

Motcombe Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113808
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	378754
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2011
Reporting inspector	David Curtis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alistair Crossley
Headteacher	Rhiannon Tidby
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight lessons taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils, including the school council. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to safeguarding and child protection, the school improvement plan, minutes of meetings held by the governing body and data provided by the local authority in relation to pupils' performance. Inspectors looked at 48 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, together with those completed by staff and pupils.

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

- How successfully are all groups challenged in the mixed-age classes?
- How effective are marking and target-setting for pupils in informing them as to how they can improve their learning?
- How well do pupils use and apply key literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects?

Information about the school

This is a small village primary school. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes comprising of Reception and Year 1, Year 1 and Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4, and Year 5 and Year 6. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly with speech, language and communication difficulties, is below the national average. The headteacher and a newly qualified teacher joined the school on 1 September 2011.

On the school site, there is a privately-managed pre-school and after-school club. These are subject to separate inspections.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has maintained the strengths identified in its last inspection and improved on its performance in a number of key areas, especially in the outcomes for pupils. Achievement is good. All pupils make at least good progress and by the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in English and mathematics and on a rising trend. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress, with many achieving as well as their peers in national tests. In Years 3 and 4, progress in writing slows because pupils have insufficient opportunities to write at length using their own ideas and imagination and there is too much emphasis on worksheets. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children make good progress.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and engaging young people. They have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and of how to keep themselves safe in school and the wider world. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and pupils reflect deeply on their own lives and that of others.

There are significant strengths in teachers' relationships with pupils and in the management of behaviour. Teachers and teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including the use of high-quality individual education plans. In the main, teachers are successful in meeting the needs of all pupils in mixed-age classes through good planning. Marking is regular and detailed, although occasionally not consistent in identifying next steps for pupils. In most lessons, teachers use success criteria as a means of target-setting but these are not always linked closely enough to the different levels that individual pupils work at. As a result, pupils are not sufficiently clear as to what they need to do in order to improve. Strengths in the curriculum, especially through the use of SEAL (social, emotional and emotional aspects of learning) underpin pupils' outstanding personal development.

School self-evaluation is accurate. Through her own monitoring and evaluation, the headteacher has identified the strengths and areas of relative underperformance in the school. The governing body is particularly strong in challenging the school in relation to its performance and in ensuring that the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures is excellent. Pupils, parents and carers raised no concerns about safeguarding. Taking into consideration the quality of self-evaluation, the improvements made since the last inspection and sustained school performance, the school has the good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In Years 3 and 4, improve pupils' progress in writing by:
 - ensuring they have greater opportunities to write at length
 - reducing the number of lessons where photocopied worksheets are used.
- Strengthen the consistency of the use of success criteria with pupils by:
 - ensuring they are linked more closely to the levels at which individual pupils work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children start school with knowledge and skills that are expected for their age. All groups of pupils make at least good progress in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make more rapid progress than their peers. Pupils enjoy school and work hard. In lessons they work diligently and independently, for example in mathematical investigations and problem-solving and, as a result, make good progress. When working in pairs, pupils are successful, with strengths in the way in which they listen to and value the opinion of others. When asked to do so, they work successfully in groups, for example in music where they make their own compositions using a range of instruments. Pupils are mainly successful in using literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum, including individual research projects. Older pupils produce some high-quality multi-media presentations, for example on Ancient Greece. In most cases, pupils take great care and pride in the way they present their work, especially in mathematics.

Alongside their good achievement all pupils, including different groups, display outstanding personal development in several key areas. Their behaviour is of the highest quality throughout the day, including in lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes. Their social development is impressive. They show awareness and concern for each other and develop strong relationships. Attendance is above average and reflects pupils' obvious enjoyment of school. All groups of pupils are prepared successfully, both academically and socially, for transfer to secondary school. Pupils provide generous support to local and national charities. Through the school council, links with the Church and good interaction with the wider village community, pupils make an effective contribution to the school and wider community. As the result of requests from pupils, teachers introduced a self-assessment booklet in information and communication technology so that they can see the levels at which they work and what they must do in order to reach the next level. Pupils' awareness of safety issues is exemplary as shown by their conduct in evacuating the school when the fire alarm went off on both days of the inspection.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning
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2

Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use their questioning skills effectively to probe and challenge pupils' thinking, for example in asking them to explain their strategies for solving problems or finding patterns in number. All lessons have clear learning objectives which are explained to pupils although the success criteria by which pupils are able to assess their own learning are not always sufficiently helpful. Lesson introductions are usually brisk and challenging. Teachers mainly provide good opportunities for pupils to do their own research and, through this, use and apply key literacy and numeracy skills, for example in history and geography. However, the planned curriculum does not always offer enough challenge; there are examples of commercially-produced photocopied worksheets in pupils' books which do not extend pupils' thinking and creativity sufficiently. This, in turn, limits the development of writing skills. Pupils' work is assessed termly and teachers use the information to identify pupils at risk of falling behind and then put in place successful intervention programmes to support such pupils.

The take-up of extra-curricular activities is high and pupils enjoy the opportunities to develop their sporting and musical interests and abilities. Older pupils benefit from residential visits. Pupils' learning is enriched through focussed-subject weeks on themes, including for example, 'maths' and 'arts'. Pupils benefit from effective links with other schools, including Shaftesbury Sports College, together with other cluster and pyramid events.

The arrangements for children joining Reception are excellent. There are very high-quality links with the on-site pre-school which most children attend. The sharing of the outdoor learning area is particularly effective in preparing children for transfer. Staff provide a safe, secure and caring environment within which all pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. Links with outside agencies are excellent and this contributes to the outstanding progress in learning made by pupils

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

In the short time since her appointment, the headteacher has, through her own audit of school performance, identified in line with inspection findings the strengths of the school, together with those areas where it could do even better. There is a drive and determination to make the school outstanding that all staff share. In this small school, all staff have leadership and/or management roles and there are good procedures in place to monitor teaching and learning in subjects. While, the analysis of teaching and learning is detailed and thorough, actions to address areas of relative underperformance have not always been followed through with sufficient rigour and impact.

The governing body is very effective and a significant strength in supporting the school's sustained performance over time. Members ensure that all policies and procedures relating to child protection and safeguarding are reviewed regularly and that they comply fully with current legal requirements. The governing body is particularly strong in challenging the school and in holding it to account, for example, in the school's decision to split the current Year 1 between the Reception and Year 2 classes.

Discrimination is not tolerated in the school and it ensures that all groups of pupils make at least good progress during their time in the school. All pupils are included fully in all aspects of the day-to-day life of the school. The school is an integral part of the community it serves and it provides pupils with good opportunities to understand the diversity of life internationally, especially through sponsoring a child in Nepal. Through the school improvement plan, the school has identified the need to strengthen the national dimension of community cohesion.

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	2
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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress and by the time they start Year 1, their attainment is above the national and local authority average. The progress of boys in physical development and creative development is satisfactory rather than good. This is mainly linked to the school recognising that more resources are needed in the outdoor learning area, including those suggested by the children, such as bicycles and scooters. Children settle remarkably well into the day-to-day life of the school. They show good levels of sustained interest, for example in exploring computer games. They enjoy working and playing together, for example in throwing tennis balls into a net with the target of hitting the holes from one up to 10. As a result, they make good progress in recognising numbers.

There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of letters and sounds, and in the assessment of children's skills on entry to school as the focus for adult-led activities. Children are confident in working with adults and already show readiness to choose activities for themselves indoors and outdoors. Children record their own learning by choosing what to put in their 'scrapbooks', with teachers using the 'learning journey' as a successful way of recording and assessing children's on-going progress.

Partnerships with parents and carers are strong, especially in preparing children for joining the school. There are very effective partnerships with pre-schools and with other schools in the cluster which support staff and children in their learning and progress. The staff work as an effective team to monitor, assess and record children's progress.

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

Fifty-five per cent of questionnaires were returned which is above the national average return rate. The vast majority of parents and carers are fully supportive of all aspects of the school's work. Typical of the positive comments are: 'Motcombe primary is a very warm and friendly school, where children seem to mix easily across the ages. The older children take great care of the younger ones and are always so kind. We are particularly pleased with the amount of high quality music drama and sport which is offered at school both during the day and at after school club. We feel very lucky that our children are able to enjoy all that is offered'. In response to a few less positive comments, inspection evidence shows that the provision for pupils in Year 1 who are in the same class as children in Reception, is good and that the school meets their needs successfully.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Motcombe Church of England 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 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 87 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	60	19	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	65	17	35	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	22	46	20	42	3	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	50	20	42	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	29	60	16	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	27	56	16	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	69	12	25	2	4	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)	25	52	17	35	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	27	56	16	33	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	52	21	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	48	21	44	0	0	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	24	50	18	38	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	30	63	17	35	1	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



29 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Motcombe Primary School, Dorset SP7 9NT

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to Mrs Strange and myself when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you all in lessons and around the school. I would like to thank the school council for giving time to meet with Mrs Strange. You go to a good school and it does have a number of outstanding areas. These are the things that really stand out in your school.

- Your attainment in English and mathematics is above average by the time you leave Year 6 and improving year on year.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you have an outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe in school and in the wider world.
- You make good progress in most lessons because teaching is good and some of you make excellent progress.
- You are kept very safe in school by adults and you know exactly what to do when the fire alarm goes off.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governing body know where the school is successful and they are committed to giving you the best education they can.

Although you go to a good school, there are two things that we have asked your headteacher, teachers and governing body to do to help make it even better. These are to:

- give those of you in Years 3 and 4, more time to write longer stories and/or factual accounts
- make sure that when teachers use success criteria, they link it to the levels at which you work, in order for your learning to be even more successful.

You can help by asking your teachers if you are not clear about the success criteria for a lesson, and in asking your teachers if you would like more time when writing.

Yours sincerely

David Curtis
Lead inspector

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