

Buckland Newton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113776
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	395743
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Barron

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	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janis Hill
Headteacher	Nicola Ralph
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Barron

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent a total of five and a quarter hours observing seven lessons taught by three teachers and two sessions in the on-site pre-school. He heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read and made short observations of sessions on the teaching of phonics (pupils learning letter patterns and the sounds they represent). The inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, the headteacher, staff, parents and carers and also pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including school policies, governing body minutes, school development planning, pupils' work and records of pupils' learning and progress. The inspector observed and discussed pupils' behaviour and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures. He also analysed completed questionnaires from staff and pupils as well as 54 from parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is above the national average. These needs include behavioural difficulties and social and emotional problems. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the school's mixed Year 2, Year 1 and Reception Year class. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress. The school recently opened a pre-school provision on the school site which is managed by the governing body and therefore formed part of this inspection. The school has received several recent awards including Arts Council Goldmark and Rights Respecting School level 2.

The headteacher returned to the school in September 2011 following her year-long secondment to the acting headship of another school.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school which prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. A vast majority of parents and carers correctly believe that the school provides a good quality of education for their children. The school is not outstanding because the quality of teaching is not outstanding.
- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although outdoor facilities are limited, and in Years 1 to 4. Pupils then make outstanding progress in Years 5 and 6. By Year 6, attainment is comparable to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, with the exception of Years 5 and 6, pupils' progress in mathematics is not as strong as it is in reading and writing.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and of very high quality in Years 5 and 6. Lessons are well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers ensure that pupils requiring extra help with their learning receive the support they need to make similar progress to all other pupils.
- Pupils behave well, enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. They show respect for the feelings of others and this reflects one aspect of the school's good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. A small minority of parents and carers believe that some pupils find behaving well difficult in lessons, but pupils say that behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and that they feel very safe.
- Leadership and management are good, including the leadership of teaching and the management of performance. The headteacher works well with staff and governors to ensure the school regularly analyses its performance in order to improve its effectiveness and to ensure all pupils are always given equal opportunities to succeed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the spring term 2013, accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics and so raise attainment by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their ability to use and apply basic numeracy skills when involved in problem solving.

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- Improve the outdoor provision for children in the Reception Year so that it matches the good quality of indoor provision to ensure that children are provided with the facilities they need to develop all areas of their learning, including their physical development.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children often enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels below age-related expectations, especially in numeracy. This can vary from year to year because of the small number of children entering the school each September. The pre-school setting provides good-quality learning experiences for children and is providing a firmer foundation for children's learning on entry to the Reception Year in the future. However, the outdoor provision, which Reception Year children share with the pre-school, is small and has no covered area for children to use to improve their skills and understanding in all areas of learning, including their physical development.

Even so, children make good progress during their first year at school. The classroom that Reception Year children share with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils provides them with a stimulating and well-resourced indoor learning environment. The class teacher works well to ensure that lessons cater effectively for the diverse needs of the pupils of different ages and abilities. This was evident, for example, during a well taught numeracy lesson focusing on the numbers 'three' and 'four'. The tasks provided for the children and pupils were divided into seven levels of difficulty ranging from physically placing black spots onto felt material ladybirds to working out worded multiplication and division problems. All pupils made good progress and those requiring extra help with learning were well supported by both the teacher and the teaching assistant. However, it was noticeable that even the more-able pupils found difficulty applying their numeracy skills successfully when trying to work out mathematical problems correctly.

By Year 2, attainment in mathematics is below average while attainment in writing and reading is broadly average. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4, but still have some difficulty using and applying their numeracy skills. Outstanding teaching in Years 5 and 6 ensures that all pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, make exceptional progress. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is presently comparable to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress for this cohort of pupils, from their starting points, especially in mathematics.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and work hard because teachers make learning interesting and provide pupils with tasks that are not too hard or too easy for them to complete. An example of this was observed during a phonics lesson for Year 2 in which pupils improved their understanding of the use of prefixes such as

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'un', 'pre' and 'dis'. Pupils made good progress because the work they were asked to complete was well matched to their individual abilities and previous learning. Similarly, in a Year 3 and Year 4 lesson, pupils made good progress developing their reading skills because the class teacher ensured the books they were reading offered them just the right amount of challenge.

Parents and carers correctly believe that their children are making at least good progress. One parent and carer aptly summed up their views with the comment, 'My daughter is thriving at this school.' Another commented, 'The school has ensured that my children are keen to learn.'

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good over time. The vast majority of parents and carers agree. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils because teachers ensure that the work they are expected to complete in lessons is well tailored to their needs. Those requiring extra help with learning are also well supported by enthusiastic and effective teaching assistants. This was reflected in the teaching observed during the inspection, which was of good or better quality, and ensured that all pupils made at least good progress. In addition, younger pupils receive help developing their reading skills through frequent opportunities to read on an individual basis to volunteer helpers from the local community.

Teachers in all classes have high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Lessons are usually well paced and, when teaching is outstanding, pupils are absorbed in their work and make rapid and sustained progress. A typical example of this was observed during a literacy lesson to the Year 5 and Year 6 class which focused on the Titanic disaster. Outstanding teaching engaged pupils' interest and the pupils produced some excellent narrative writing which developed their use of adverbs and other describing words. Their choices of phrases to describe the fate of passengers, for example 'sucked into the black water', added to the impact of their writing and pupils enjoyed reading out their work with feeling and conviction to their classmates.

During discussions, pupils commented appreciatively that they enjoyed lessons and liked the way teachers often taught literacy and numeracy by combining different subjects together in order to make learning interesting. In addition, a scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display confirmed that teaching also promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development well. However, mathematics lessons do not provide pupils with regular opportunities to develop their ability to improve and apply their basic numeracy skills when involved in problem solving.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers feel that the school offers a safe environment for their children, although a few have concerns about behaviour in

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lessons. Pupils say that behaviour is usually good in the school, especially in lessons, although they are well aware that a very small number of pupils sometimes misbehave. However, they also say that there is very little disruption in lessons because teachers always cope with any signs of misbehaviour effectively. This was confirmed in the lessons observed, where pupils behaved well and displayed enthusiasm for learning. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions shows that behaviour is good over time too. Pupils also believe that there is very little bullying of any type in the school, including physical, emotional or cyber-bullying, and that adults always deal with any rare occurrences quickly and firmly. They are also very well aware of potential internet safety issues. This enables them to feel very safe.

Pupils have confidence that adults will always help them if they have a problem. As one pupil commented, 'We like our teachers and know that they are always there to help us.' Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above-average rates of attendance and good punctuality each day.

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher has displayed the vision necessary to ensure the school has recovered well from a period of disruption to leadership and management during her year-long absence. She has worked very effectively with staff and the governing body to ensure the school's monitoring and evaluation processes are now linked well to managing the performance of the school and monitoring the quality of teaching. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed and that discrimination of any type is not tolerated. All staff have leadership responsibilities and perform their duties effectively. Teachers and teaching assistants believe the school promotes their professional development very well and that this has helped to raise the quality of teaching. Systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils are good and have improved since the previous inspection. This has helped the school to maintain pupils' good achievement and also identify areas of provision in need of improvement. It is also a reflection of the school's strong capacity for future improvement.

The governing body is very well informed and supportive and offers the school a good level of challenge when required. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and are very active in the life of school. They have a very realistic idea of the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and successfully promotes pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of abilities, including sporting and musical skills. Pupils learn to play a variety of musical instruments including guitars and brass instruments. They enjoy taking part in the wide variety of extra-curricular activities the school offers them. In addition, pupils say they look forward to receiving regular visitors to the school and taking part in school trips, especially their residential trip to an activity centre in Weymouth.

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The school has developed very good relationships with parents and carers, who say that the school is a welcoming and friendly place. Safeguarding procedures meet all statutory requirements and staff and governors receive regular training about safeguarding issues and are aware of the importance of their role in protecting pupils.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



22 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Buckland Newton Church of England Primary School,
Dorchester DT2 7YB**

Thank you for making my visit to your school so enjoyable. I was impressed by the way in which you all worked hard in lessons and how much you enjoy school. I enjoyed listening to pupils playing a range of musical instruments from trumpets and trombones to recorders. I also really enjoyed talking to the Year 6 pupils about what they thought about the school. They told me that they believed they attended a good school and I agree with them.

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

- You attend a happy and friendly school which gives you a good start to your education.
- Teaching is good and helps you make above average progress.
- You all enjoy school and get on very well with each other.
- You behave well and feel safe at school.
- You are sure that adults will always help you if you have a problem.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to keep on improving the school.

I have asked your school to help you to improve your progress in mathematics by making sure that you have lots of opportunities to improve the way you use your numeracy skills when trying to solve mathematical problems. I have also asked the school to improve the outdoor area that children in the Reception Year and in the pre-school use.

You are lucky to attend such a nice school and all of you can help your school to get even better by working as hard as you can in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron
Lead inspector

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