

Trinity Church of England VA First School

Coopers Lane, Verwood, Dorset, BH31 7PG

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school benefits considerably from the drive and ambition of its headteacher to ensure teaching and achievement are of the highest quality. She is exceptionally well supported by other leaders, staff and governors in pursuing these priorities.
- Excellent systems for checking on the quality of the school's work and pupils' progress ensure any emerging weakness is speedily identified and addressed.
- Improvement since the previous inspection has been excellent and the school is especially well placed to maintain its high-quality provision.
- Leaders' monitoring and support of teaching are exceptionally strong. Consequently, teaching is outstanding and teachers' ability to help pupils recognise how they can improve and inspire them to do so is exemplary.
- Achievement is outstanding. Activities planned for pupils of different ability are very challenging and pupils' attainment is much higher than that seen in most schools, although the writing of some younger pupils is slightly behind their impressive reading and mathematical skills.
- Special activities to help pupils who are behind others to catch up are excellent. Consequently, they make outstanding progress. The most-able pupils are equally well supported and consistently attain high standards.
- The curriculum is especially well designed to engage pupils' interest, make learning relevant and promote their progress. Activities for Reception children are excellent.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. As a result, pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their relationships with adults and each other are excellent.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Consequently, they greatly enjoy school and work very hard.
- The governing body is very effective at fulfilling all its duties. Governors are very well informed about teaching quality and its impact on pupils' achievement. Governors hold staff to account for their work exceptionally well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons or parts of lessons, the majority of which were shared observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of other short visits to special activities intended to help pupils catch up, heard a sample of pupils read and scrutinised a sample of pupils' written work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, staff – including senior and middle managers, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the school's recent parent questionnaire as well as the 42 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to a small number of parents bringing their children to school.
- Responses from the 18 staff questionnaires were analysed.
- The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents including the school's records on current pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to school development planning, monitoring of the school's performance and safeguarding were also looked at.

Inspection team

Diane Wilkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Trinity is a smaller than average-sized first school. The number on roll is increasing.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is low and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides funding for pupils in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below average.
- The Orchard Nursery shares the school site and also provides after-school care for pupils who attend the school. This provision was not inspected as part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the strategies for raising attainment in writing so that it is consistently at least as high as in reading and mathematics by:
 - extending the activities for promoting younger boys' writing skills
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to check and correct the accuracy of their spelling.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children enter Reception with the skills generally expected at this age; although, for some children, mainly boys, their literacy skills are lower.
- Activities in Reception are highly motivating to children's learning and achievement. Consequently, when they enter Year 1, most reach a good level of development across all areas of learning. In communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and literacy, attainment is high.
- Outstanding teaching and learning in other year groups enable pupils to build exceptionally well on this very strong start and make excellent progress. In national assessments at the end of Year 2, attainment has been significantly above the national average since the school's previous inspection. By Year 4, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is high when compared to that found in most schools.
- Due to staff changes and absences, there was a slight dip in attainment in writing, relative to other subjects, in the younger classes in 2012. The school has been exceptionally effective at tackling this weakness, and attainment in writing by Year 2 in the 2013 national assessment showed that in this subject pupils were nearly a year ahead of the standards seen in the majority of schools.
- Some pupils, especially boys, find writing difficult and the school is working hard to ensure that, by Year 2, pupils write grammatically correct and well-punctuated sentences with interesting vocabulary. By Year 4, pupils write very well in a range of different formats, such as character sketches, stories or biographies. Their use of imaginative language is especially good; but, sometimes, their spelling of more complex words is inaccurate. Impressive improvement in writing skills in Reception is in the process of supporting boys' writing in the older year groups.
- The school's drive to raise pupils' phonic knowledge (the sounds letters make in words) saw a rise in pupils reaching the average level in the 2013 Year 1 phonics screening check. The success of this strategy ensures virtually all pupils reach, at least, average levels in reading by the end of Year 2, and around half exceed them.
- Attainment in reading continues to rise so that by Year 4 the large majority of pupils reach Level 4 two years ahead of the standards usually found at this age. Very few older pupils need extra support for reading. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 read widely for enjoyment and also very effectively to obtain information in a range of subjects.
- Excellent progress in mathematics has ensured pupils' rising attainment, especially over the last two years. Standards are well ahead of those usually found in most schools by Year 4. Pupils' calculation skills are excellent. By Year 2, pupils work very confidently with three-digit numbers and use these skills very well to work with measures, data or mathematical problems. Year 4 pupils attain highly, working with negative numbers, coordinates and a very wide range of shapes and measures. In one lesson seen, Year 4 pupils were very skilled at working out the type of calculation and method, working at a high level to solve problems.
- The school's very strong commitment to equality of opportunity is seen in the very effective programmes to help pupils who need to catch up. As a result, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language make excellent progress and achieve exceptionally well.
- The number of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is low. Those who receive it make excellent progress. They reach at least similar standards to those of others in English and mathematics by Year 2 and Year 4.
- The school is exceptionally effective at ensuring the most-able pupils consistently attain high standards. Their achievement is excellent.
- Outstanding teaching across different subjects, for example that seen in history, helps ensure pupils achieve exceptionally well in these subjects.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- High-quality support for teaching has ensured that excellent practice is very well shared across the school. Leaders provide exceptionally effective support for new staff, including those at the beginning of their teaching careers. Teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is uniformly outstanding and enables all pupils, particularly the most able, to make excellent progress.
- Pupils' outstanding learning is underpinned by the excellent relationships seen throughout the school community. Pupils want to do their very best and both teachers and teaching assistants are especially skilled in showing them how to do so.
- At the start of lessons, teachers tell pupils what learning is intended so all work to the same end, albeit at different levels, throughout the lesson. Teachers use various techniques to make the learning successful for all pupils and a range of well-chosen resources invariably supports learning very well. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils studied different types of invitations to identify which features they needed to include in the formal invitation to Katie Morag's party that they were to write.
- Learning is equally successful across all subjects. In Year 3 geography, for example, the local knowledge of pupils helped them draw a map of their route to school after first investigating a wide range of maps, including electronic maps and the globe. They successfully learned standard ways of representing features, resulting in their drawn maps being of very good quality.
- Learning activities are always interesting, highly relevant to pupils' experience and frequently great fun. This is clearly evident in Reception, where children are very engaged in learning. They excitedly showed the inspector the 'letters from elves' they had received, those they wrote in reply and the homes they were going to make that 'the elves had asked them to build'.
- Writing and reading are, currently, impressively taught from Reception onwards. Pupils, particularly younger boys who struggle with their writing, are being helped to achieve better in this skill from the quality of teaching they receive. Teaching assistants effectively reinforce teaching of key skills for individually identified pupils.
- Staff always help pupils to review and improve their work throughout lessons and make the very best progress. For example, a very effective discussion led by the knowledgeable teacher in a Year 1 mathematics lesson helped pupils to become very skilled at using the appropriate measuring equipment supplied.
- The marking of pupils' work is excellent in helping pupils to learn. Teachers' very helpful guidance is supplemented by pupils learning how to mark and evaluate their own work and that of others. The varied approaches to marking gives pupils excellent awareness of how to do even better. Pursuing this even further in terms of providing more opportunities for pupils to check and correct their spelling already features in the school's improvement planning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils, their parents and the school can take great pride in the exceptionally strong personal skills that pupils develop.
- From the time they start in Reception, children are helped to take responsibility for themselves, one another and the environment around them. They show considerable respect for adults and each other and their behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent.
- Pupils develop outstanding attitudes to learning. Their understanding of what they are learning helps them to develop into especially mature learners. They are exceptionally well prepared to make the very best of their future education.
- All pupils are unfailingly polite, kind to each and genuinely concerned if others around them are upset or, as they say, 'stuck at their work'. Pupils very willingly take on responsibility as playground monitors, making an excellent contribution to others' behaviour and safety during playtimes.
- The school's outstanding commitment to preventing discrimination and fostering good relationships makes the school a very happy and harmonious place to be. Bullying is extremely

rare, with pupils reporting that, 'Everyone is very kind.'

- The support provided for the few pupils who find consistently good behaviour difficult to maintain is outstanding – including through the nurture group. Consequently, these pupils' behaviour improves exceptionally well over time and their academic achievement is excellent.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Leaders make sure that safeguarding is a high priority and that entry to the school is secure and staff employed are checked for their suitability. Safety extends to ensuring pupils are very well equipped at dealing with potential hazards such as any bullying – cyber bullying in particular. The attention given to pupils' safety during the regular walks to the church is exemplary.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Very strong links with the local church and impressive assemblies ensure pupils' spiritual awareness is provided for very well. During the inspection, the reflective mood created by pupils' singing while the pupils entered the hall for assembly was of the very highest quality.
- Under the leadership of the school council, pupils' links with a Ugandan school and their support for pupils there is one example why pupils develop an excellent understanding of cultural diversity. They are exceptionally well prepared to become citizens in a multicultural society.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- At the root of the school's success are the excellent skills and very strong determination of the headteacher to ensure that teaching and achievement are outstanding. To aid her work, she benefits considerably from the very effective support of other leaders, including subject leaders, and the high level of challenge that governors set for them.
- Since the previous inspection, excellent procedures have been put in place to check pupils' progress. All who work with pupils are held responsible for this and teachers are required to provide very regular reports for leaders and governors, clearly setting out how any emerging weaknesses are going to be addressed.
- Outstanding practice in monitoring and supporting teaching ensures close links between this and pupils' progress. Excellent teamwork among staff allows them to share their expertise and adopt a coherent approach to overcome the weaknesses.
- The success of these monitoring and improvement strategies can be seen in how quickly the school has identified and successfully begun to overcome relative weaknesses in writing. Subsequently, the school has gone from strength to strength, surpassing the effectiveness seen at its previous inspection and placing it in a very good position to maintain its many strengths.
- Performance management of staff is used to very good effect to improve teaching and address whole-school priorities. The governing body benefits from the helpful information arising from the management of staff performance to help it make well-informed judgements about awarding salary increases.
- The curriculum provides exceptionally well for pupils of all ages and abilities and is very good at promoting their high achievement. Topics, such as 'traditional stories' and 'rescuers', are very carefully planned to engage both boys and girls. Activities are especially relevant to pupils so that they can see a reason for learning the skills and knowledge required. Tasks are always highly challenging, inspiring pupils to do as well as they can.
- Programmes for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are of very high quality, helping to ensure excellent development in these aspects.
- Safeguarding policies, practices and procedures are rigorous. All staff training is fully up to date and they and the governors are vigilant regarding pupils' safety and well-being.
- Most parents are very appreciative of what the school does for their children, as is shown by the school's December 2013 parental survey. They are supportive of the school in many ways, including helping their children at home. The links for home-school learning in Reception are outstanding. A few parents are unhappy that the school does not authorise holidays during term time, but the reasons have been clearly explained. Attendance has risen as a result and currently is above average.

- The local authority correctly recognises the school's many strengths. However, it still provides a good level of challenge and provided helpful advice and training to help the school address the weakness in writing in 2012.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school benefits considerably from a very astute governing body that carries out its role of challenging staff to continually move forward exceptionally well. Governors are very committed to training, for example in ensuring they are always up to date on safeguarding matters. They are well informed about data on pupils' progress and attainment so they can easily compare Trinity's performance with that of other schools locally and nationally. Recognising that they are not professional teachers, governors are very effective in gaining evidence of how well pupils are supported in their learning through their personal visits to the school. Consequently, they are exceptionally well placed to challenge the headteacher and other staff about the regular monitoring reports on teaching quality and how well this is promoting pupils' learning. Governors are fully involved in deciding the allocation of pupil premium funding, to provide extra support from very well qualified teaching assistants, and are satisfied that this provides excellent value for money in terms of the achievement of pupils who receive it. The additional sports funding has been allocated effectively to enhance pupils' well-being through extending the opportunities for team sports and increasing staff expertise in coaching these. Pupils report that they benefit from these activities, although it was not possible to observe any taking place during the inspection.

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	132767
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	441082

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Macdonald
Headteacher	Jane Green
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2011
Telephone number	01202 821704
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