

Cranborne Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113797
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	357424
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael 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	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Brenan
Headteacher	Pippa Rossiter
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons featuring the work of five teachers. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils, as well as meeting informally with parents and carers in the playground. They observed the school's work, and looked at strategic and curriculum planning, records of pupils' progress, reports from the local authority, school documentation and monitoring records of teaching and learning. Inspectors analysed 54 parents' and carers' questionnaire returns, as well as 13 from staff and 44 from pupils.

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

- The effectiveness of teaching in mixed-age classes, especially those which are cross key stage, and how effectively middle-ability groups are challenged.
- Care, guidance and support, to evaluate the school's judgement that they are outstanding.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management of middle managers in terms of promoting pupils' achievement and progress.
- Attendance, to establish why there appears to have been a dip in rates in 2010.

Information about the school

This is a below-average-sized first school serving a wide rural area. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, but the proportion with statements of special educational needs is well above average. A large extension to provide a hall and extra classroom facilities has very recently been completed. Numbers on roll dropped in 2010, with fewer children entering Reception due to a lower birth rate locally. The school's intake for September 2011 is once again oversubscribed.

The school holds a variety of awards including Healthy School status and the Activemark. The school runs a twenty-minute start-of-the-day group for pupils. This was evaluated as part of this inspection.

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 where pupils are eager to learn and staff are committed to do their best. Provision is of high quality because it is extremely well led, managed and monitored. The headteacher has the total support of staff and governors and drives the school forward to maintain and raise standards. Staff make excellent use of information from assessment of pupils' performance to evaluate what works best and what to do next. This is very effective in ensuring that pupils in mixed-age classes flourish. There is a constant challenge to do even better. Pupils are very successfully encouraged to develop their capacity as learners. As a result, attainment is high and progress is outstanding, with pupils consistently well above average by the time they leave. A significant proportion of pupils are achieving levels normally expected of eleven-year-olds, most notably in reading and writing, at the end of Year 4. This reflects outstanding teaching and support, and represents excellent preparation for future learning.

An absolute credit to the school, well recognised by parents and carers, is that, as well as academic success, the school's fostering of pupils as caring, sensible, considerate young people is outstanding. This starts in Reception, where, through excellent provision, children are very quickly shown how much they are valued, and continues throughout their time at the school. Pupils respond particularly well to opportunities to show initiative and to share their strategies and opinions with others. Even at an early age they are learning to understand how what they do affects other people and the environment. They appreciate that this is an inclusive school which successfully provides for the needs of everyone. Links with the church and local community are strong and pupils are encouraged to find out about life abroad. However, pupils' awareness of contrasting lifestyles and customs across the United Kingdom is limited by lack of opportunity. This is recognised by the school as an important area for development.

Staff and governors are quick to pinpoint where extra effort and resources may be needed to overcome potential relative weaknesses. For example, although reading was above average, with both the least able and those of middle ability doing very well last year, slightly fewer pupils reached the highest level. Swift and decisive action to remodel provision and alter the school's approach has turned this around and once again attainment is significantly above average. The achievement of pupils of all abilities is outstanding. Such a successful track record, allied to excellent planning, procedures and teamwork already in place, is evidence of the school having an outstanding capacity to sustain further improvement. Decisions are made, and their impact carefully monitored against pupils' achievement, in such a way as to be sure of outstanding value for money. The parent who wrote, 'I would recommend this school to anyone. My child continues to excel,' summed up the views of the overwhelming majority of parents and carers.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' awareness of diversity in United Kingdom lifestyles and cultures by developing more links with schools in different areas and monitoring the impact of such initiatives in terms of the promotion of community cohesion.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children start school with a wide range of skills and experiences. Their attainment when they first arrive is about what is normally expected. Pupils make excellent progress, especially in reading and writing, and a high proportion reach levels well above average. Attainment at the end of Year 2 has been significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics for the last five years. This is very successfully built upon in Years 3 and 4 so that achievement by the time pupils leave, very well prepared for the future, is outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in all activities and, because of the high quality support they receive, make the same outstanding progress as their classmates.

Academic success is fully complemented by pupils' personal development. Pupils respond particularly well to outstanding care, guidance and support. The high level of trust, based on the high-quality relationships which are common throughout the school, means that pupils are not afraid to make mistakes and learn from them. They know their targets and enjoy evaluating their own performance. Pupils of all ages show that they can work well with others as well as independently. In an excellent Years 2 and 3 literacy lesson, pupils devising their own play scripts negotiated roles and responsibilities in their groups to the benefit of everyone. 'There's no I in team!' was their conclusion and their learning accelerated as they all contributed.

There is a real spiritual dimension to the school. Pupils' development is enhanced by an appreciation of art, nature and music that encourages wonder and self-evaluation, and makes an especially positive contribution to the school's ethos.

Pupils know how to stay safe and keep fit and healthy. Year 3 and 4 pupils put theory into practice with the keenness they showed when introduced to tag rugby. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school as a community, readily taking on responsibilities such as setting up the hall for assembly, as playtime monitors and as school councillors. The school is careful to provide opportunities for pupils to make suggestions and pupils are confident that their views will be listened to. The impact of this can be seen in new playground provision.

Pupils are the first to say that behaviour is not perfect, but it is nevertheless outstanding for the overwhelming amount of time, and this has a very positive impact on everyone's learning. Attendance continues to be above average as it has at least been for the last five years. The reasons for the slight dip in 2010 have been evaluated by the school and appropriate measures have been taken in the very small number of cases where families have taken unauthorised absence.

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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?

Outstanding outcomes are a testament to the quality of provision and excellent care and guidance. Teaching and support for pupils of all abilities are extremely effective in maintaining high standards and helping all pupils to fulfil their potential. Almost all teaching is at least good, with a significant proportion that is outstanding. Pupils' work and school records show that this has long been the case across the school. This is securely based on very good cooperative planning and active moderation of what is relevant and enjoyable in the curriculum. Assessment of what pupils already know, can do and understand is used extremely well to set targets for individuals and the school. There is a tangible and day-to-day/lesson-by-lesson measuring of progress against aims and objectives, which the pupils themselves have been drawn into. This makes it possible to plan and deliver work at different ability levels and is very effective in the teaching of mixed-age and ability classes. A current emphasis on speaking and listening has resulted in pupils taking a greater part in oral work, and improved progress rates. Middle ability pupils were observed taking a full part in lessons. A particularly good initiative is when Year 1 and 2 pupils join Reception to work in groups on practical activities derived from topics arising out of the outstanding curriculum. In a lesson seen, excellent management of the learning resulted in pupils being on task, engrossed in what they had to do and ready to listen to advice. Teaching assistants play a vital part in promoting learning especially, but not exclusively, for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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They use the same high-quality questioning that teachers use to get pupils to explain answers and give considered opinions.

Pupils are safe and well cared for in the start-of-the-day club. They have interesting things to do and puzzles to work out which put them in the right mood for learning. Their behaviour is excellent and all get on well together because provision is well led and managed.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher sets the tone of the school particularly well. Her drive and ambition and her 'always looking for improvement' attitude are infectious. Returns to the Ofsted staff questionnaire show that everyone is 100% behind her. Together with the deputy headteacher, she has ensured that the school is always on the right track. Middle leaders make a good contribution to overall management and take responsibility for action plans within their own area of responsibility. Very strong team work results in these being prioritised very effectively in the school development plan. There are very strong links with schools in the local area and teachers take the lead in some initiatives, for example staff training, to the benefit of everyone. Monitoring of teaching and learning through direct observation and analysing outcomes is outstanding and a central reason why provision, particularly teaching, is so effective. Self-evaluation, although at times too modest, is robust and accurate, leaving no one in any doubt as to what to do next. Governors are supportive and have played an essential part in the development of the building and learning environment. They are well informed and in a good position to challenge the school and hold it to account. This has not been quite so effective in terms of the promotion of community cohesion. Although overall provision is good, this depends heavily on local and international links and leaves pupils with a basic, rather than good, understanding of diversity across the United Kingdom. Safeguarding arrangements and procedures, designed to ensure equality of opportunity and see that there is no discrimination, have an outstanding impact on pupils' safety, personal development and progress. This benefits all pupils but particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities where the management of support is excellent.

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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	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

Children get off to a flying start. They are extremely well cared for personally and academically. Relationships are excellent and children flourish, confident that they are safe and that their opinions and feelings matter. Staff know children very well because links with parents and carers and pre-schools are outstanding. Teaching and support are excellent. They are deep rooted in a clear understanding of how young children learn, which is securely based on detailed assessment and thorough evaluation. There is just the right balance of activities directed by the teacher and those which children choose for themselves, and this very successfully encourages independence as well as working-together skills. Children do not need to be reminded to be considerate, take turns or share. No wonder they are happy to be in school.

Progress is outstanding and children frequently reach above average levels in all areas of learning by the time they join Year 1. There is a strong commitment to enabling children to learn through structured play activities in and out of doors. This has not stopped during the limitations imposed by the recent building work and is set to be even better in the newly-created outdoor space. Children respond extremely well to the high-quality provision on offer. Behaviour is outstanding and attitudes are totally positive. For example, there was a buzz of anticipation and avid concentration when children had to choose their materials and colours to paint pictures of their parents and carers as part of their work on people who make a difference. Children stayed on task and were skilfully encouraged to consider what others were doing in order to improve their paintings.

Parents and carers can be confident that children are emerging as readers and writers and that basic skills in mathematics are being effectively fostered. That this is happening while children are happy and making such progress in personal, social and emotional development is a credit to the outstanding leadership and management of the setting.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	1
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

The return of the Ofsted questionnaire was above average. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school especially how well it cares for their children, the quality of teaching and support, and the strong leadership and management. There was no consensus of negative comment. 'Fantastic school', 'excellent staff', and 'We feel privileged to have a child at Cranborne First,' are just a few of the many written, very supportive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cranborne 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	83	8	15	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	87	7	13	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	69	17	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	83	7	13	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	83	9	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	85	8	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	83	9	17	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)	45	83	7	13	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	78	12	22	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	69	14	26	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	69	17	31	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	76	13	24	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	85	7	13	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



26th March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Cranborne Church of England Voluntary Aided First School,
Wimborne BH21 5QB**

A huge thank you to everyone at the school for all your help during the inspection. What a happy place! We were very impressed by your friendliness and how polite you are. The pupils I had a meeting with in the new classroom were very keen to tell me about all the good things that go on. These children are what adults would call very good ambassadors for Cranborne. We are very pleased to judge that yours is an outstanding school. That does not mean perfect, but you should be extremely proud of it.

Here are some of the many highlights.

- You make outstanding progress to reach levels that are much better than those in most other first schools, especially in reading and writing, because you are particularly well taught. Teachers are very good at setting targets for you and helping you to measure how well you are doing.
- The school takes excellent care of you and is making sure that you grow up as caring, sensible and considerate young people. Staff know you very well.
- You are keen to work, and behave especially well in and out of class.
- The new curriculum makes learning interesting and exciting for you and gives you lots of opportunities to be independent, find out things for yourselves and solve problems.
- The school has excellent links with your parents and carers and with other local schools.

All this is possible because the headteacher, staff and governors make an excellent team. They are always trying to find ways of making the school even better. We have asked them to help you find out more about the many different ways of life in other parts of our country. Unsurprisingly, they already have plans to do this.

I know you will enjoy working in the magnificent new building. You deserve it. Well done everybody!

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart

Lead inspector

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