in improving the confidence and progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are strong links with outside agencies and effective procedures to support attendance and facilitate transition to other schools. Both pupils and parents appreciate the extent to which the school is an inclusive, caring community.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Monitoring has improved since the previous inspection: subject coordinators are now more involved, although they have limited opportunities for lesson observations and sharing of good practice. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and active within it, although they recognise the need to be more incisive in their participation in the school's self-evaluation. Planning is more focused on the key priorities for improvement. The school works hard to engage parents in their children's learning, for example through consultation meetings. There are strong links with local schools, which have a good impact, for example in providing opportunities for joint sporting activities. There is a strong commitment to equal opportunities, evident in the personal development and academic successes achieved by vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. North Molton is a happy school and senior staff work effectively to ensure there is no discrimination. There are robust safeguarding procedures, reinforced by an extensive programme of personal and social development. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Pupils are often engaged in local activities such as the Two Moors Festival. However, there are no developed links with schools or other institutions outside the local area and many pupils have a limited understanding of the world beyond.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

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<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for pre-school children alongside children in Reception has been a great success. All the children get on well, making good progress in acquiring a range of knowledge and skills. The profile of children joining the Early Years Foundation Stage varies considerably year on year, but they generally attain skills and knowledge beyond expectations for their age. This is especially so in personal, social and creative development, and increasingly so in language and communication skills. Inspectors were greeted by confident and often articulate children, who rapidly learn how to play and learn together, to listen to each other, take their turn, and explore activities either with direct adult supervision or without. Children feel safe and well supported. The teaching is enthusiastic, well-paced, shows high expectations and ensures that good links are made with previous learning, as was observed during sessions focusing on the sounds that letters make. There are good links with parents. The leaders recognise the desirability of more training opportunities for staff and a refinement of evaluation and assessment procedures. Leaders have had an impressive impact in a relatively short time in creating a learning atmosphere that enables pre-school children, children in Reception and Year 1 pupils to flourish collaboratively and independently in a happy environment.

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

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

## Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers are certain that their children enjoy school and feel safe there. A large majority of parents feel that the teaching is good, that their children are well prepared for the future and that their children get a good experience at school. Most think that the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle. A small minority of parents and carers feel that their children do not make enough progress, feel that parents themselves are not helped sufficiently to support their children's learning and feel that their suggestions or concerns are not taken into account. A similar proportion has concerns about the quality of leadership. Inspectors acknowledge parental concerns about pupils' progress, although judge that most pupils make at least satisfactory



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progress. The school does make considerable efforts to keep parents and carers informed about what is happening in school and tries to involve them in their children's learning through channels such as progress reports and consultation meetings. Inspectors also judge that there is satisfactory leadership in the school, as leaders and managers are developing a more systematic approach to improving key aspects, including pupils' progress, which have had scope for improvement in recent years.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Molton 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 106 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	62	17	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	56	19	42	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	29	13	29	11	24	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	24	17	38	9	20	4	9
The teaching is good at this school	18	40	14	31	4	9	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	33	15	40	8	18	3	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	42	17	38	2	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	36	17	38	6	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	27	18	40	4	9	4	9
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	24	20	44	3	7	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	16	15	33	8	18	5	11
The school is led and managed effectively	12	27	12	27	10	22	6	13
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	36	19	42	6	13	1	2

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



15 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Molton School, North Molton, EX36 3HL

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing you both in lessons and around the school. You told us lots of interesting things about how you enjoyed coming to school, how you liked your teachers and enjoyed going on trips.

North Molton School gives you a satisfactory standard of education. Most of you make satisfactory progress in your work. Some of you, including those who do not find learning easy, make very good progress  so well done! A few of you who find learning easy could do even better than you do. Pupils in your school have not in the past done as well in their writing as they should, although this situation is now improving. We know that you like school, feel safe, come to school regularly, get on well together and like taking on responsibility, as when you are in your family groups. Your teachers work hard to help you in lessons, although some of you told us that you would like to know more about exactly how well you are doing and how you could improve your work even more.

Because everyone, including the headteacher and all the staff, want the school to improve we have given them three things to do:

- give you more opportunities to write in different subjects and in different ways to improve your writing skills
- make sure the work is always hard enough for those of you capable of reaching higher standards
- give you more information in your books and use your targets more so that you have a clearer idea of how well you are doing and how you can improve your work even more.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

John Laver (on behalf of the team)

Lead inspector

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