

Wool Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113822
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	357431
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Burghart

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Wilson
Headteacher	Lesley Craze
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 10 lessons accounting for all teachers working on each day of the inspection. Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils and governors and observed the school's work. They looked at pupils' work, school documentation, including records of pupils' progress and the school development plan, and considered questionnaire responses from 47 parents and carers, as well as from 9 staff and 27 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key issues.

- The reasons why boys do better than boys nationally and than girls in the school, and why more-able pupils appear to do better in reading and mathematics compared with writing.
- The effectiveness of the school's procedures aimed at improving attendance rates.
- The apparent success of provision in Reception as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The impact of the school's intention to broaden pupils' multicultural awareness.

Information about the school

This is a small rural first school drawing pupils from a wide area. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, having increased over recent years. Such needs are mainly related to communication, language and literacy difficulties, with a small minority related to autism. No pupils speak English as an additional language and no pupils have statements of special educational needs.

Among others, the school holds the Rights Respecting Schools award, Healthy School and Eco friendly awards and the Activemark

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

This is an outstanding school at the heart of its community. Pupils are extremely well cared for and helped to do their best. 'A wonderful school. I can't compliment the staff enough!' was a typical parental comment. Staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers are keen to say that although the school was good at the last inspection, it is better now. These sentiments match inspectors' judgements.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding in both academic and personal terms. Pupils' attainment is high, being well above average throughout. Outstanding progress, regardless of age and ability, builds on the excellent start children get in Reception. Reading and mathematics have traditionally been particular strengths. Well-focused and ongoing emphasis on writing is paying dividends with attainment being high in the latest national assessment. The standard of current work is well above what is normally expected, with over a third of Year 4 pupils showing signs of reaching standards normally seen in Year 6. Pupils show an excellent understanding of their place in, and their contribution to, the school as a community. They are ready to share, to take turns and show consideration. They eagerly take advantage of opportunities to be independent in their learning and stay healthy. Consequently, they are extremely well prepared for future study and life in general. Teaching is of outstanding quality in each of the three classes. Highlights include very successful planning and delivery of work at different ability levels and the very effective team of teachers and teaching assistants. There is excellent use of assessment to set targets. Staff obviously enjoy learning as much as pupils and morale is high.

The school's success it built on the outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher, staff and governors. Evaluation of strengths and relative weaknesses quickly leads to planning which very effectively makes the most of what works to bring about improvement. The school continually challenges itself to maintain the momentum for development and has the systems and personnel in place to see this through. For example, the school already recognises that the pupils' awareness of what life is like in other parts of the United Kingdom is not fully developed. There is a very convincing track record of improvement, for example in developing problem solving in mathematics and science, supporting creative writing and introducing pupils to respecting the rights of others. The impact of efforts to provide an excellent standard of education can be seen in outstanding outcomes. This is not just an indication of excellent value for money but a clear sign that the school has excellent capacity to sustain further improvement. The confidence that this inspires in pupils and staff alike was evident in the cheer that went up when the headteacher announced in assembly that Ofsted inspectors were to visit the school. Well done everyone!

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' awareness of life in the multicultural society of the United Kingdom by forging links with schools in contrasting areas representing different customs, faiths and lifestyles.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils make outstanding progress and achieve especially well. Attainment has been significantly above national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 for several years. There are noted strengths in reading and, following the subject being one of the school's central targets for improvement, in mathematics. Although writing is above average, the school determined to raise the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels with considerable success. In 2010 national assessments and optional tests a third of Year 2 and Year 4 pupils reached above-average and expected levels. Current attainment and predictions, deep-rooted in excellent ongoing assessment, indicate that the majority of Year 4 pupils are reaching standards in English and mathematics normally associated with 11-year-olds. They also confirm that there is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys and that apparent anomalies in the past were more to do with the limitations of pupils' special educational needs rather than gender.

Notwithstanding limited opportunities to find out about lifestyles in other parts of the country, outcomes in terms of personal development are also outstanding. Pupils are being very successfully helped to grow up as caring, healthy, well-balanced young people, acutely aware of human rights and responsibilities. They play key roles in helping to fashion school rules as a charter and, for example, as school councillors contributing to policy making as well as taking the lead in fund-raising. Pupils are very well prepared for the future with excellent basic skills and the capacity to work not only with others but independently. Attendance is good, being above the national 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	1
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

Care, guidance and support are not only outstanding because relationships are excellent and staff know pupils very well, but also because there are very strong systems to record and evaluate information. There are excellent partnerships with outside agencies, for example speech therapists and education welfare officers. Successful pastoral support goes hand in hand with outstanding academic assessment which leads to aspirational targets for individual pupils. That pupils are so effectively shown how they can make improvements is an indication of the outstanding teaching and support on offer in all classes. This is fundamental to the rapid and meaningful progress pupils make. Especially noteworthy is the way pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are helped to make the same high-quality progress as their classmates. In an outstanding French lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher skilfully challenged more-able pupils while teaching support staff very successfully ensured that lower-ability pupils took an active part in oral work. High-quality questioning is common to all lessons and staff are particularly adept at challenging pupils at their own level. A Years 1 and 2 English lesson brought together the thrust of anti-bullying week and the school's commitment to improving writing. Pupils showed distinct sensitivity to those who might be bullies as well as potential victims. Role play really brought the story to life and fired imaginations. The introduction this term of a more creative curriculum focusing on themes that interest pupils and the system of teaching pupils in ability groups across Years 1 to 4 for literacy and mathematics is showing good signs of success. It is too soon to judge this provision as better than good,

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but there is more than enough to show it is well managed and that improving the curriculum does not need to be highlighted as an area for development in this report.

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 outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher, very ably supported by the senior management team and perceptive governors, drive the school forward. With high-quality planning and procedures very securely in place and the undoubted commitment of all concerned, the school is extremely well placed to sustain its development. Although at times too modest, leaders have a very clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. They are very effective in translating this into plans to capitalise on the former and overcome the latter. This evaluation is extremely well communicated to staff, pupils, parents and carers with the targets which will be used to gauge success. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is very successful in bringing about improvement. For example, the sustained development of mathematics is the result of the application of the school's review, evaluate and modify process. This now serves as an excellent model for development in other areas.

Governance is outstanding, exemplified in the very effective way the budget is applied and in ensuring that the school remains focused on pupils' learning and levels of achievement. Safeguarding arrangements are particularly effective. It is not surprising pupils feel so safe. There is no evidence of any form of discrimination and the school is especially true to its Christian ideals to treat everyone, regardless of age, gender or ability, equally. Outstanding links with the local community and good opportunities forged with schools abroad underpin an effective contribution to community cohesion. Pupils' awareness and understanding of life in other areas of the United Kingdom, although satisfactory, are underdeveloped. This already features in school development planning and is another example of the positive impact of the school's self-evaluation.

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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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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	1
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

The school's confidence in early years provision is fully justified. 'We couldn't want for a better start,' was one parent's much echoed comment. Children make excellent progress often from below what is expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development, to reach above-average levels at the end of Reception. They are extremely happy and their behaviour is excellent. Turn-taking and showing consideration do not have to be enforced, for children are already showing a strong awareness of the essence of the school's commitment to 'respecting the rights of others'. Children's eagerness to learn is a credit to outstanding care, planning and teaching. There were whoops of delight from children being allowed to choose activities out in the driving rain, complementing high levels of concentration indoors, for example in solving number problems. Unobtrusive, yet very well-directed, support based on first-rate assessment and recording ensures that children are involved in a full range of activities covering all six areas of learning. The independence they develop sets the scene for learning further up the school, while appropriate staff-led opportunities ensure that children are emerging as readers and writers.

Leadership and management are outstanding and reflect excellent teamwork and shared responsibility. Despite the lack of shade and shelter outside from bad weather, which can restrict activities, the learning environment throughout is stimulating and very well resourced and is hugely improved since the last inspection.

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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

Parents and carers have very positive views of the school. Even the very small minority who raised concerns were constructive in their comments. Parents and carers are very pleased with the way their children are cared for and that they are happy in school. There are strong feelings that teaching is good and that the school is well run. A few parents and carers believe that communication between school and home is not good enough and a very small minority feel that behaviour is not managed well. Inspectors find that the quantity and quality of information available to parents and the range of opportunities to talk to staff are outstanding. They also judge that behaviour is particularly well handled and rare weaknesses do not detract from the overall outstanding profile. Several parents queried the newly introduced system of teaching pupils of similar abilities but different ages together. Inspectors judge that, although it is too soon to see the full impact, there are very positive signs in terms of pupils' progress and achievement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wool Church of England Voluntary Aided First 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 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 87 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	81	9	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	79	10	21	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	53	20	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	68	14	30	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	77	11	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	57	19	40	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	66	16	34	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)	28	60	17	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	68	14	30	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	53	15	32	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	49	18	38	3	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	62	14	30	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	68	15	32	0	0	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.



19 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wool Church of England Voluntary Aided First School, Wareham BH20 6BT

It was an absolute pleasure to visit your school. Many thanks to the pupils who told me about life at the school, especially the school council. I was very impressed by the friendly way all of you welcomed the inspection team. Wool truly is a happy school. Your attitudes and behaviour do you immense credit. Yours is an outstanding school. That means top quality. Here are some of the highlights.

- Children get off to an excellent start in Reception.
- You do very well in literacy and mathematics by the time you leave. Well done, especially for your hard work which has improved standards in writing.
- Staff look after you extremely well. They are very good at setting targets that help you improve your work as well as encouraging you to grow up as sensible, healthy young people who care about others.
- Teachers are very good at their jobs. Teaching assistants work very well with them as a team which is extremely successful in helping you to learn.
- The school is very well run. The headteacher, teachers and governors know what works well and where things can be better. They are quick to make improvements.

As you can see things are going particularly well but, as you know from your behaviour, outstanding does not mean perfect, so we want the school to work at improving the following aspect.

- Improving your understanding of what life is like in very different parts of our country, giving you lots of opportunities to find out about customs, faiths and everyday life for people of different backgrounds.

You can help by continuing to work hard.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart

Lead inspector

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