

Inspection of a good school: Plympton St Maurice Primary School

Plympton Hill, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 1UB

Inspection dates:

9–10 January 2020

Outcome

Plympton St Maurice Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Plympton St Maurice are cared for well. They learn in a calm and focused environment. They enjoy coming to school very much and this is reflected in their high levels of attendance. Many pupils' parents and carers work away from the family home for long periods of time. Leaders recognise that, at times, some pupils and parents may need additional support. Staff do this well. Pupils in Year 6 are provided with staff mentors to support their personal development and transition into secondary school.

Pupils describe the school as a fun place where no bullying or poor behaviour exists. They are extremely polite and well mannered. Parents and carers who spoke with me and who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, also agree. They say that over recent years, the school has gone from strength to strength. Parents and carers are full of praise for the school's leaders.

Leaders and staff have high aspirations for pupils' achievement from an early age. Staff ensure that children starting the school develop the required skills quickly to learn effectively. These expectations form the bedrock of the school's curriculum. Pupils are keen and motivated to achieve well.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, staff, governors and trustees work well together. Since the school joined Westcountry Schools Trust (the trust), governors have been able to focus more closely on the curriculum. Staff morale is high.

The youngest children learn phonics well. However, this learning is not always built on as pupils move through key stage 2. Leaders have recently introduced a new approach to ensure that pupils develop the necessary skills required for reading. Pupils who find reading more challenging are identified early. Staff put in place additional support swiftly. This is because they recognise that reading is fundamental to pupils achieving well. Pupils in Year 6 told me how their class book, 'Carrie's War', helped them understand life during

the Second World War. They know that reading is an essential ingredient of life. Reading records demonstrate a strong link between home and school expectations. The books pupils read are varied and well matched to pupils' reading ability.

Leaders have thought carefully about their curriculum design. They have constructed coherent plans that are well organised. The experienced subject leaders check that the plans are taught effectively. This enables pupils to reach the high ambitions set by senior leaders.

Recently, leaders identified that some pupils in key stage 2 found writing more challenging. This is because their spelling and punctuation knowledge is not strong enough. This prompted leaders to adjust the curriculum and put in place revised strategies. However, it is too early to see any demonstrable impact of this work.

Pupils have many first-hand experiences to broaden their horizons. This includes biannual visits to France to learn about a different culture. Regular visitors to the school also help to provide pupils with the knowledge they need to be an effective citizen in modern Britain. Leaders have established strong links with local sports teams to enhance pupils' access to sport.

Pupils' art work is of a high standard. This is because teaching staff ensure that pupils develop key knowledge and skills over time. In Year 6, pupils were able to confidently manipulate watercolours to mirror the work of Lowry.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Carefully planned curriculum activities ensure that they keep up with the pace of learning. Staff know the needs of their pupils well and work to meet their aim that no pupil is left behind.

During visits to classrooms, pupils were focused and motivated to learn. They listen carefully to adults and have a thirst for success. This starts as soon as children enter the Reception class.

Leaders have invested significantly in developing children's writing in early years. They are beginning to see the impact of their work. The well-resourced environment provides children with exciting opportunities to grow and flourish. Children are keen to use their early reading skills to be creative in their writing. They use and apply what they have learned in their phonics lessons across a range of stimulating activities. Children are curious and inquisitive about their learning. The leader for early years has created a curriculum that ensures that children are challenged to reach their full potential.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All adults undergo relevant checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils. There are thorough induction processes in place to ensure that new staff and volunteers are well trained. Training is regular and ongoing for all staff and governors. Record-

keeping is diligent. Staff show a strong understanding of risks within the local and wider area. They know how to raise any concerns if they are worried about a pupil.

Pupils know how to stay safe. They talk with confidence about how to keep themselves safe online and when they are not in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders recognise that work is needed to improve further the quality of the reading curriculum in key stage 2. This is because pupils do not always secure the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful. Teachers should assure themselves that all pupils are able to recall and use a range of reading skills across the curriculum.
- The new approach to supporting pupils in key stage 2 who find writing challenging is not fully embedded. Misconceptions in spelling and punctuation lead to pupils' writing not being as effective as it should be. Teachers need to ensure that pupils' basic spelling and punctuation are accurate.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Plympton St Maurice Primary School, to be good in May 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143473
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10122366
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Iain Grafton
Headteacher	Sarah Jane Tustain
Website	www.plympton-st-maurice-primary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In April 2017, Plympton St Maurice Primary School became part of the Plym Academy Trust, a partnership of five primary schools. In September 2019, Plym Academy Trust merged with the Westcountry Schools Trust. This trust now consists of 18 schools of which five are secondary and 13 are primary.

Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with the headteacher. I also met with the chair and vice-chair of the local governing body and the director of primary school improvement from the trust.
- I met with a sample of staff from across the school to find out about their workloads and well-being.
- Documents related to safeguarding were reviewed. I checked that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively.
- I took account of the 44 responses to Parent View. I also considered the 15 responses to the survey for staff and 62 responses to the pupil survey.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing and art. This entailed discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work, discussions with teachers, discussions with pupils and listening to children read.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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