

Charmouth Primary School

Lower Sea Lane, Charmouth, Dorset, DT6 6LR

Inspection dates 16–17 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The progress that pupils make from their different starting points is inconsistent and not enough pupils achieve as highly as they possibly could. There is too much variation between year groups.
- Teaching has not been effective enough to ensure all pupils make rapid and sustained progress over time.
- Teachers do not always use the information they have on the pupils to ensure learning activities are not too easy or too hard.
- Marking does not always provide clear guidance for pupils on how to improve their work and pupils are not given enough opportunities to make the necessary changes.
- There are not enough opportunities provided for pupils to practise their English and mathematical skills in other subject areas.
- Certain learning topics are not taught in enough depth.
- The skills of middle leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make are not developed sufficiently to contribute to improved outcomes.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has quickly identified aspects of the school that require further development to raise achievement and enhance teaching. She has begun to make the necessary improvements, with the increasing involvement of the governing body.
- The school staff are fully behind the headteacher's efforts to improve the school.
- Pupils in Reception make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and they feel safe and well looked after when in school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 10 lessons, some of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed a school assembly. During the inspection, Year 6 were involved in national assessment tests and on day two, Year 2 pupils were not taught by their class teacher but instead were working on a Forest School project led by an outside provider. Due to staff illness, the Year 5 class was taught by a long-term supply teacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and senior and middle leaders and telephone discussions were held with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised samples of pupils' work books.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents, including the school's information on pupils' recent progress, as well as planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors also took account of 31 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), a telephone call from a parent and one letter from a parent. They also took account of the views of staff through the 18 staff questionnaires completed.

Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lucy Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Charmouth Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school, with a high proportion of boys in most year groups in the school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services) is much lower than the national average. Currently there are no looked after children or pupils from forces families in the school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic backgrounds other than White British is much lower than average and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very low.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.
- The headteacher now in post took over in September 2012, having previously been the deputy headteacher at the school a number of years previously.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers use the information they have to match the learning tasks closely to the abilities of their pupils so there is good support for less able pupils and the more able are stretched to progress quickly
 - ensuring the quality of marking consistently provides pupils with clear guidance on how they can improve their work and pupils are able to quickly respond to the feedback teachers provide.
- Improve the curriculum so pupils' skills in writing and mathematics are developed and extended by:
 - providing pupils with more chances to practise extended writing
 - giving pupils increased opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in practical activities across the curriculum
 - ensuring that the planning of the curriculum is robust and ensures all subject areas are well covered.
- Improve leadership by developing the skills of the middle leadership team so they can take on greater responsibilities within the school in monitoring the progress pupils make and in reviewing the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not achieve well enough over time. Attainment in Key Stage 2 assessments is declining, though still remains above the national average for mathematics. The progress pupils make from their starting points in both English and mathematics is not good enough.
- Over a number of years, there has been a focus within the school on pupils' attainment rather than the progress they are making. The progress pupils do make has been, and continues to be, inconsistent between different year groups with pupils.
- Pupils enter the Reception class generally with skills that are typical for their age or a little above. During their first year in school, they make good progress due to effective teaching, with the development of their writing skills being noteworthy. Overall, by the time they leave Reception, they are well placed to start Year 1.
- Thereafter, pupils' progress in English and mathematics is not fast enough because teaching is not consistently well matched to individual needs, weaknesses in the curriculum provided are a barrier to pupils consolidating their learning, and middle leaders are not sufficiently effective in their monitoring role.
- Targeted additional support enables disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to make similar progress to their peers, although support in mathematics is less effective than support in English.
- The effectiveness of the small group or one-to-one sessions to support pupils eligible for additional funding from the pupil premium grant is currently under review. Initial figures suggest that gaps in attainment are not being closed quickly enough, with the gap in mathematics in Year 6 currently one term and in English three terms. There is a note of caution with these data as the numbers of pupils is small and outcomes do vary between years.
- The small number of pupils from ethnic heritages other than White British make similar progress to other pupils.
- The reading skills of pupils are generally in line with expectations in Key Stage 1 and 2. The school's own data for the current Year 1 group suggest that this year the school will have similar success in the national screening check when compared with last year. Pupils' reading journals record when pupils read at home and in class but there is no specific guidance from teachers as to how parents may help improve their child's reading.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it has, over time, not enabled groups of pupils to make fast enough progress. Currently this remains the case, with progress being inconsistent between some year groups.
- The information teachers have is not always used effectively to plan activities precisely enough to match the abilities of the pupils. As a result, some tasks do not challenge and extend the more able so the progress they make in lessons is slower than it could be. Teaching assistants provide effective support for less able pupils in class, but when pupils have to work independently, activities are not as effectively structured to ensure they achieve well, particularly in mathematics.
- The marking and feedback pupils receive is inconsistent. There is evidence of good practice in some classes, with teachers highlighting areas to develop and improve on. However, pupils do not always have opportunities to follow up on this guidance and make the improvements suggested quickly enough. As a result, some pupils do not always remember their improvement points for the next time. Marking is not being used consistently to move learning forwards.
- Pupils' targets are changed termly, or more often if the pupils are successful in activities, but pupils are uncertain of what they specifically have to do to move up. That said, pupils are

generally aware of their working levels.

- Teachers look to use a range of activities to enable pupils to learn and develop their understanding. In a mathematics class, pupils' misconceptions from the previous day were addressed and pupils developed their own two-part calculation questions. Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to 'real life' situations are somewhat limited in numeracy lessons and in other learning areas.
- The school looks to widen and enrich the learning experiences it provides, with visits to places of significance such as the At-Bristol Science Centre, where the pupils said the planetarium was particularly exciting. The school regularly uses the local environment of the beach for a range of activities such as creative work with a local artist and the local river for environmental studies. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils worked with a visitor from a Forest School to explore the need to care for the local environment, especially the trees that grow in it.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils feel well looked after and cared for in school. The school is effective in promoting good relationships and pupils get on well with each other and with staff. They say they feel safe and that there are few incidents of unkindness. If problems do occur, pupils say they are dealt with effectively by the staff. Pupils have a good understanding of personal safety in terms of stranger danger and road safety. Parents and carers overwhelmingly support the view that behaviour and safety are good.
- Pupils enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities within school. Older pupils act as librarians and younger ones take pride in being group leaders in guided reading sessions when they can 'act like a teacher and help someone'. The behaviour they display is mature and sensible around the school. At break and lunchtimes, pupils are active and play well together.
- In class, pupils have good attitudes to learning and engage well with activities. When given opportunities to work in groups, they demonstrate good collaborative skills. If, on occasion, individual behaviour is less than good, it is well managed by teachers and pupils say learning is rarely disrupted. The new behaviour systems are known to the pupils.
- The headteacher has worked hard to improve the attendance at school as a number of parents request leave during term time. The headteacher has actively discouraged this to ensure pupils are in school as much as possible. Attendance figures are now felt to be more accurate and show that attendance is generally in line with national averages.
- The school offers a good number of clubs to pupils to widen their experience and involvement within school. These range from sports based activities to French club and gardening club. They add to pupils' enjoyment of school and enhance their positive attitudes to learning.
- However, there is not a forum to discuss issues or to make suggestions, such as a School Council, which is frustrating for older pupils. The school acknowledges that there needs to be an avenue to explore pupils' views and is looking to address this.
- Pupils at Charmouth are polite and welcoming and are a positive asset to the school.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The headteacher, on her return to the school, has quickly reviewed its strengths and identified key aspects that require improvement. Development plans are in place and interim reviews provide governors with assessments of the progress the school has made so far.
- Due to illness in the leadership team, the headteacher has had to lead most of the initiatives and consequently the speed of change has not been fast enough. However, the desire to improve the outcomes for learners is shared by all staff, and the steps to achieve this are recognised as necessary and fully supported by the staff.
- Experienced staff have now been given responsibilities as middle leaders to secure improvements in the curriculum and in the tracking of specific groups of pupils. However, the

impact of this is yet to be seen in improved outcomes for pupils.

- The headteacher has drawn on support from the local authority, which has reviewed the work of the school and is providing support to improve the quality of teaching across the school. The local authority is looking to assist the headteacher further.
- New performance management systems that link teachers' salary progression to pupil outcomes are now in place. Staff are observed teaching more frequently so the headteacher has a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and learning within the school. Support has been provided to develop the quality of teaching through training that is linked to the school development plan. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated.
- The creative style of the school curriculum provides pupils with some enjoyable experiences. However, the overarching plan is not secure. This has resulted in some groups repeating topics unnecessarily and some aspects of the school curriculum, for example Christian Festivals, are missing. The headteacher has moved quickly to ensure that a new more effective curriculum will be in place for September 2013.
- Opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces in different subject areas are not well developed at the moment so pupils have limited opportunities to test their skills in lessons other than English. That said, the assemblies and moments of reflection within the existing curriculum do provide opportunities for the development of social, moral, spiritual and cultural qualities in the pupils. In Year 6, for example, pupils were given the opportunity to explore the important topic of considering the feelings of others through role play.
- The additional funding to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant has been used to provide one-to-one and small-group interventions. The school and the governors are beginning to monitor how effective the work has been in improving the literacy and numeracy skills of the pupils.
- Parents view the school in a positive light and feel their children are looked after well and are safe. A very small number expressed concerns about the progress their children have made during this year and over time, but they were in a very small minority.
- The swift way the headteacher has acted in identifying areas of concern in all aspects of the work of the school and the detailed development plans have put the school in a much better position to move forward and provide improved learning opportunities for all pupils.
- Appropriate support from the local authority has been sourced. With a cohesive staff behind the headteacher and a governing body with a greater understanding and opportunity to support the developments, the school has a clear capacity to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body draws from a diverse background with expertise in teaching and the financial sector. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas the school needs to develop. They have been able to access training to raise their awareness of the role of governors in school from the local authority. Consequently they are now more active in school, with individual governors having responsibility for monitoring different aspects of the school development plan. Governors are now more aware of pupils' progress data and becoming more confident in interpreting it. The governors are starting to track the progress of groups of pupils, for example those who are eligible for additional funding from the pupil premium grant, and generally are now in a better position to monitor how well groups of pupils are doing in school. They are now starting to hold the school to account for the progress the pupils make. The link between salary progression of teachers and outcomes for pupils and the new systems in place to assess this are understood. The financial position of the school is monitored carefully and the governors check that the procedures to ensure pupils' safety and well-being are robust and make sure pupils are well looked after.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113662
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	413241

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Melanie Harvey
Headteacher	Gillian Morris
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
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