

Appledore Community Primary School

Richmond Road, Appledore, Bideford, EX39 1PF

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The progress most pupils in school are now making in reading, writing and mathematics is good.
- In 2014 national tests, the attainment of pupils by the end of Year 6 in reading and writing was above the national average. In mathematics, it was in line.
- In the same tests, the proportion of the most able pupils in Year 6 who achieved above average standards was greater than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception year in 2014 was much higher than the national average. Children are well prepared for the move into Year 1.
- The behaviour of pupils in school is good. They try hard in class and are keen to do well.
- Pupils say they are well cared for and well looked after in school. They say they feel safe.
- Since joining the school, the headteacher has quickly drawn up plans to improve the quality of teaching to previously high levels. He is raising the expectations of everyone working in the school.
- Senior and middle leaders provide good support to the headteacher. They are clear about their roles and are having an impact in moving the teaching back to outstanding levels.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is good. The school fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination robustly if it ever occurs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils across the school do not make as much progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Planned activities are not always challenging enough in some foundation subjects.
- Teachers do not always use teaching assistants effectively to support the learning of all groups of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 12 lessons or small group activities. Two of these sessions were jointly observed with the headteacher. An assembly, presented by an outside church group, was also observed.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the Chair and other members of the Governing Body. He held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Years 2 and 6 read. Samples of pupils' workbooks were scrutinised.
- The inspectors examined a wide range of documents, including the school's information on pupils' recent progress. They also looked at planning and documentation about checks on teaching, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- The opinions of parents were taken into account through the 62 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors held informal discussions with parents dropping their children off and had one letter from a parent. The views of staff were considered through the 32 staff questionnaires returned to the inspection team.

Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Linda Rafferty

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. All pupils in the Reception class attend full time. The school also runs a 26-place Nursery that provides morning and afternoon care for 41 children. Most children attend one session a day.
- The school has one class in each of the year groups. There are no mixed-age classes
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of the pupils in the school that receives support funded by the pupil premium is below that seen nationally. The pupil premium is funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- Nearly all pupils are from a White British background.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by ensuring that teachers:
 - develop the pupils' writing skills more quickly so that all groups can make better progress across the school
 - use the additional adult support more effectively so that the progress of all groups of pupils is accelerated.
- Ensure that when pupils are learning they are challenged more often in a wider range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher quickly identified key aspects of the school's work, such as accelerating the progress all groups of pupils make, especially in writing. As a result of the actions the school has taken, the rate of progress most pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics has improved. A greater proportion of pupils are now on track to exceed their targets.
- The headteacher has recognised the need to distribute key responsibilities to other senior and middle leaders in order to secure improvements. School leaders have taken on their enhanced roles with enthusiasm and have provided good support to the headteacher. Some of their actions are still very recent but have helped improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Their plans are well considered and pave a way forward to secure the further improvements needed to move the school back to outstanding levels.
- Robust systems are in place to review the effectiveness of teaching through the scrutiny of pupils' work and increasingly the learning that takes place in lessons. The headteacher uses this information to decide if teachers are meeting their targets and so are eligible for improvements in their salaries or are in line for promotion.
- The school has received a good level of support from the local authority that has helped the new headteacher in his review of the school. It has provided training for the governing body which has enabled governors to refine their skills in reviewing the work of the school. The local authority works closely with the school to develop the skills of those overseeing the learning and progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The school's system for checking the progress pupils make has enabled the senior leaders to target individual pupils with additional support when necessary. This has helped pupils to make better progress. The school is committed to ensuring all pupils make as much progress as they can from their starting points.
- The programme of lessons has for a number of years focused heavily on developing pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematical understanding. This has narrowed the range of activities. The headteacher has correctly identified the need to widen the range of subjects in which pupils can apply and develop their skills. However, the school now provides a more extensive suite of subjects that better engages the pupils' skills, while extending their learning.
- Parents commented on the change that they have seen in the school this year with it becoming more welcoming and having a much more positive ethos. Staff are felt to be more approachable, especially those leading the school. The school website provides parents with key information about their children's learning.
- The school works effectively to develop the social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding of the pupils. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 visited a Sikh temple in Bristol. This raised their awareness of the diversity of cultures and faiths within Britain. The school is also involved in activities more close to home such as when pupils from Years 3 and 4 were involved in a beach-clearing activity. Pupils reflect on the moral issues that they may face. They develop a good understanding of some of the key British values such as respect for others and understanding of those who may be different. The school tackles any discrimination and a lack of tolerance of others robustly. The school works well in fostering good relationships across the school.
- Pupils enjoy sport and their opportunities to participate in activities in school or in competitions in the local area. Through its well-considered use of the primary sports premium funding, the school effectively supports pupils to participate in a wider range of activities, for instance, skipping workshops and surfing. Pupils are involved in more competitions against other schools enjoying success with first and second places in recent team cross-country championships. The school is also improving the quality of physical education lessons in school by giving staff additional training.
- Child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and ensure pupils are safe in school and well looked after. Governors re-examine the safeguarding policies and procedures annually to assess their effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas the headteacher is working on to develop it further. They monitor the work of the school closely and are fully aware of how school leaders are addressing any underachievement in the progress pupils make or in the quality of teaching in the school. They are able to compare the achievement of pupils with the national picture and are increasingly effective in their ability to hold the school to account for the

progress different groups of pupils make. They meet with subject leaders to discuss the effectiveness of teaching across the school. They understand the clear link between teachers' targets and the potential for promotion and salary advancement. Governors review the financial position of the school carefully along with the impact of other sources of revenue such as the primary sports and premium funding to ensure it is well spent. They check policies and procedures to ensure pupils are safe in school and make sure all pupils are well looked after. The governors take their responsibilities related to safeguarding very seriously.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils work hard in their lessons. They are interested in what they are learning although some expressed a desire to cover other subject areas in more depth. Occasionally, a few pupils can become distracted and make less progress when they are not as interested in the work set.
- The school offers pupils the chance to take on roles and responsibility in class and around school. Pupils from Year 6 act as play leaders. Older pupils read to younger ones to help develop their reading skills. The pupils link-up with pupils from different classes and work together across the school.
- The school has an active school council and eco-group that have helped to improve the school grounds. They have been able to improve the quiet areas of the playground and help set up a gardening club.
- Pupils say that everyone gets on well together. Pupils are insistent that, although they may fall out with one another, bullying is very rare. Pupils have a good awareness of what constitutes bullying. They have taken an acting role in eliminating it from school with activities during anti-bullying week. Pupils designed the school anti-bullying leaflet. Parents are confident the school deals with issues of unkindness should they ever happen.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel well cared for in school. They have good relationships with the staff who work with them. Pupils move around the school sensibly and take care when playing on the playground so as not to bump and hurt others.
- Pupils have a good understanding of why they need to be careful when using the internet or playing games on line. They can explain why it is potentially dangerous to share personal information online.
- The school has worked hard to improve the attendance of pupils in school. Attendance is now above the national average.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers monitor the work of the pupils in class closely and through effective questioning, check their understanding. Pupil discussion is encouraged by teachers so pupils can develop and extend their ideas. This develops the confidence of the pupils so they are confident to speak out in class.
- Teachers provide good guidance to pupils as to what they have to achieve in lessons. Pupils' work is regularly marked and pupils receive clear guidance on what they must do to improve their work. Pupils respond to this guidance and this ensures pupils make good progress.
- Teachers use the information they have on the pupils to help plan work that challenges the most able but also supports those pupils who may have additional needs. Teaching assistants are used well in some classes but not all teachers use them to the best effect. When they are not used as well they do not provide the necessary support for the range of abilities within the class.
- Teachers use the local area well as a resource to help engage the pupils. The nearby river and estuary were part of the topic work for Year 5 pupils. A local fishmonger visited the Year 3 class to show the pupils a selection of fish that he sells. He also brought with him a live lobster! Some of the children helped him to make a fish stew using cod, ling and salmon, which they later tasted. The activities provided pupils with a good insight into their local community and the unique history of their village.
- In the past, teaching has not developed pupils' skills in writing promptly, especially in Years 1 and 2.

Pupils have not always acquired the more complex writing skills needed to extend their work. Through well-targeted training and changes in the types of activities in lessons, to pupils' interest has been stimulated. This has resulted in clear improvements in the quality of writing seen in pupils' workbooks. Both boys and girls are now making much better progress especially in Year 6.

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2014 pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics rose after a dip in the previous year. Writing showed the greatest improvement with standards significantly above the national average. Reading was also above the national average with mathematics in line.
- Scrutiny of the workbooks of pupils currently in school shows that these improvements will be sustained especially in writing. Pupils are also making good progress in mathematics and reading.
- Pupils develop their understanding of the sounds that link to groups of letters (phonics) quickly. They are able to apply this knowledge when they come across unfamiliar words. They can use their understanding of phonics to build up the word and read it. Both younger and older pupils read regularly at school and home. Older pupils in Year 6 read with good pace and expression and this brings the stories to life.
- The proportion of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2014 achieving the expected levels in reading and mathematics was above that seen nationally. In writing however, results were below that seen nationally. School leaders have taken swift action to address this. Evidence in pupils' books and in the information held by the school confirms pupils now make much better progress in writing.
- The school now provides greater challenge to the most able pupils in Years 1 to 6. In the 2014 national tests, the proportion of pupils at the end of Year 2 achieving Level 3 or above in reading and writing was below that seen nationally, but in line with the national picture in mathematics. At the end of Year 6, the proportion of the most able pupils achieving Level 5 or above was above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is quite variable. In 2014, the numbers of pupils in Year 6 was very low, so comparisons of their attainment and progress with the national picture are not possible. The information the school has indicates that the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in other year groups is generally in line with or better than that of other pupils. Consequently, the differences in their test results compared to other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics are closing.
- When teachers make best use of any additional support they have in class, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points similar to that of other pupils. However, on occasions teachers do not use teaching assistants as effectively as they could and the progress of pupils of different abilities can slow.

The early years provision is good

- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are typical for their age though this can vary in some years. Through good teaching children make good progress and catch up in any areas of learning where they may be a little behind. By the end of the Reception year, they are well prepared to move into Year 1. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development more than doubled in 2014 over the previous year. This result was much higher than that seen nationally and the school's own information indicates this level of achievement will be sustained.
- The school leaders responsible for the early years team have been responsible for the recent improvements. The work of the Nursery and Reception classes is co-ordinated carefully. Activities are well planned and assessments checked to ensure they are accurate.
- All staff know the children very well. Activities build on the interests of the children and successfully develop the skills of individuals so that they all make good progress. Careful observations helps staff decide if any of the children need additional support or if the activities need to be more challenging to accelerate the learning further. The most able children in the Reception class developed their literacy skills by using puzzle cards to build up sentences. They were able to write at least three sentences that included words that rhymed.
- In the Nursery class children learn well. They are very motivated by the learning experiences offered to them. For example, the children were helped to count and write lists in the class cafe which developed

their skills. The care they receive ensures they are happy and settled.

- Adults use a range of techniques to record the progress the children make, including photographs. The records gathered, along with notes, are used to form 'learning journals'. These show parents the types of activities the children are taking part in and enjoying. In addition the journals provide good evidence of the progress the children are making to show parents when they meet with staff.. The school has excellent links with the children's families.
- The behaviour of the children is good. They play and learn well together. Children respond well to instructions and requests from the adults around them
- The early years team try to widen the children's awareness of the beliefs and cultures of other people. Children in the Reception class practised a dance themed with the Chinese New Year celebrations which help develop their skills in movement linked to music.
- The children are well cared for in the early years setting and are kept very safe. All aspects of safeguarding that are relevant to the setting are in place and robust.
- The early years provision is not yet outstanding, as some teaching does not use the teaching assistants as effectively as it could, for example when children are learning phonics.

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	113125
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	444192

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Shephard-Blandy
Headteacher	Jeremy Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2008
Telephone number	01237474365
Fax number	01237424325
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