

Ermington Primary School

School Road, Ermington, Ivybridge, PL21 9NH

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher and governors lead a highly skilled team in a relentless pursuit for excellence. Their expectations are high and, at all levels, staff are determined that they will meet these high expectations and strive to ensure that the school will continue to perform outstandingly well. For example, the school identifies the middle leader role should be strengthened further.
- Pupils at Ermington consistently achieve extremely well, many of them reaching the highest levels by the end of Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, all pupils make excellent rates of progress.
- The quality of teaching across the school is outstanding. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils. Because they know their pupils so well, they consistently challenge pupils to achieve more.
- Children get very effective help in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are given things to do that interest and excite them. They make a flying start to their life in school.
- The school promotes a love of reading from the earliest years. All pupils make very good progress in reading.
- Teamwork and collaboration are essential elements of the school's approach and this is reflected in the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils respond enthusiastically in their lessons and as they say, 'Learning here is fun.'
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding; pupils are always polite and well mannered. They say they feel very safe in school and bullying is rare; parents agree.
- The school has developed an exciting and stimulating curriculum which delivers some inspirational learning experiences. This is greatly enhanced by all the sport, music, drama and art offered to the pupils.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, based on the school's strong emphasis on mutual respect. Older pupils inspire the younger ones. As one Year 2 pupil said, 'I can't wait till I'm in the production, I want to be as good as they are.'
- Pupils enjoy all that the school has to offer them, there is a vibrant climate for learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils from Year 6, the Chair of the Governing Body and a range of staff, including senior and middle leaders as well as those with specific responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage and special educational needs.
- Inspectors heard pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read, observed morning playtime and lunch breaks, and attended an assembly and part of the end of year production.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised, including the 'learning journey' records of the youngest children. Displays around the school were also examined.
- The inspection looked in detail at the quality of teaching and how much progress the pupils make in each year group.
- Note was taken of the 11 responses to the staff questionnaire, the 30 responses made to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the responses to the school's own survey of parents' views. Inspectors met some parents informally at the start of the day and as they collected their children from school. One letter and two phone calls from parents were also considered.
- A range of documents was looked at, including the school's data on pupils' progress, improvement planning, the school's checks on how well it is doing, information on the quality of teaching and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Anne Wesley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marian Marks

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ermington is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school which is increasing in size.
- Since the previous inspection it has federated with Ugborough Primary School and the two schools have formed the Beacon Federation, sharing an executive headteacher and a governing body.
- It has seven classes, including one Reception class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and children from service families) is much lower than average.
- The proportions of pupils from ethnic minority groups or who speak English as an additional language is much lower than found nationally.
- There are fewer disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action than the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the role of middle leaders to increase their formal monitoring role.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Most children enter Reception with skills and understanding in line with what are expected for their age. As a result of excellent teaching and activities closely matched to their needs, all children make rapid progress and move into Key Stage 1 very well equipped for the next stage in their learning. They make particularly good progress in using their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to start reading and writing very well.
- This very positive start is continued by extremely skilled teachers and assistants in Years 1 and 2, and pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics flourish. Standards in Key Stage 1 have continued to rise each year and are all above, or well above, the national average. The latest results show a very marked increase in the number of pupils achieving the highest level in writing.
- By the time pupils leave, at the end of Key Stage 2, they have achieved standards significantly above the national average. This has been a consistent pattern over the last five years. Pupils do especially well in achieving the higher levels in English and mathematics, this has continued in the current year with over half the pupils achieving Level 5 in reading and writing and almost three quarters Level 5 in mathematics. Furthermore, two pupils achieved Level 6 in writing and seven pupils in mathematics. All pupils in Key Stage 2 make well above expected progress in all subjects. This includes pupils with special educational needs
- The school's accurate tracking system ensures extra support is targeted promptly so that all groups of pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make equally outstanding progress. The personalised programmes devised for these pupils' particular needs are very impressive and ensure that the pupils maintain the school's very high expectations of progress.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding also achieve exceptionally well, at least in line with other pupils in the school. There is no gap between their achievements and those of their peers.
- Attainment in writing is strong because of the many opportunities to use writing skills in a wide range of subjects. As part of an enterprise project, pupils wrote their curriculum vitae and a job application, as it was important for their own success they showed exceptional skill in writing persuasively.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is outstanding. Pupils are consistently challenged to use their basic skills to solve problems and teachers ensure that the tasks match the needs of the pupils very well by careful use of assessment. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils were working on problems related to reading a variety of scales of measurement with unnumbered divisions; however, some problems needed pupils to convert kilograms to grams and then work with decimal numbers whilst others were working on units in fives and tens. Consequently, all pupils made excellent progress.
- The outstanding achievement is made possible because of the emphasis the school places on teaching pupils how to learn, for example skills of independence, resilience and perseverance. In Year 6, pupils were encouraged to use their 'thinking hats' when asked to write their leaving speeches. This meant they considered both the positive and negative aspects of leaving Ermington, with the result that the writing was excellent, but they were also given a strategy for tackling future reflective pieces of work. Pupils' attitudes to learning are superb.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- At all stages in the school, the majority of teaching is outstanding, this is ensuring that the pupils are able to make excellent progress. Teachers have extremely high expectations for all pupils, who respond very positively to the challenge.
- The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development and their attitudes to

learning so that the pupils are able to achieve exceptionally well as they move through the school. This begins in Reception where children are encouraged to consider carefully their own learning, their thoughts are recorded on a learning board; for example 'I learned what a volcano looks like, I learned it by drawing one' and 'I learned about squares by cutting cake'.

- Rigorous assessment systems, used consistently and shared by all teachers, ensure that lessons are planned to meet the needs of different groups. As a result, all pupils can access their learning quickly. In Year 4, for example, it was clear that a group of pupils were finding it difficult to understand the concept of writing about 'character' rather than describing how the person looked or what they were doing. The teacher quickly adapted her plan to take this into account and used drama very effectively to act out being 'happy' or 'grumpy', almost instantly the pupils understood and, as a result, they wrote very good characterisations of the people in their story.
- Throughout the school, there is a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' reading skills, from very well-planned work on early reading skills in Reception, Year 1 and 2 to the more advanced skills pupils need to achieve the higher levels at the end of Year 6. Pupils demonstrate a real enjoyment in reading, with Year 6 pupils explaining very well what they look for when choosing a book, and one saying, 'When I get it right I can get lost in the book for hours.'
- Writing skills are taught extremely well. Evaluating and editing their own work are common practice for pupils. Pupils are always given a clear explanation of how to be successful in completing the written tasks and then they are continually asked to consider how their writing could be improved. In Year 2 the pupils were writing extremely good poems, as a result of the careful planning of a series of lessons following a visit to the beach. The pupils were inspired by the stimulating discussion, the artefacts and resources provided, as well as the knowledge of what makes a good poem.
- Teachers are extremely skilled in using a range of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and develop their knowledge. This was observed in the last part of a mathematics lesson when the whole class were working together, the teacher's skilful questioning ensured that she could assess the learning of the different ability groups.
- Teachers regularly create exciting opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their mathematical skills. The enterprise project enthuses the older pupils, and the business accounting necessary to the task develops very effectively their skills in using money and percentages; furthermore, they could happily explain about costs, profit margins, resources and loss within the context of their company manufacturing pop-cakes.
- The high quality teaching of art is evident in wonderful displays around the school. The 'real artists' sketchbooks are rightly a source of great pride for the pupils.
- Additional adults in the classroom provide excellent support to all pupils. However, they are particularly effective when they work with individuals with special educational needs. Their skilled and highly effective approach, led by the specialist teacher, helps these pupils to quickly catch up with their peers.
- High-quality marking provides a careful balance between praise and suggesting how pupils could improve their work, pupils routinely check their own books to ensure they have responded to the advice the teachers have given them; exemplary practice!

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- There is an exceptionally warm, welcoming atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils are always very friendly and extremely polite. They get on very well with each other and with adults. They enjoy school and are keen to learn. They are expected to behave extremely well, and they do.
- Children in Reception learn the rules of good behaviour quickly. They show maturity as they concentrate and persevere with activities, choose their own resources and make decisions together about their own learning. The current Reception children were very keen to get back into their classroom after the visit from next year's children to make sure everything was back 'where we know where to find it'.

- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour extremely well. They create a very effective climate for learning. Pupils respond extremely positively to the high expectations of them in lessons. Their behaviour and attitudes make a particularly powerful contribution to their own learning. The school is effective in promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and ensuring there is no discrimination.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the different forms bullying can take. They say it is extremely rare, but that any problems 'are very quickly sorted out' and 'anyway everyone here has lots of friends'. Pupils have a very thorough understanding of how to stay safe, including internet safety.
- The pupils would know how to act if something seemed dangerous and they are secure in the knowledge that help is on hand should they need it. They feel very safe. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's ability to keep their children safe and to deal with any problems quickly.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and contributing to the life of the school. The importance of being part of a caring community is stressed and seen in action throughout the day, with older pupils often seen supporting younger ones. During assembly, pupils were asked to reflect on how change can make people feel and that they could help each other to deal with their uncertainties about what lay ahead: thoughtful and useful in promoting pupils' consideration for others.
- The pupils' good attendance reflects their enjoyment of school and the good partnership with parents. This was expressed in a typical comment 'My friend's child is desolate today because he is too ill to come to school.'

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and governors have a fierce ambition for continuing improvement, and so consistently set high expectations for pupils' achievement and the quality of the teaching. The headteacher has created a team which is well able to support the relentless pursuit for excellence. The track record of excellence in pupils' results and the progress pupils make show that there is an outstanding capacity for continuing improvement.
- The school knows its strengths and points for development extremely well through the very systematic and rigorous checking of pupils' progress and the quality of the teaching by the headteacher. This information is shared fully with the governors.
- Subject leaders make a significant contribution to school improvement. They are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders, other than the headteacher, could be more formally involved in checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Very effective performance management provides support, constructive criticism and appropriate training for the teachers' work in the classroom. The teachers are aware of the relationship between performance management, promotion and salaries.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. There is only a very small number of pupils eligible for this funding; these pupils have diverse needs so the needs and the progress of each are checked individually. The use of this funding is checked by governors.
- There is a real richness in the breadth of the curriculum and pupils excel in sport, music and drama. The end of year production illustrates this; the excitement and enjoyment were palpable, providing the pupils with wonderful memories of their time in Ermington.
- The curriculum's breadth and variety help to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness outstandingly well. This is further enhanced by the many opportunities the pupils have to take part in residential trips. The learning in the Reception class is firmly based on the children's needs and interest, so the children are enthused and motivated by all that is on offer for them.
- The local authority provides only a very low level of support to the school, visiting at the specific request of the school, for example conducting the recent review of practice.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body are very well aware of the school's strengths and remain ambitious for the school's continued improvement. They are the driving force in ensuring that the schools in the federation benefit fully from the opportunities this offers, mostly in sharing resources and expertise. They have a very clear understanding of data and the standards in the school and of the quality of teaching. The governors are fully supportive of the school, but also consistently challenge its performance. They ensure performance management is in place and play an extremely effective role in making staff appointments and promoting staff within the school. Governors take part in many training courses to ensure they are fully up to date with all their areas of responsibility. The governors ensure that their statutory obligations are fully met, including safeguarding.

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	113249
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	402805

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	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Roberts
Headteacher	Jane Byrne
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
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