

# Sherborne Abbey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113766
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	357416
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Barron

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	206
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Walters
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lyn Stockham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Lenthay Road Sherborne Dorset DT9 6AQ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed nine teachers. They also held meetings with the headteacher, senior leadership team, members of the governing body, teaching staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school development planning, minutes of governing body meetings, school policies, including those associated with safeguarding procedures, assessment and tracking documentation, pupil records and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed the views of parents and carers in the 145 Ofsted questionnaires returned.

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

- Pupils' attainment, especially in Year 6, and what this signifies in terms of the quality of teaching and learning and the progress of different groups of pupils.
- The impact of the school's initiatives to raise attainment in reading in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Provision for cultural education and its impact on building up pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultures and communities other than their own.

## Information about the school

This is a slightly smaller than average size primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. These needs include moderate learning difficulties and language and communication needs. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the school's Reception class. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school has gained several awards including Healthy Schools status.

**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 with a very caring and inclusive ethos. Attainment is high and pupils' achieve extremely well. Parents and carers hold very positive views about the effectiveness of the school. 'Our children are both doing really well and are very happy' and 'excellent teachers, excellent progress', are typical of the very positive comments in the returned parents' and carers' questionnaires.

At the heart of the school's success is the inspirational leadership of the headteacher. He has worked very well with the staff and governors to ensure that the school has systematically and accurately evaluated its performance and successfully implemented improvements where needed. As a result, the quality of education has significantly improved since the last inspection and this is reflected in the improvements in pupils' attainment and progress during the last three years. One specific example is the recent improvement in pupils' attainment in reading in Year 1 and Year 2. It is also an indication of the school's excellent capacity for future improvement.

The quality of teaching is outstanding throughout the school and caters very effectively for the needs of all pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to ensure that all pupils are included in learning. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes towards school. They work hard in lessons at tasks which offer them just the correct amount of challenge. Pupils gain a real sense of achievement when they finish their work successfully. They are also confident that, if they encounter any problems completing their tasks, teachers will ensure that they are given a clear understanding of how to improve their work. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress in all year groups and by Year 6 attainment is high. Pupils successfully meet, and often exceed, the very challenging targets set for them by the school.

The level of care, guidance and support for pupils is excellent. Parents and carers are overwhelming in their praise for the way the school looks after their children and comment positively about its safe and caring environment. Health and well-being are securely safeguarded and child protection procedures are good. Systems for monitoring pupils' well-being and progress are excellent and used effectively to ensure that pupils develop as individuals and are provided with the support they need to become confident and independent learners.

Pupils enjoy explaining what they like about school. However, they have little experience of the multicultural nature of society in the United Kingdom. They find joining in discussions about this difficult through lack of understanding and this remains a gap in their learning.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of modern society in the United Kingdom by improving opportunities for them to develop their knowledge and understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Pupils really enjoy school and this is reflected in their high rates of attendance. They get on very well with each other and say they feel very safe and secure and confident that adults will always deal with any very rare instances of unkind behaviour promptly and fairly. The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. While aspects of pupils' cultural development are in need of improvement, the quality of their spiritual, moral and social development is strong and this is reflected in pupils' excellent behaviour, their politeness and in their respect for others.

Children often enter the Reception class with many of the expected skill levels for their age although their writing skills are often less well developed. Outstanding teaching ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable and more-able pupils, make consistently rapid progress in all year groups, not only in literacy and numeracy but also in a range of other subjects including information and communication technology (ICT).

Pupils say that teachers 'try to make learning interesting and fun'. An example of this was observed in a Year 6 mathematics lesson when the teacher used interactive technology exceptionally well, and with good humour, to demonstrate and explain in detail how to work out the area of circles. Pupils worked with smiles on their faces because the teacher ensured that the work they were asked to complete was very well matched to their different abilities. It was evident that pupils felt a real sense of achievement when they completed their tasks successfully.

Pupils are always encouraged to do their best in lessons and their attitudes to learning are excellent. As a result, teachers have the opportunity to focus on helping pupils experiencing difficulties in learning or provide others with additional challenge. This was the case in a lesson to Year 5 pupils which aimed to improve their ability to use mathematical data. The teacher and teaching assistant had the time to help individual pupils complete their tasks successfully because all the other pupils were able to work well independently.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to both the school and wider community. They are very proud of the role the school council plays in ensuring the school listens to, and acts, on their views regarding both their learning and well-being. Older pupils have a very clear understanding of local issues. Sport plays a very important part in the life of the school and this is reflected in the growing list of sporting achievements by pupils. They are very aware of the importance of exercising regularly and eating healthy foods and understand the significance of the school achieving Healthy Schools status.

Pupils' well above average skills in literacy and numeracy, their excellent attitudes to learning and their outstanding collaborative and independent skills are preparing them very effectively for their future economic well-being.

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

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

The curriculum is broad and well balanced and mixes different subjects together well in order to make lessons enjoyable for pupils, who comment that they like this approach to learning. It is enhanced through visitors to the school and by visits to places of interest. Lessons are very well structured and work is well matched to pupils' individual needs. Classrooms are well resourced and teachers make full use of interactive technology to enhance learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and teachers work very well with teaching assistants to ensure that lessons are interesting. The school has developed a very useful system to follow the progress of individual pupils and teachers use this very effectively when planning further work. As a result, lesson planning meets the needs of all pupils and teachers ensure that pupils fully understand what they need to do to improve their work.

The level of care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding and this is the basis for their excellent personal development. Parents and carers are confident that their children will always be very well looked after. Induction and transfer arrangements for pupils are very effective and help them to settle quickly into new routines. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including potentially vulnerable pupils, receive excellent levels of very well-targeted care and support and play a full and active part in school life. However, the curriculum does not offer regular opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the wider nature of modern society in the United Kingdom.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding and this is reflected in the precision of the school's self-evaluation and the excellent quality of its development planning. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. The headteacher and senior leadership team have ensured all staff share a common belief in embedding ambition and striving for school improvement in order to raise pupils' attainment. They have been well supported by the governing body, which offers a very effective level of support and challenge to the school. Individual governors play a very active role in school life and governors are involved in all major decision making.

Links with parents and carers are outstanding and the overwhelming majority believe that the school meets their children's individual needs very well. Parents and carers are encouraged to take an active role in their children's education. They value the way in which the school keeps them very well informed, especially regarding their children's learning and well-being. Parents and carers fully appreciate the outstanding way in which the school places equality of opportunity for all at the heart of its work and ensures pupils are given equal chances to succeed. The school's success in this respect is reflected in the outstanding progress made by all groups of pupils.

The school has developed very effective relationships with a number of pre-school providers and with several specialist services, including the county's hearing support service, which it uses very effectively to support pupils' learning and well-being. Safeguarding procedures are good and meet all requirements. Safeguarding policies and child protection procedures are regularly updated and the school has very good systems in place to communicate with parents and carers. Safeguarding training for staff and governors is fully in place and routinely updated so they are well aware of the importance of their role in protecting pupils.

The school's work in promoting community cohesion is good. The school regularly evaluates its contribution to community cohesion and uses its very effective links with the local community well to develop pupils' understanding of shared values. However, even though the school has developed links with an inner-city primary school, pupils do not have a realistic appreciation of the diversity of cultures and beliefs in the wider national community.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception Year classroom is a large, colourful and attractive place which has been specifically designed to provide children with a stimulating learning environment. However, the outdoor area, while quite secure, is relatively small in comparison.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. The Reception class teacher and her very effective teaching assistant work very well together to make sure children really enjoy their first year at school. Lessons are very well planned and effectively blend opportunities for children to learn both independently and with adult direction. Recording of children's progress is ongoing and used consistently well to plan future work.

Progress in children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding and parents and carers appreciate the high level of the care and support their children receive. Children behave excellently and join in lesson activities with enthusiasm. They enjoy talking about what they are doing and are happy to share and take turns.

Parents and carers value the outstanding quality of education the Early Years Foundation Stage provides for their children. They are keen to talk about the warmth and friendliness of the teaching staff and about how they correctly believe that their children are making outstanding progress. As one parent and carer commented, 'My child is doing extremely well in the Reception class and is very happy.'

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
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

There was a higher than average rate of response to the parents' and carers' questionnaire returns. An overwhelming majority of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaires or who were spoken to by inspectors held very positive views about the school. Very few parents and carers expressed any concerns although a few felt the school did not deal well with rare instances of unacceptable behaviour by pupils. A very small minority of parents and carers thought the school did not take account of their suggestions and concerns or did not help them to support their children's learning. Inspectors considered these comments and judged that the school did deal well with unacceptable behaviour, and that the school took account of parents' and carers' suggestions and concerns and also helped them to support their child's learning.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sherborne Abbey Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 145 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 206 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	103	71	42	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	102	70	43	30	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	68	47	76	52	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	84	58	57	39	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	89	61	56	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	81	59	55	38	5	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	83	57	57	39	2	1	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)	77	53	56	39	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	76	52	67	46	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	43	72	50	7	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	40	76	52	6	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	80	55	64	44	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	97	67	48	33	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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



20th June 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Sherborne Abbey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Sherborne DT9 6AQ**

Thank you for welcoming the two other inspectors and me to your school. We all enjoyed talking to you about what you like the most about school and seeing you working hard in lessons. You were all very friendly and polite and we quickly realised why you like your school so much. We found it interesting reading your questionnaire replies and agree with you when you say that you attend an outstanding school.

Here are some of the main things we found out about your school.

- Children get off to an excellent start in the Reception class.
- Pupils then make outstanding progress throughout the rest of the school because teachers make lessons interesting and give you work that is not too easy or too hard for you to complete.
- Adults always make sure you are very safe and really well looked after.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you all get on well with each other.
- You are lucky to have such caring and thoughtful teachers who always make sure you know what you need to do to improve your work.
- Your headteacher, governors and staff are working hard to improve the school.

We believe your headteacher and teachers can make your school even better. We have asked them to:

- help all of you to find out more about the customs and traditions of people living in this country who are from different cultural backgrounds to yours.

Once again, thank you for making us feel so welcome and remember you can help your school to improve by attending as often as you can and continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron

Lead inspector

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