

Bridport, St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113757
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	357410
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Tolley
Headteacher	Kay Rawling
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
School address	Skilling Hill Road Bridport, Dorset DT6 5LA
Telephone number	01308 423065
Fax number	01308 424666
Email address	office@stmarybridport.dorset.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, observing 10 teachers. They also observed a number of smaller groups, some led by teaching assistants, and the breakfast club. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and pupils, and also spoke to a small number of parents and carers who were bringing their children to school. They observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' progress, development planning and monitoring, local authority reports, a range of policies and procedures including those associated with safeguarding, curriculum planning documents and a sample of pupils' work. They also scrutinised questionnaires returned by 67 parents and carers, 103 pupils and 24 staff:

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How well equality of opportunity is promoted, particularly for girls and middle-ability pupils.
- The effectiveness of procedures for supporting good attendance.
- The extent to which the school promotes pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Information about the school

Bridport St Mary's is a smaller than average primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with very few who speak English as an additional language. The school provides a breakfast club which was also inspected. A Sure Start Children's Centre shares the site, but this setting was not inspected. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The most commonly identified of these needs relate to specific and moderate learning and behavioural, emotional and social needs. The proportion of pupils leaving or joining the school between Reception and Year 6 is above average. The school holds a number of awards including those of Artsmark and Healthy School Plus.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Bridport St Mary's provides an outstanding level of education and care. This is because the staff team has been very successful in meeting the needs of individual pupils. The promotion of equality of opportunity for all pupils, whether they be boys or girls, have a specific talent or need, or are working within the middle-ability band, is excellent. As a result, all make outstanding progress. So, despite a very large majority starting in Reception with skills well below typically expected levels, the attainment of most pupils is at least average by the time they leave.

The driving force behind the school's success is the outstanding leadership of its headteacher and the excellent support she receives from staff. Together, they have built exceptionally well on strengths seen at the last inspection, determinedly and very successfully addressing weaknesses to ensure attainment stays on an upward trend. There is a clear indication that attainment is very well placed to keep on rising and this, together with the high-quality work that has now been established and accurate self-evaluation, means that the school has an excellent capacity to improve further.

Throughout the school, teaching is consistently at least good and often outstanding, with adults intuitively recognising when pupils have achieved their lesson target and planning very effectively for the next stage of learning. There is an established culture of staff continually asking, 'What value am I adding to pupils' learning?' and very speedily readjusting tasks to increase this value. The curriculum is relevant, interesting and very motivational, with activities challenging pupils to do well, although the full effect of some strategies, such as a story-making project, are not yet apparent. Breadth and richness help pupils to do well in a range of subjects. For example, sports activities ensure pupils have an excellent awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Recent projects include work towards the school achieving Rights Respecting Status and a topic on fair trade which help pupils to understand social diversity. However, they are less clear about religious and cultural differences, and this has been identified by the school as an improvement priority this year.

The school's success in meeting the wide range of individual pupils' needs is due to a great extent to the high-quality personalised programmes in place. The level of care and support for pupils, especially the most vulnerable, is exceptionally good. In particular, excellent partnerships with a range of other schools and agencies, for example a local special school, benefit pupils especially well. This results in many of these pupils reaching average levels for their age and excellent behaviour from the vast majority of pupils, despite a small minority finding this very difficult. The school has worked hard over the last year to improve attendance levels, significantly decreasing the number of persistent absentees, partly through instituting the successful breakfast club. The school has been

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less effective in discouraging term-time holidays, although extra work is provided to help pupils who go on holiday to catch-up.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on and extend the procedures in place to encourage good attendance, particularly by working with parents and carers to decrease the number of term-time holidays.
- Improve community cohesion by providing more opportunities for pupils to acquire an understanding of cultural and religious diversity in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

This is a school in which pupils continually strive to do well because they like their teachers and enjoy the activities planned for them very much. Excellent provision helps Reception children to achieve exceptionally well, with most reaching average levels by the time they move into Year 1. Highly effective assessment and tracking procedures, together with other inspection evidence, clearly indicate that progress across the school is outstanding. For example, when they start school, a considerable number of Reception children find it difficult to concentrate and conform to classroom requirements, but by Year 6, behaviour both in class and around the school is excellent. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 exhibit the capacity to work extremely well together or on their own. Older pupils are very reflective, working very purposefully, continually evaluating their work and setting themselves new goals; these strengths are acknowledged by the secondary school to which they transfer.

Pupils develop important skills at a rapid rate. Innovative approaches to vocabulary development and the teaching of sounds in words help pupils to become confident writers. Year 2 pupils use words like 'grizzly' and 'bask' to enliven their writing, and the effective posters Year 6 pupils designed to encourage shoppers to buy fair trade products were very persuasive. Pupils benefit from a very effective programme that helps them to understand number so that, by Year 2, they are confidently adding and subtracting numbers to 100. Older pupils use their mathematical skills to good effect in a range of activities, for example in timing the descent of different parachutes. Given pupils' starting points, an impressive percentage reach the higher levels in science by the end of Year 6. This is because the investigative approach helps them to understand important concepts, such as the effect of different forces, very easily. Pupils' personal development is a strength, particularly their moral and social development, which helps the school to be a very happy and harmonious environment. Spiritual reflection is good and pupils contribute exceptionally well to school and community life. Despite strengths in skills that will help pupils do well in their future life, such as the ability to work in teams and respect another's point of view, the attendance of a few pupils is below average.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is tailored exceptionally well to meet the needs of each pupil. Teachers build highly effective relationships with pupils and all are known as individuals. Staff use this thorough knowledge to plan work that is pitched at just the right level. As a result, pupils make very rapid progress.

A great deal of thought has been given to designing an effective curriculum that helps address pupils' needs and encourages their commitment to learning. In this, staff have been especially successful, although the effect of a number of innovations, such as an exciting project on punctuation which has seen Year 2 pupils confidently using exclamation and question marks in their writing, is still working its way through the year groups. Pupils are greatly enthused by the 'Wow Days' at the start of their topics and the ways that staff take account of pupils' own interests as vehicles for learning and applying important skills. For example, a project on space involves pupils using the internet to research varied topics such as the clothing for astronauts and unidentified flying objects. Leaders very wisely capitalise on staff strengths, for example in providing expert teaching in music, physical education and information and communication technology (ICT). The very well trained teaching assistants play a major part in supporting learning, especially for pupils with specific needs, and in groups where pupils of similar ability are taught together. Assessment information is very well used to set targets for pupils in each lesson.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's excellent leadership and management allow staff to capitalise on their strengths and share these very effectively with each other. This benefits pupils' learning especially well. For example, outstanding leadership by the special educational needs coordinator has helped all teachers and classroom assistants to acquire particularly good skills in supporting these pupils. Shared expertise has also resulted in an exceptionally consistent approach to classroom practice which is a major factor in providing excellent equality of opportunity, ensuring that pupils make very good progress across the school.

Excellent self-evaluation is at the heart of all the school's work because staff and governors are continually asking, 'What can we do better?' Development planning is therefore exceptionally well focused on remaining weaknesses so that the school is constantly improving and refining its work. Staff are determined to build on the very good cohesion achieved in the school and local community by enhancing pupils' awareness of cultural and religious diversity, which is a development priority. The school works very hard to engage with parents and carers in supporting their children's education, especially through induction and for pupils with specific needs. Currently, the focus is on working with them to avoid term-time holidays.

The governing body is very well informed and provides expert support in a number of ways, most notably in health and safety expertise. Its members are very proactive in helping staff to make the very best use of resources in order to achieve excellent value for money. Their recent reorganisation provides a very effective platform to support the school's drive for improvement, although there has been insufficient time for its full impact to be seen. Much attention is paid to safeguarding procedures, which work well and are thoroughly understood by all.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Reception children benefit considerably from the fact that all adults who work with them have an exceptionally good understanding of how children learn. This, together with outstanding assessment of children's needs when they start school, means provision is especially well adapted to each child's stage of development. For example, many children find sitting still and taking turns very difficult, but within the first half of term they listen carefully to their teacher and each other as well as being able to work well together or independently. Children love taking on responsibility, especially in checking that everything is tidied away properly at the end of the day.

Children benefit from the strengths in provision seen elsewhere in the school. The accommodation, both indoor and out, is organised to very good effect to stimulate learning, and the planned activities are very interesting and practical. During the inspection, children very much enjoyed the Dinosaur topic, enthusiastically printing dinosaur footprints or pretending to help run the museum. Adults are very skilled at developing language skills, constantly encouraging children to talk about what they are learning, especially when they are working independently. Excellent observational assessment of children's activities means future planning is very good. Outstanding induction procedures help staff to build up a very positive relationship with parents and carers, and links with the large number of pre-school settings previously attended by children continue to develop well. Excellent self-evaluation is undertaken, with the leader continually researching ways in which to improve provision. She is exceptionally well supported by the Reception team.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who spoke to inspectors or who responded to the questionnaire have positive views and are happy with their children's experience at Bridport St Mary's. In particular, they agree their children enjoy school, and consider they are well taught and progress well. Parents and carers are confident that the school keeps their children safe and helps them to have a healthy lifestyle. They are also pleased with the way the school is led and managed and the information they receive about their children's progress. A number of parents and carers wrote positive comments, particularly with regard to how well the school meets individual children's needs, the support provided for children and their families, and the quality of extra-curricular activities. Inspection findings endorse these views.

Only a small minority of parents and carers expressed negative views, the most common ones being with regard to how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and the account staff take of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors consider the procedures for dealing with the very rare incidences of unacceptable behaviour to be very effective and pupils themselves agree with this view. During this inspection, inspectors found that the school regularly consults parents and carers about their views and responds to these well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bridport St Mary's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	51	31	46	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	64	24	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	40	34	51	2	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	39	37	55	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	46	32	48	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	45	32	48	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	52	31	46	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	33	49	27	40	4	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	37	38	57	4	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	30	33	49	6	9	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	46	29	43	6	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	40	60	24	36	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	58	27	40	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bridport, St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Bridport, DT6 5LA

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our time talking to you and seeing all the things you do. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their lunchtime to talk to us. We think your school is excellent, and are delighted that you and your parents and carers think it is a great place to be, too.

Here are some of the things we found out were especially good about the school.

- Teaching is excellent and you make very good progress.
- Adults take exceptionally good care of you.
- You enjoy school very much and work hard.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are very friendly and helpful young people.
- The activities teachers plan for you are very interesting and help you to do well. You have lots of opportunities to do well in subjects like art and sport.
- You have an excellent headteacher. With staff and governors, she has worked very hard to make your school even better than it was at its last inspection, and they are still working hard to try and make everything excellent.

Here are some of the things we have asked the school to improve.

- Raise attendance levels, especially by encouraging your parents and carers not to take you on holiday during term-time. You all can help by always attending school when you should.
- Help you to learn more about the different religions and cultures of people who live in other places in this country and overseas.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson

Lead inspector

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