

Chilthorne Domer Church School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123815
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359523
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Waters
Headteacher	Theresa Hobbs
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They saw seven lessons and observed four teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, pupils, teachers and other leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at planning documents, assessment information and pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 65 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- The quality of provision and outcomes in mathematics.
- Pupils' attendance and procedures to improve it.
- The quality of pupils' cultural development.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average, rural primary school with four mixed age classes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average but varies from year group to year group. Virtually all pupils are White British. Since the last inspection a high proportion of staff were appointed on a temporary basis. Since September 2010 all staff are now on permanent contracts.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. There are strengths in the good quality of care, guidance and support that the school provides for all its pupils, resulting in positive relationships, pupils' good behaviour and their effective social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The school's Christian ethos is evident in the way that pupils are helpful, polite and considerate to each other and to adults. Older pupils take care of younger ones in the playground, making sure that they always have a friend to play with. Pupils' knowledge of healthy eating and keeping fit is good and they have a clear awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils say that they enjoy school, and their parents and carers agree. As one explained: 'We are extremely happy with the school and more importantly, so is our daughter.'

Pupils' achievement, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is satisfactory. Pupils make steady progress from their individual starting points so that, by the time they leave the school in Year 6, pupils' attainment is average. It is better in English than in mathematics. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers because of effective individual programmes that are monitored regularly. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils benefit from satisfactory, and sometimes good, teaching with positive relationships, good use of technology, and careful and sensitive support. In a minority of mathematics lessons however, expectations are not high enough and too few practical tasks are planned to excite and engage pupils. There are too few examples of pupils using their numeracy skills in other subjects. The school has established a system to track and monitor the progress of individual pupils but it is not yet fully effective and, as a result, target setting is not challenging enough. Older pupils are often unclear about their individual targets and how to improve their work. This is because marking is not always helpful in guiding pupils to their next steps. Pupils across the school benefit from some exciting activities from the overall sound curriculum. For example, the high-quality outdoor area engages pupils in imaginative play ensuring that they fully enjoy playtimes and keep fit and active. Provision for sport is a particular strength enabling pupils to achieve well against other local schools in a range of team tournaments, contributing well to their healthy lifestyles. Close links with a school in Swindon are helping to improve pupils' awareness of different cultures.

The headteacher has led the school carefully through a difficult period with many changes in staffing. She has a clear vision and has established effective partnerships to take the school forwards. Past inadequacies in teaching have been eradicated. Recent and more accurate self-evaluation shows that leaders and managers are increasingly aware of what needs to be done to bring about change. Effective attention to raising attendance has resulted in pupils coming to school more often. A supportive staff team is helping new initiatives to succeed. Members of the governing body are regular and helpful visitors. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection and everyone shares the

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school's ambitions. Given this and school leaders' and governors' clear recognition of where action is needed as well as signs of pupils' rising attainment in English, the school has satisfactory capacity to continue improving.

About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted Inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in mathematics by:
 - providing a wider range of practical activities that engage pupils' interest
 - ensuring that pupils use their numeracy skills in other subjects
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - developing the quality of marking so that pupils know how to improve.
- Embed the assessment and data tracking system so that it provides a clear picture of pupils' progress as they move through the school.
- Improve the quality of target setting by ensuring that pupils are fully involved in setting and measuring their own targets.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily in most areas of learning and make sound progress from their starting points. Many make good progress in reading and writing and their attainment in English is rising as a result. They make more limited progress in mathematics, particularly in Years 3 to 6 because expectations of what they can achieve are not always high enough. Often too few tasks are planned to enable pupils to develop their mathematical skills through practical activities and challenges. A minority of pupils said that they do not know how well they are doing or what they could do to improve. This is because marking does not always point them towards their next steps. As a result progress in mathematics is often slower than it is in English. Some good learning in mathematics however, was seen in Years 5 and 6 where some of the more able pupils were given a challenge which extended their skills well. They were given a virtual hundred pounds to spend on a garden. They trawled catalogues and the internet to see what they could afford to buy for their virtual gardens. Because of warm relationships and pupils' good social skills, all groups collaborated well with each other to succeed in their task. Pupils' reading and writing skills are improving, partly because of the introduction of a regular phonics programme for the younger children, so that they have a good knowledge of the sounds that letters make. They enjoy stories and in most year groups pupils use their literacy skills effectively. In history for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used their writing skills well to write detailed accounts of the life of Catherine of Aragon as part of their study of the Tudors. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 made good use of their phonic knowledge to describe characters. They used simple punctuation as they wrote their sentences making good attempts at some quite complicated words. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers because they have specific targets for improvement which are well monitored.

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Pupils behave well, clearly know right from wrong and there is a harmonious atmosphere in almost all lessons. Their excellent understanding of staying safe is reflected in the way they walk calmly and quietly around the school. Pupils enjoy taking part in the regular exercise programme before morning lessons and make healthy choices at lunch times. Their good contribution to the local community can be seen as older pupils act as buddies to Reception children and in the way that the school council is involved in making changes to the playground. Pupils show their enjoyment of school in their good attendance. Preparation for their futures is satisfactory, as pupils acquire a satisfactory range of basic skills in numeracy and literacy and information and communication technology.

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	2
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?

Strong relationships are evident in most lessons resulting in positive attitudes to learning. Effective use is made of information and communication technology to support lessons. Teaching assistants contribute well to the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The lack of specific targets in some subjects means that not all pupils are sure what is expected of them or how they can improve their work. Most lessons provide tasks to match the needs and abilities of all groups, but in a few lessons targets are unclear and do not always enable pupils' specific needs to be fully met.

Teaching in literacy lessons is good and as a result pupils make better progress in reading and writing than they do in mathematics. In the best lessons pupils make good use of

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resources and tasks match the abilities of all groups of pupils. This was evident in years 3 and 4 where pupils were learning how to describe characters from the 'Peter Rabbit' story. Drama and pictures were used effectively to help pupils develop ideas. This was very powerful because the visual approach to learning helped pupils to see details in the characters. Pupils were able to show that they understood how to use adjectives, exclamation marks and evocative vocabulary to make their descriptions more exciting. One pupil commented, 'I really love this activity'. Assessment procedures are new and are not yet fully in place in all classes. As a result practice is variable. In their questionnaires a minority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 reported that they were unsure how well they were doing at school.

Pupils benefit from some exciting activities, including a wide range of visits to places locally which contribute well to their learning. The school environment has improved significantly since the last inspection. Outdoor spaces, some of which provide very exciting environments, meet the needs of pupils well providing some rich play and learning areas. Strong sporting links and joint working practices with other local schools enhance the curriculum. There are several examples of pupils using their literacy skills in other subjects but numeracy skills are used less frequently and opportunities for pupils to extend their mathematical abilities in real-life situations are not always evident. The curriculum is enriched through the use of topics that help pupils to learn about the wider world.

Pupils are well cared for. Their personal needs are met effectively and welfare arrangements are thorough. Good-quality guidance and support have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in the support of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance is promoted well through regular contact with parents and carers. Transition and induction arrangements are good, helping pupils to quickly settle. Procedures to support vulnerable pupils are effective because of good links with support agencies.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders are driving improvement in all areas of the school. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future. She is ably supported by the senior teacher. Recent self-evaluation has ensured that leaders are increasingly aware of what is working well and what needs improving. A new assessment system has been introduced and teaching has improved. Leaders are aware that not enough has been done to improve standards in mathematics. Plans are well advanced to increase the levels of training for staff. Senior managers have embedded their ambition for the school by working closely with local businesses. This has

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resulted in some productive experiences for pupils that will serve them well in the future. For example a regular link with a local aerospace company is giving pupils valuable insight into engineering. Leaders are careful to eliminate discrimination and promote equality through enrichment activities such as additional provision for the more able pupils at the local secondary school. Governors are helpful and supportive but several are new to their roles and are not yet as challenging to leaders as they could be. However they have ensured that the school's strategy for community cohesion is good. Effective links with a school in Denmark as well as one in Swindon are helping to extend pupils' understanding of different communities and cultures. Close local partnerships promote effective working relationships with the community and the church, ensuring that pupils are proud of their local area. Regular and robust links with parents contribute well to pupils' improving attendance. Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, are good and fully meet current government guidelines. They are monitored rigorously and the site is very safe and secure.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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

Children enjoy their time in the Reception class. The room is small for the number of children in the class but staff make the best use of the outdoor area to supplement the accommodation. Children benefit from a broad range of interesting and appropriate activities. During the inspection, children showed how much they enjoyed playing outdoors with their older peers. They played enthusiastically on the playground drums, chased each other around and played hide and seek in the wooded area. They showed good personal development as they helped each other, took turns and made their own choices. Children are kind and polite. They show good understanding of eating healthily and are safe and secure. Children of all abilities make at least satisfactory progress in all areas during their time in the Reception class. By the time they enter Year 1 most have

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skills that are broadly average for their age. Most children exceed the goals expected in personal, social and emotional development. This is evident in their good behaviour, their calm approach to learning and in the way they share resources with their peers.

As a consequence of sound leadership, children are well looked after and welfare arrangements are rigorous. Their achievements are annotated regularly and progress is beginning to be tracked from the start of their Reception Year. Children benefit from good-quality support so they are confident to ask for help. Satisfactory and sometimes good teaching enables them to consolidate their skills and enjoy their learning. For example in one lesson, children improved their confidence and self-esteem as they moved around the hall 'like dinosaurs.' They worked well together as they tried to interpret words such as 'sliding', 'stomping' and 'wriggling,' through movement. They enjoyed showing their movements to the other children, who then tried to guess the word the children were acting out. Good questioning by the teacher ensured that they made good progress in their physical skills although there were some lost opportunities to extend their literacy skills further. Staff know children well. They encourage them to tidy up their own toys and develop their independence.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are pleased with the school. There was a good response to the parent questionnaires with the majority of parents and carers responding to them. They feel that the school is a good place to learn. 'My child has been very happy and settled throughout her time at Chilthorne Domer' and 'the school has been extremely supportive of our child's development and he has made significant progress. We believe he benefits from a small village school which has a big community and family atmosphere,' are typical comments. All of the parents and carers who responded said that they were satisfied with their child's experiences at the school. They all commented that their child enjoys school. A very few do not think their child makes enough progress or that they are well enough informed about their child's progress. Pupils at the school make satisfactory progress in their lessons and information about their progress is shared with parents on an annual basis through reports although there are regular half-termly newsletters to inform parents about what is going on at the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chilthorne Domer Church 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 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 117 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	72	18	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	80	12	18	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	58	25	38	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	55	26	40	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	74	16	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	63	23	35	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	60	25	38	1	2	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)	34	52	26	40	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	68	19	29	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	58	21	32	0	0	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	57	24	37	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	49	75	15	23	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	77	15	23	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



23 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chilthorne Domer Primary School, Yeovil, BA22 8RD

Thank you for your help in our recent inspection of your school. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out during our visit.

- Your school gives you a satisfactory and improving education so that you make sound progress in all your tasks.
- Those of you who find learning difficult try hard to succeed.
- You told us that you enjoy coming to school and you now come to school more often than you used to. Well done for that.
- You told us all about your healthy lifestyles and we could see that you do lots of exercise.
- Most of you try hard to be polite and you work well together and share ideas with others.
- Your leaders keep you safe and secure.
- We liked the way that older pupils help younger ones in the playground.

We are asking your school to do three things to help you to do even better. You can help with these by continuing to work hard in your lessons.

- To make sure that you all make better progress in mathematics.
- To make sure your work is checked regularly.
- To help you learn your targets and make sure that you all know how well you are doing

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris

Lead Inspector

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