

Sherborne Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113673
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	357391
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	David Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alistar Powell
Headteacher	Kevin Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2009
School address	Harbour Way Sherborne, Dorset Sherborne DT9 4AJ
Telephone number	01935 812619
Fax number	01935 817943
Email address	office@sherbornepri.dorset.sch.uk

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St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 16 lessons and 11 teachers. They met with governing body representatives, members of staff, and pupils. Inspectors also looked at a range of documentation including school policies, development plans, minutes of governing body minutes, records of pupils' achievements and progress, questionnaires returned by staff and pupils and the 98 questionnaires submitted by parents and carers.

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

- How effectively leaders and managers (at all levels and in all key stages) are securing improved levels of attainment and progress across the school.
- To what extent teaching is sufficiently challenging, throughout the school, to secure improved pupils' achievements.
- Whether strategies to improve the assessment and monitoring of pupils' learning and progress are helping to accelerate pupils' progress. Evidence to demonstrate that the school has a strengthened capacity for further improvement
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Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school serving the north and east of Sherborne. The school is popular, with some families choosing to travel to the school from outside the immediate area. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. There have been significant changes to staffing since the last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2008 along with a new deputy headteacher. In addition, the senior leadership team has been restructured.

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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school which is showing clear signs of rapid improvement. This is because the headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, has introduced essential changes to the way pupils' learning and the school's effectiveness are evaluated. He has also successfully communicated high expectations to all staff about securing the necessary school improvements. Consequently, staff and governors have fully embraced these changes and undertaken additional training in order to establish improvements in provision and secure better outcomes for pupils.

Children entering the Early Years Foundation Stage often do so displaying skills and abilities that are below those typically expected for their age. They make good progress, however, in developing their skills for learning which means they are well prepared when they enter Key Stage 1 to continue their learning. In 2010, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics improved to bring attainment broadly in line with the national average. This is an improvement compared to previous years, when attainment, especially in mathematics, was well below average.

Pupils say they enjoy school and that they feel safe. All safeguarding regulations and duties are carefully implemented, reviewed regularly and are in line with government requirements. Pupils play well together and have frequent opportunities to work in groups. Their behaviour is good in and around the school, especially when lessons are stimulating and engaging. Pupils say that when unacceptable behaviour does occasionally occur it is dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

Teaching and learning overall remain satisfactory. The majority of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good and is indicative of the good work carried out by senior leaders to change how assessment information is used to support pupils' learning. However, the impact of more consistently good teaching has yet to affect pupils' outcomes, especially at Key Stage 2. Not enough pupils are making the good progress they are capable of in lessons because teachers do not always take account of pupils' prior knowledge and understanding when planning lessons. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not always make good progress, relative to their starting points, because the additional support they do receive is not sufficiently well evaluated to inform their next steps in learning.

Senior leaders possess an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are using the results of pupils' assessments to hold teachers more accountable for their pupils' progress. Comprehensive systems to track the progress and attainment of pupils are beginning to provide all leaders and managers with the necessary information to help identify pupils at risk of underachievement. As a result, intervention programmes are now carefully targeted at those pupils who need the most help. However,

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the monitoring and evaluation of all groups of pupils by middle leaders across all year groups are not consistently embedded throughout the school.

The headteacher's high expectations, his willingness to listen and determination to bring about rapid change within the school have inspired confidence and trust from leaders and managers, at all levels. As a result of these leadership changes and the steady improvements in pupils' outcomes, the school is now demonstrating a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - using children's prior knowledge and understanding more effectively to plan lessons and provide personalised learning opportunities that ensure all pupils are enabled to make good progress in lessons .ensuring the marking of pupils' work is consistently supportive, shows pupils clearly how to improve their work further, provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work and engages them in their learning and progress towards achieving their targets.
 - ensuring the marking of pupils' work is consistently supportive, shows pupils clearly how to improve their work further, provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work and engages them in their learning and progress towards achieving their targets.
- Improve the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities through:
 - providing learning opportunities that better meet pupils' individual learning needs .evaluating closely the impact of interventions to inform the next steps in learning more effectively.
 - evaluating closely the impact of interventions to inform the next steps in learning more effectively.
- Ensure middle leaders monitor and evaluate closely the progress of all groups of pupils across all year groups.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' behaviour is good and is supported through a strong sense of unity within the school. This is evident in the way pupils are engaged in a wide variety of community activities such as a recent local litter pick up and in providing suggestions for the community 'pink wall' project. There are good opportunities for regular reflection and celebration within school through acts of worship that promote pupils' spiritual development well. For example, each class took part in the national two minute's silence, during the inspection, to remember all those killed or wounded in conflicts around the world.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and play well together. Older pupils say they have good opportunities to take on roles of responsibility such as being playtime pals at lunchtimes. They say incidents of bullying are rare and they know who to talk to if they have concerns. Pupils speak confidently about what constitutes a healthy diet and lifestyle. Strategies to

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support pupils in attending school are thoroughly implemented and attendance remains in line with the national average. Historically, pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 has been good and their attainment has been above average. However, improved assessment procedures now more accurately show that pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is more in line with the national average. Similarly in Key Stage 2, satisfactory progress in English and mathematics has meant pupils' overall achievements, by the time they leave school at the end of Key Stage 2, are satisfactory. The most recent test results for 2010 demonstrate further improvements in English and mathematics, particularly for more-able pupils. ♦

Pupils show good concentration in lessons especially when appropriately challenged with stimulating activities. They are able to work well together in pairs or groups.

♦♦ However, too often pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make only satisfactory progress and do not make the progress they are capable of in lessons because they are not provided with activities that best meet their learning needs and neither are the outcomes of interventions used effectively to inform teachers when planning the next steps in their learning. ♦

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
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

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How effective is the provision?

Careful attention is given to the care, guidance and support of all pupils. Relationships between teachers and support staff are good, which helps to ensure that pupils engage positively with their work. Teaching assistants are well trained and work closely with small groups or individuals and contribute to the assessment of pupils' learning. In the best lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan stimulating lessons that match the learning needs of pupils well and provide appropriate challenge for all pupils. This was particularly the case in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where the teacher used questioning very effectively to challenge pupils and clarify their mathematical understanding. In addition, the use of 'talk partners' by pupils led to excellent progress in their ability to handle data and thereby make accelerated progress in their learning. ♦

Where teaching is less strong, planned activities do not sufficiently match the learning needs of all groups of pupils. The good use of marking to guide pupils and help them understand how they could improve their work further is evident in some classes but this is not consistently applied throughout the school. Pupils generally lack opportunities to reflect on work that has been marked or engage in evaluating how much progress they have made towards achieving their targets.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and is developing ways to extend and improve the provision to provide tasks and activities which reflect more fully pupils' individual learning needs. The attractive indoor learning environment is enhanced with colourful displays that reinforce and celebrate the school's work and values while the large outdoor environment provides good quality learning opportunities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the school has undergone significant changes in the past two years. In particular, the headteacher has focused on making explicit his vision for creating a climate of high aspiration and continuing school improvement accessible to all staff. He has drawn together a cohesive team of motivated professionals who are beginning to secure the necessary improvements in teaching and learning and provide pupils with improved opportunities to attain more highly. Within the school there is a strong commitment to inclusion. The school uses contacts with other agencies well to support and enhance provision for pupils and is committed to working closely with parents and carers. For example, the recent mathematics workshops were well received. The school's work in ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils and the removal of barriers to achievement is

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currently satisfactory. The school has completed an audit to strengthen community cohesion which is promoted effectively throughout the school and beyond.

All adults are appropriately trained and regularly updated in the procedures for safeguarding pupils and vigilant in keeping records. Senior leaders have effectively introduced a robust system of monitoring that accurately tracks pupils' learning and progress which provides essential information to leaders and managers about the school's effectiveness. However, this is yet to be embedded fully by all middle leaders. For example, the school does not have a secure knowledge of the impact of strategies to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Governance is satisfactory and improving. Regular communication with the headteacher is enabling ♦ governors to play a more strategic role in the life of the school. With the provision of more accurate assessment data now available to it, the governing body is in a stronger position to hold the school to account and to deploy governor skills and abilities with greater effect.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly into school and begin to develop their self-confidence. This is because children's learning needs are accurately identified and provided for through stimulating play-based learning. As a result, children develop good levels of concentration that can be seen in their ability to 'stick' at a task, such as persevering when using scissors to cut out tricky shapes. Children are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles, enjoy fruit and vegetables at snack time and readily engage in physical activities outdoors. ♦

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The pleasant and well-appointed classrooms and outdoor learning environment are well resourced and allow children to move freely between all learning areas. Adults possess a good knowledge and understanding of how children learn and ensure the indoor learning environment is well equipped to cover all areas of learning. The outside learning environment is similarly well equipped and stimulating but does not reflect all areas of learning as strongly. Safeguarding arrangements are good so that children can learn in safety. Parents likewise feel that their children's well-being is effectively provided for.

At what is a difficult transition point in the current leadership and management of the provision, staff have worked effectively together to ensure children continue to benefit from a strong and secure leadership. Adults are focused on providing a good balance of activities for children to make good progress in all areas of learning and development. Leaders have been successful in creating a real sense of enjoyment in learning among all children. There remains a very strong sense of common purpose between all staff which supports the good transition into Key Stage 1. Leaders are self-critical and they recognise exactly where they need to improve further.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about the school. One parent summed up the views of the majority by writing: 'I am extremely happy with Sherborne Primary. It is an extremely caring, safe place for our child to learn and grow.' In essence the findings of the inspectors reflected the views of parents. The small number of parents who raised concerns would like to see further improvements to the way the school handles their concerns and to improve communication channels so that the partnership between home and school can be strengthened even further. ♦

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sherborne 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 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 308 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	63	31	33	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	60	65	31	33	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	41	44	49	53	0	0	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	47	45	48	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	47	51	43	46	0	0	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	49	45	48	0	0	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	56	39	42	0	0	1	1
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)	47	51	37	40	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	51	43	46	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	51	40	43	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	42	45	48	3	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	57	61	33	35	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	65	31	33	1	1	1	1

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



12 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sherborne Primary School, Sherborne DT9 4AJ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and telling us what you thought about your school. Your views, along with everything else we saw and heard, helped us to form a clear picture of your school. There have been a lot of positive changes in your school recently, such as the appointment of your new headteacher and deputy headteacher. We have decided you go to a school that is satisfactory at the moment but improving quickly. Here are some important things we found out.

We were impressed with your good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Teaching is generally satisfactory but improving and you make expected progress. Those of you who sometimes find learning difficult also make satisfactory progress.

When lessons are exciting and carefully planned to support your learning you show good enthusiasm and more of you make better progress in your work. Your attendance is in line with the national average.

Those of you we spoke to told us the school is a safe place, and that you have a good knowledge about staying healthy through regular exercise and eating a healthy diet. We noticed that you work well together in lessons and enjoy singing in assemblies and in choirs. You enjoy the many after-school activities on offer to you.

To help your school improve further we have asked your headteacher to make sure teachers use the information they have about your learning to help you to make even better progress in reading and writing and in developing mathematically. When your teachers mark your work we want them to make sure you understand exactly what you need to do to improve and to give you opportunities to think about how well you are doing and what you could do to improve. In this way even more of you will be able to make better progress in your learning. I have also asked the school to ensure that teachers with responsibilities keep a close check on how well you are all doing.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards

Her Majesty's Inspector

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