

Thornbury Primary School

Miller Way, Plymouth, PL6 8UL

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, staff and governors have a very clear vision for the school. They work together effectively to provide a highly positive learning environment for all pupils.
- Leaders, including governors, know what needs further improvement. High levels of commitment ensure that this is an improving school.
- In lessons, and around the school, pupils behave exceptionally well. They display an eagerness for learning, work hard and achieve well.
- Pupils feel safe at all times in this exceptionally cohesive school community.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and their attainment is rising.
- Pupils' mathematics skills have improved as a result of changes introduced by leaders.
- Children achieve well in the early years. They are well prepared for the move to Year 1.
- Pupils' achievement in the specially resourced provision is particularly strong.
- Teaching is typically good across the school and lessons are carefully planned.
- Lessons are interesting and engaging, with many opportunities for pupils to explain what they think and respond to searching questions.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as other pupils and often better. They are given additional support in lessons by teachers and teaching assistants; this meets their needs well.
- Checks on teaching by leaders are detailed and helpful. Staff value the advice and guidance given. This is improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are occasions in lessons when learning slows. This is because pupils are not moved on quickly enough to new and more challenging activities, particularly the most able pupils.
- There remains a very small proportion of teaching which is not as effective as it should be because the guidance provided on how to improve has yet to be fully implemented.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, seven of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils, as well as individual pupils during lessons and play times, to find out their views about the school. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire (Parent View). Parents' views were also gathered from written comments, informal discussion and the school's own survey.
- The views of staff were gathered through discussions and the 44 returns to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents, including improvement plans, safeguarding documents, records relating to attendance, systems for tracking pupils' progress and the school's data on pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection team

Peter Clifton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Judith Long	Additional Inspector
Wendy Marriot	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized school.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased considerably since the time of the previous inspection.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has specially resourced provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. There are currently 10 pupils attending with speech and language difficulties across Key Stage 2. This is referred to as the specialist speech and language provision.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, outside of the specially resourced provision, is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (government funding to support disadvantaged pupils) is average.
- The school's provision for pupils in the early years is full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Several staff have been recently appointed.
- The school runs a breakfast and after school club.
- The school is part of the Endeavour Learning Community Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - ensuring that learning is always moved on as briskly as possible through challenging tasks, including for the most able pupils
 - eliminating the small proportion of teaching which is not as effective as it should be by ensuring that the guidance on how to improve teaching is acted on fully.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior and middle leaders and governors provide strong leadership for this good, and improving, school. The headteacher provides a determined lead which places pupils' needs at the heart of all decision making, promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles discrimination robustly.
- Senior leaders have ensured that changes to teaching staff have been managed well to establish shared values. Consequently, expectations about teaching and providing a secure learning environment for pupils are high.
- Support to improve the work of teachers is clear and, overall, effective. Leaders can demonstrate the improvements made by teachers and teaching assistants. This ensures that teaching is strengthening pupils' progress and achievement. Leaders are aware that there remains a very small proportion of teaching which does not always meet pupils' needs well enough.
- Working within the Learning Trust has been beneficial; for example, in sharing best practice and developing middle leadership skills.
- Staff work together well to check that judgements about pupils' attainment are accurate. The school's tracking provides a clear picture of progress for different groups of pupils.
- Particularly effective use is made of pupil premium funding. Disadvantaged pupils have additional support which is consistently well targeted and they have exceptionally strong attitudes to learning. This ensures they do at least as well as other pupils.
- Leaders track the progress of pupils in the specialist speech and language provision with great care.
- Parents comment that leaders are very approachable and that they are very happy with the quality of education provided.
- The school uses its additional funding for school sport well. Specialist sports teaching and coaching have helped to raise the profile and increase the range of sporting activities across the school. This includes outdoor education. This has improved pupils' rates of participation.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly across the school. Pupils are always encouraged to behave in a respectful and polite way. They are taught that tolerance is important in dealing with their friends and members of staff, and are encouraged to resolve conflicts for themselves. Recent work includes a celebration of diversity where pupils were encouraged to 'step into the shoes' of other people in order to gain respect for different people's experiences. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Leaders ensure that there are consistent messages about British values.
- The local authority provides an appropriate level of support when needed and, rightly, has confidence in the headteacher to promote improvement.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Child protection training is up to date and all necessary checks on staff are carried out.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very effective. Governors provide challenge and support for the school and have a clear understanding about how well different groups of pupils are doing through their knowledge of progress data. The school's strengths and weaknesses are understood. Governors visit to see for themselves how well the school is doing and regularly participate in training. They know how the school monitors teaching and make sure that good teaching is rewarded through pay increases and promotion, and weaker teaching is challenged. They attend several parent events to ensure that links with parents remain strong. Governors provide secure financial management and ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils eagerly join in with class discussions and are very keen to share their ideas. They are resilient learners who are not put off if they do not succeed the first time. They greatly enjoy working together to find answers to problems. Their perseverance and energetic approach help them to do as well as they can in lessons.
- Pupils are very kind and respectful towards each other. They talk openly about the need to support others who are feeling sad or upset.

- Pupils from the specialist speech and language provision are valued as part of the school community. They thrive in an environment where they are encouraged and supported by their peers and members of staff.
- Conduct and behaviour outside of lessons are exemplary, including in the breakfast and after-school clubs. Pupils appreciate activities provided at lunch times which help to provide a focus for play. This ensures that the pupils have fun and work together in a cooperative way.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have a strong understanding about different types of bullying. They appreciate the information provided by leaders which ensures that they know exactly what to do if problems occur, for example when using the internet.
- There are very few recorded incidents of bullying and this reflects the views expressed by the pupils who say that they always feel safe and secure in school.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and pupils are punctual to school. In 2014, no pupils' attendance fell below 85%, which is much better than the national picture.
- Parents comment that behaviour is handled well in the school and, as a result, their children are happy and very well cared for.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and there are strong relationships across the school. Planning is typically good and pupils are given interesting and relevant activities. This helps to promote positive attitudes to learning.
- The confident way in which pupils are encouraged and prepared to 'have a go' at tricky tasks is a strong feature across the school. One Year 3 pupil, for example, commented that she was surprised that she could complete a difficult mathematics problem. This was because she persevered with a range of different methods. Different methods of calculation are taught effectively.
- Pupils are required to think hard because discussion and robust questioning help them to test out their understanding. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as those from the specialist speech and language provision, working alongside their classmates.
- Literacy is taught well. Teachers ensure that pupils understand how to use their grammar, punctuation and spelling to improve their writing. For example, in Year 5, pupils use a range of carefully considered metaphors to bring their writing to life.
- Reading is promoted well through guided reading sessions and at the start of the school day. Younger pupils in Year 2 enjoy reading and talking about books. They read regularly at home. They use their phonic knowledge well (the sounds that letters make) to 'sound out' and read unfamiliar words. Older pupils are successfully encouraged to read a wide range of different texts and check that they have understood what they have read.
- Teachers provide pupils with good quality guidance about how to improve their work through marking and discussion. Pupils are given time in lessons to respond to the comments made and to say how confident they feel about their learning.
- There are times in lessons when teachers and other staff do not move pupils on to more challenging tasks quickly enough. When this happens learning slows, particularly for those pupils who are the most able. In a few lessons, teachers do not change their approaches quickly enough to make sure that all pupils make at least good progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is slightly above average. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading and writing is above average, with mathematics being the weakest subject. In the 2014 national tests, Year 6 pupils made good progress from their different starting points in Year 3.
- The school's records of current pupils' progress, and samples of work seen, confirm that pupils' progress in mathematics is now much improved and similar to that in reading and writing. Overall, pupils across the school make good progress from their different starting points and achieve well.
- Children's achievement in the early years has improved since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils' attainment at the start of Year 1 is now higher.
- Year 1 pupils do well in the phonics screening check.
- Older pupils read fluently and with good expression. In Years 4 and 5, pupils read out loud confidently.

Year 6 pupils read widely, including using tablets and computers. They have clear preferences for different authors and comment on their writing styles.

- Pupils' progress in writing by the end of Year 6 was particularly strong in 2014. Pupils take care over the presentation of their work and take heed of advice given to improve their grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Overall, the most able pupils make progress which is similar to that of other pupils. Occasionally, they are not challenged enough in lessons.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress which is at least as good as that as their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. They benefit from additional support which meets their needs well.
- Pupils eligible for additional funding make at least good progress from their different starting points. In 2014 national tests this group of pupils was four months ahead of their classmates in writing and mathematics and equal in reading. Compared to other pupils nationally, they did as well, overall, in reading, writing and mathematics. Their performance was particularly strong in grammar, punctuation and spelling, and writing, where they were six months ahead. They were one month ahead in reading and three months behind in mathematics. The school has received national recognition for these results.
- Over two thirds of pupils in the specialist speech and language provision make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Their achievement is stronger than that of other pupils because their needs are exceptionally well understood. These pupils work alongside their classmates confidently in all lessons.

The early years provision

is good

- The school has used partnerships with other schools and training effectively to improve the quality of provision and children's achievement. Children are well prepared to start Year 1 by the end of Reception.
- Leaders foster good relationships with parents, for example through open mornings and workshops. These good relationships help children to become confident learners.
- Activities provided are based on accurate assessment of children's needs. Planning covers all the different areas of learning well and there is an appropriate focus on developing reading, writing and number skills.
- Teachers and other adults support learning effectively, guiding children without discouraging their independence.
- Children behave well and keep themselves safe, whether concentrating on accurate letter formation or riding bikes in the outside area. They cooperate and are quick to congratulate each other when they have achieved something. They help to clear away and keep the area tidy.
- Children join Reception with levels of skill and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age in areas such as their physical development. However, their early reading, writing and number skills are below those expected. They make good progress, particularly in literacy and mathematics. In 2014, the proportions reaching the goals expected by the end of Reception were a little above average.

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	113329
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	449157

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynn Smith
Headteacher	Claire Hardisty
Date of previous school inspection	30 March 2011
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