

Plymtree Church of England Primary School

Plymtree, Cullompton, EX15 2JU

Inspection dates 22–23 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The executive headteacher leads the school well. Supported ably by the two heads of school, she has ensured that the whole staff are successfully improving pupils' education.
- Pupils' achievement is good, especially in Key Stages 1 and 2 where all groups of pupils make at least good progress in English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good, and often outstanding, leading to many pupils making better than expected progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils.
- Pupils are keen to attend school and they have positive attitudes towards their learning. Their behaviour is good. They feel safe, are proud of their school and respect one another.
- Teachers plan interesting work which engages pupils. Pupils' work is well presented.
- The governing body is effective in checking how well the school is performing. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and rigorously hold teachers to account.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some children do not make enough progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as lessons are not always planned effectively.
- Occasionally, pupils are not moved on to harder work swiftly enough in lessons, inhibiting their progress.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils understand how to improve their work in response to their feedback.
- Some parents feel that the school's website is not sufficiently informative and are unclear about how well their children are progressing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in seven lessons, one of which was undertaken jointly with a head of school. He also observed the teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) in small groups and listened to some pupils read.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books and spoke to pupils about their work and other aspects of school. He observed pupils at playtime, attended the daily worship and visited the breakfast club.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, both heads of school and members of staff. He explored pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The inspector examined a range of school documentation including records of the quality of teaching, the school's information on pupils' progress, the sport funding action plan, the school improvement plan and records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- A meeting was held with five governors, including the Chair of the Federation Governing Body. The inspector also spoke to the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- The views of parents were taken into consideration, including the 36 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire. The inspector also spoke to several parents at the start of the school day.
- The 11 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

John Cavill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Plymtree is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- There are three classes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception Year with pupils from Year 1 in Ash class, pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 are taught together in Oak class and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught together in Pine class.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is very small. This additional funding supports disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast club for its pupils.
- The school is part of the Culm Valley Federation, a federation of three primary schools in the villages of Kentisbeare, Plymtree and Culmstock. The federation is led by an executive headteacher and a federation governing body. The senior leadership at Plymtree consists of two, joint heads of school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding overall, paying particular attention to the Early Years Foundation Stage, by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan lessons in Ash class that make better use of the teaching areas to develop children's creativity, imagination and independence
 - speed up pupils' progress in all classes by moving them on to harder work more quickly once they have mastered what they are doing
 - check that pupils understand how to improve their work in the light of teachers' feedback.
- Improve the school's engagement with parents by making sure that they know how well their children are doing and by extending the information on the school website.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Because the school's leaders and governors are committed to improving the quality of teaching across the school, pupils' achievement has continued to improve, especially in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Improvement planning is sharply focused and informed by accurate self-evaluation. The heads of school have a clear picture of what must be done next, and are supported very well by the executive headteacher, middle leaders and governors. Staff morale is high.
- The regular scrutiny of pupils' books, lesson observations and information on pupils' progress are used effectively to monitor the quality of teaching. The professional development of staff is given a high priority and is linked to teachers' professional targets.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' good achievement. The requirements of the new National Curriculum have been incorporated in a systematic fashion involving all staff and literacy and numeracy are embedded well in all subjects. There are many opportunities for pupils to explore subjects in depth. Pupils in Oak class, for example, have discussed where they spent their summer holidays and why there are checks at airports, helping them to gain an understanding of British values and identity.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given a strong focus in a range of subjects and in the daily worship. A wide range of texts used to develop their reading provides pupils with characters to explore and discuss, developing their social and moral skills. Pupils are encouraged to participate in a wide range of sporting opportunities and represent the school. This helps to build their self-confidence.
- The school has used the primary sport funding to develop teachers' skills in sport through training and coaching. There are also more sporting activities on offer, including additional clubs and tournaments. These initiatives have had a significant impact, with increased numbers of pupils participating in sport.
- The additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils has been used well.
- Links with parents are generally good. However, a small proportion of parents feel that they are not sufficiently well informed about their children's progress or about changes at the school. Parents also do not have enough access to information about the school curriculum on the school's website.
- The staff do not tolerate discrimination of any kind, ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to take part in all school activities.
- The local authority provides this good school with very little direct support, although the school draws on the authority's expertise to support school improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has taken some effective action to improve teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
 - Governors scrutinise pupils' progress to satisfy themselves that pupils' achievement is improving across the school. Recent training in interpreting data has strengthened their understanding and ability to ask challenging questions of the school's leaders. They know how the pupil premium funding is used because they have information about the extra support given to eligible pupils and follow this up with school visits. They are clear about how the money from the primary sport funding has been allocated. Governors make decisions about rewarding the good performance of the executive headteacher and other staff and are not afraid to tackle weaknesses in teaching. They are good at talking to staff and pupils and rightly believe that this helps to promote tolerance and respect. Governors have undertaken training in safeguarding and have checked that all statutory requirements in relation to child protection are met and that safeguarding arrangements are effective.
 - The governing body has a secure grip on the budget and is working to bring the budgets from the three federation schools together.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are keen to take part in a wide range of activities and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. They are respectful to one another and cooperate well with staff.
- In lessons, pupils respond enthusiastically to teachers' questions and show resilience when tackling challenging tasks. Only rarely do they become distracted and lose concentration when the work they have been set is not challenging enough.

- No disruptive behaviour was seen during the inspection and pupils said that it rarely occurs. School records show that there have been no recent exclusions from school and very few serious incidents of poor behaviour. Some parents raised concerns about pupils' behaviour but the overall pattern is good.
- Pupils have opportunities to develop and demonstrate their leadership qualities. The school council provides them with a chance to make decisions about what happens at their school and pupils in Pine class value being a 'buddy' to younger pupils at the school.
- Pupils know that it is important to tolerate and respect people who are different from themselves. They get on well together, regardless of background, and say that name-calling and inappropriate language are unusual. As one pupil put it, 'If it's not kind, don't say it!'

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils move around the school carefully and look out for each other. The pupils spoken to said that bullying incidents are rare and that staff manage them well. Pupils understand different types of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying, and bullying related to social media and the use of the internet.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and coming to school, which is reflected in their above average attendance. The school rigorously follows up absence and there are no persistent absentees. Pupils are smartly dressed in school uniform and arrive on time in the morning, reflecting their pride in their school.
- Parents believe that their children are kept safe at school. Behaviour and safety in the breakfast club are good.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good, with some that is outstanding, especially in Key Stages 1 and 2. This enables most pupils to achieve well from their starting points, leaving the school well prepared for secondary education.
- Teachers plan their teaching well and are good at deciding what pupils need to learn in lessons and over time. They use their strong subject knowledge to make sure all pupils in the class are suitably challenged. Lessons move at a fast pace and work given to pupils is set at an appropriate level, helping them to make good progress.
- Teachers plan lessons that motivate and excite pupils. Interesting activities are linked well to the work they do in other subjects. Pupils in Pine class were writing a biography of Michael Morpurgo after reading some of his books as part of their study of the Second World War.
- Teaching assistants are highly effective and provide good support for pupils, especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They do this by working closely with pupils in class and in small groups. Lessons are planned to ensure the teacher spends time with all groups during the lesson. This enables them to monitor the impact that the additional support is having on pupils' progress.
- Leaders have put a strong emphasis on improving standards in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils are making better progress as a result. Teachers and teaching assistants have been supported with effective professional development. Pupils know what their goals are in English and mathematics.
- Teachers question pupils effectively to judge the progress they are making in lessons and reshape activities in order to speed up the pace of learning. However, sometimes teachers do not move pupils on to harder work quickly enough when they have mastered what they are doing.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and are meticulous in ensuring that all corrections are highlighted. They also provide pupils with useful feedback about how their work could be improved. However, teachers do not always check that pupils are able to use this feedback to make the necessary improvements.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, most pupils have reached above average levels of attainment in English and mathematics, and some have done significantly better.
- Standards in reading have remained especially high. This reflects the school's strong commitment to reading for pleasure and to ensuring that pupils can understand the wide range of texts they encounter in different subjects. The effective teaching of phonics has resulted in increasing numbers of pupils doing well in the Year 1 phonics check; results in 2014 were well above the national average. All this means that pupils are able to read successfully from an early age.
- In the past, pupils' writing has not been as good as their reading. However, following a whole-school focus on writing, in 2014 the gap in attainment for Year 6 pupils was closed. In most other year groups, pupils

are achieving similarly in reading, writing and mathematics, and where gaps still exist they are closing rapidly.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points and achieve well.
- The small number of pupils who are eligible for additional funding are making good progress and achieve well. There were no eligible pupils in Year 6 in 2013, so a direct comparison with pupils nationally is not possible.
- The most able pupils are achieving well. Inspection evidence shows that significantly increased numbers attained the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics in the Key Stage 2 tests in 2014.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have done well compared to other pupils nationally. Most pupils make more progress than would normally be expected over the key stage, although progress is more rapid in Year 2 because of some highly effective teaching. Some weaker teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is inhibiting the progress of younger pupils which is why achievement overall is not yet outstanding.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- When children join the school in the Reception Year, most arrive with the expected levels of skill and understanding. However, some have levels which are much higher. While most children make good progress from their individual starting points and are well prepared to start Key Stage 1, some fail to reach the levels of which they are capable by the end of the stage.
- Lessons are not always planned to make good use of the available spaces and children are sometimes constrained by activities with limited expectations and resources. This is restricting their ability to develop creatively, work independently, socialise and use their imagination.
- Children are keen to take part in activities and they respond well to staff instructions. They listen well and can maintain concentration when the whole class is taught together. They show consideration when working in small groups and play together safely.
- Parents are happy with what the school provides for their children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are actively encouraged to contribute to their children's learning and development at home.
- Leaders rigorously monitor the quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and provide effective support for teachers from within the federation and from the local authority. As a result, teaching is improving and starting to have an impact on children's achievement.
- Ensuring the safety of the children is given a high priority and arrangements meet all requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113361
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	449107

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Nichols
Executive headteacher	Tracey Hailey
Heads of school	Emma Francis and Alex Cutler
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 July 2012
Telephone number	01884 277294
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