

# Durweston CE VA Primary School

Durweston, Blandford Forum DT11 0QA

**Inspection dates** 21–22 October and 11–12 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The governing body does not check rigorously enough that important polices are working as they should.
- Governors' training has lapsed so governors do not always take the correct course of action when issues arise, including those relating to pupil safety.
- Working relationships between the school's senior leaders and a minority of staff are strained. Staff do not always follow the correct procedures when raising concerns because they do not believe that their concerns will be treated seriously.
- A noteworthy proportion of parents and staff have concerns about aspects of the school's work, including the school's leadership, behaviour and safety.
- Not all members of staff share the leadership's vision for the school and understand the part they play in tackling the priorities for improvement.
- While teaching is typically good, occasionally teaching assistants do not make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and marking does not routinely tell pupils how to improve their work.
- Occasionally, the tasks set for the most able pupils in Key Stage 1 are too easy.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school. Attainment is above the national average by the end of Year 6.
- Children make an excellent start to their life in school in the welcoming and stimulating pre-school setting.
- Teaching is good and at its most effective when teachers make learning exciting and motivate pupils to do well.
- Pupils are proud of their school and are enthusiastic learners. They show good manners and are sociable and articulate.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders have worked determinedly to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Additional government funding is used to good effect to help eligible pupils to achieve well.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors first visited the school in October 2014. Through no fault of the school, the inspection was considered 'flawed' as it was deemed to be incomplete. Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school in November 2014 to gather further evidence about the school's overall effectiveness.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons, and made brief visits to other lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, middle leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors met with the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors.
- The views of the 47 parents and carers who responded to Parent View were taken into consideration in planning the inspection. The inspectors talked informally to several parents and carers during the inspection.
- The inspectors took account of the 23 staff questionnaires returned.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work and heard pupils from different year groups read.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including information about pupils' performance and progress, the school's improvement plan, procedures for safeguarding students, the governing body's minutes of meetings, school policies and curriculum planning documents.

## Inspection team

David Marshall, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Ian Hancock, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jane Neech

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority, is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a pre-school setting, known as 'Handy-Paws', on the site, which is managed by the school's governing body. Almost all of the children transfer to the school's Reception class.

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

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - all staff are confident in following the correct procedures for raising concerns
  - all staff know the part they play in the school's drive for improvement
  - the governing body checks rigorously that statutory policies and procedures are followed correctly
  - governors' training is kept up to date
  - the school takes account of and responds to concerns raised by parents and staff.
- Improve teaching so that pupils learn exceptionally well in all lessons by:
  - ensuring that teaching assistants consistently make a positive difference to pupils' learning
  - ensuring that the tasks set provide a consistent level of challenge, especially for the most able pupils in Key Stage 1
  - implementing the highly effective practice used in the pre-school setting in the Reception year
  - making sure that teachers' written feedback indicates how pupils should improve their work and is followed up to confirm that pupils have addressed the weaknesses.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to access how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### require improvement

- The governing body does not check systematically that statutory policies are being followed. Important training for governors is not kept up to date, which weakens the governing body's oversight of the school. Currently, no governors are trained in handling allegations against staff. At times, individual governors are too quick to dismiss staff concerns or they do not follow procedures closely when issues arise.
- There are tensions in the working relationships between the school's leaders and a minority of staff. As a result, these staff lack confidence in the school's procedures for raising concerns. The agreed processes for reporting issues, including those relating to pupils' safety, are not always followed correctly.
- Although the school's leadership shows a positive sense of purpose towards continued improvement, this vision is not shared by all staff. While one teacher wrote, 'I am proud to be a member of this wonderful school', several staff expressed reservations about the quality of leadership in their questionnaire responses. In discussion, not all staff had a clear understanding of the school's priorities for improvement and felt their efforts were not always appreciated.
- Communication with parents is an area of concern for the school because there are significant differences between the views that are expressed. Parents spoken to during the inspection were very enthusiastic about all that the school offers. Nonetheless, responses to Parent View showed a mixture of support for the school. A significant minority of parents that responded are unsure about the quality of the school's leadership. Responses show that these parents express concerns about the information they receive about their child's progress and that their concerns are not always dealt with sympathetically.
- The headteacher's experience and determination to provide the very best education for all pupils have enabled the school to build on many of the successes noted at the time of the last inspection.
- Leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress to ensure a positive picture of good achievement. Leaders and governors use an appropriate range of evidence on which to base judgements about the management of teachers' performance. Teachers are set challenging targets and any progression in salary is closely dependent on pupils' achievement.
- Middle leaders are confident and experienced. They work well as a team and have created good action plans for the future. These action plans are clear and checked regularly to ensure they are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers and leaders are developing strategies for assessing pupils after the introduction of the new National Curriculum that build on their current good practice. They are using partnerships with local schools effectively to share effective practice and refine their plans.
- Plans for different subjects provide a wide range of opportunities for good-quality learning. New topics from the revised National Curriculum have been incorporated very well into the school's existing plans. These are broadened and enriched by a comprehensive programme of visits and events that take good account of preparing pupils for life in Britain today. The broad range of subjects offered meets the range of pupils' interests well.
- Pupils enjoy taking part in the wide range of out of school activities, including sports, music and art. These opportunities, coupled with the numerous chances pupils are given to take on additional responsibilities, promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. These qualities were particularly evident when pupils from all year groups observed a reflective silence as an act of remembrance.
- The school's leaders ensure that those pupils who receive additional government funding develop secure skills, particularly in reading and mathematics. As a result, these pupils in all year groups make good progress, and their attainment at the end of Year 6 is above the national average.
- Very good use is made of the primary school sports funding. There has been a thorough evaluation of its impact on improving teachers' skills and confidence. This has led to a reallocation of funds to employ more specialist staff to deliver high-quality sessions for pupils, as well as training to teachers. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the dance sessions introduced as a result of the funding.
- The additional funding has been used to enable pupils to take part in more inter-school competitions. Their joy in reporting on their very recent success against another local school was a pleasure to share. Pupils are keen to take up different sports, and clubs are well attended.
- Procedures for keeping pupils safe meet statutory requirements. The school keeps detailed records of the actions taken when pupils are vulnerable that ensure they receive help in a timely manner. Leaders rigorously monitor pupils' attendance and behaviour to good effect.
- The local authority provides much appreciated support, but it was unaware of the weaknesses identified at this inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Despite some significant strengths, the effectiveness of governance is weakened by the insecure implementation of a few important policies.
- Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and achievement of the school. They offer very strong support to the headteacher in the drive for higher standards of achievement. Their knowledge is based on first-hand experience as they are regular visitors to the school and each of these visits has a clear focus.
- Governors know how good the quality of teaching is and how the management of teachers' performance has been used effectively to improve the quality of teaching. They know how well pupils are doing compared to those nationally and locally, including those eligible for additional government funding support. Governors ask detailed questions that show their understanding of the progress made by all pupils.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Despite suitable training, not all staff are confident in reporting concerns. As a result, there are inconsistencies in the school's promotion of safe practices such as alerting colleagues when they have a concern.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are detailed. For example, there is a comprehensive policy covering the use of mobile phones and cameras in the pre-school setting. This policy needs to be formally adopted to cover the rest of the school. All staff are trained at the appropriate level and the school keeps detailed records that staff have been trained and that important policies have been read.
- Pupils understand how to keep safe because they are taught well. Frequent lessons, assemblies and events ensure they understand the risks associated with the internet, water, cycling and the roads. The school draws on the specialist knowledge of other agencies to good effect.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Throughout the school, pupils are keen to participate and demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning across a range of subjects and activities.
- Pupils settle quickly to their work and cooperate well with staff and with each other. They know the rewards and sanctions system and regard it as fair and helpful. Pupils were proud to show off the badges they get for 100 headteacher's points.
- Pupils enjoy taking up the numerous opportunities for additional responsibilities that are on offer in the school. They realise the duties and importance of being head boy or head girl, librarians, lunchtime monitors and house captains.
- In discussions, pupils were very knowledgeable about different forms of bullying, including those related to internet use. Pupils said that they could not remember any bullying incidents occurring. They were very confident in the ability of staff to manage any that did occur.
- Inspection evidence shows that where it is necessary to employ more extensive support for the few pupils with known behavioural problems, leaders make effective use both of the school's own well-trained staff and external agencies, with whom they liaise well, to maximise pupils' chances of success at school. School records show that exclusions from school are extremely uncommon.
- Pupils' attendance is well above the national average because, as pupils said, they all enjoy coming to school.
- Very little disruptive behaviour was seen during the inspection and pupils report that it occurs rarely. On those very few occasions when low-level disruption occurs, it is dealt with quickly and quietly by staff. On a very windy day the younger pupils were extremely excited, but behaved well, when flying their 'kites' on the school field.

## The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers create a stimulating learning environment which promotes their high expectations of achievement and behaviour. Teachers know their pupils well and have excellent working relationships with them.

- Teaching in the pre-school setting is outstanding. High-quality assessments and the close involvement of parents ensure that children make an excellent start to their time in the school.
- Teaching in the Reception/Year 1 class provides exciting experiences in a happy environment. As a result children consolidate the excellent start they have made to become confident and eager learners.
- Teachers plan work for pupils that is securely based on accurate assessment of their abilities. Tasks are interesting and allow pupils to develop their understanding steadily. Pupils are constantly challenged to think for themselves and to look for solutions to problems. For example, Year 2/3 pupils were successfully encouraged to develop their understanding of symmetry by folding and cutting and experimenting to see if they were right.
- Across the school, teachers' secure knowledge of different subjects makes a positive difference to pupils' learning, especially in literacy, reading and mathematics.
- Overall, teachers cater for the most able pupils well. Tasks are modified well to give opportunities for pupils to investigate and try out their ideas. Teachers are very skilful in drawing out pupils' learning and understanding through detailed questioning. While progress and standards for this group are good or better, occasionally they are not challenged throughout the lessons, such as in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points because they are well taught. Expectations for these pupils are as high as those for others and tasks are refined carefully to ensure they succeed. Progress regularly exceeds expectations and many pupils achieve standards in line with all pupils.
- The quality of marking varies. Where it is at its best, such as in mathematics in the Year 1/2 class, it contributes well to the success made by the pupils. Occasionally, pupils are not clear how to improve their work and this limits their progress, especially when comments are not followed up. The quality of verbal feedback is very good and contributes successfully to the good or better progress that most pupils make on a daily basis.
- Teaching assistants are an integral part of the teaching team. Usually, but not always, they make a strong contribution to pupils' learning because they are skilled and effective in supporting all pupils. Not all teaching assistants know the school's priorities for improvement or the part they should play in tackling them.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children start in the pre-school setting and in Reception their personal and academic skills are in line with those typical for their age. Good progress overall, especially in personal and social development and early reading skills, ensures that most children's skills and knowledge are above levels expected for their age when they enter Year 1.
- Progress in reading is strong, underpinned by the good teaching of words and sounds (phonics) in all year groups. Results in the Year 1 phonics screening tests are usually above the average. While results dipped last year, the same pupils in Year 2 are now catching up as a result of the effective teaching they receive.
- Overall, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen gradually in the four years since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is slightly above the average. Even those pupils who find reading and writing difficult acquire skills very close to those expected at this age. Rightly, the school has identified the need to increase the proportion of the most able pupils that achieve the higher National Curriculum level 3.
- The Year 6 pupils that left the school in 2013 included a large group of pupils who joined the school in the later stages of Key Stage 2 with gaps in their learning. These pupils made good or better progress, but in some cases did not catch up enough to reach the standards expected for their age by the time they left. Unvalidated results for the Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2014 show standards have risen to well-above-average levels again this year.
- Standards in reading are especially high. By the time pupils reach Year 5 and Year 6, they are confident readers and enjoy reading. As a result of the school's encouragement, they read a wide range of texts, which supports their learning well. Pupils also make good gains in developing their writing skills and attain levels above those expected for their age. Year 6 pupils that left the school in 2014 had made significantly better progress in writing than in most other schools so their attainment was the highest the school had achieved for four years.
- Mathematics has been a development priority over the past year. This clearly shows in pupils' work, which demonstrates an increasing understanding of more demanding tasks. Pupils are able to apply the mathematical skills confidently and their attainment is rising.
- Overall, the most able pupils are challenged well and their achievement is good. By Years 5 and 6 they

show a strong capacity to push themselves on further. In reading they excel, consistently reaching well-above-average levels by the end of Year 6. Occasionally, the most able pupils find the work is too easy, especially in Years 1 and 2.

- The success of the school's strong commitment to providing equality of opportunity is evident in the good achievement of those pupils receiving additional funding. The large majority were a long way behind their peers at the start of Reception. By the time these pupils leave, their attainment is often above that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, but remains some way behind their classmates in school.
- Rightly, the school has made it a priority that pupils who are eligible for additional funding catch up quickly to achieve as well as their classmates in school. Last year's figures show that these pupils were around a year behind their classmates at the end of each key stage in reading, writing and mathematics. These figures were affected by the high proportion of eligible pupils that also have additional needs.
- Strong support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs enables them to achieve the demanding targets set for them in the younger year groups. In Key Stage 2 their progress accelerates further and they achieve well.
- School evidence shows that pupils attain high standards in other subjects such as music and design and technology. Opportunities to participate in a range of sports activities help pupils to gain new skills.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children make an excellent start in the very well-managed 'Handy Paws' pre-school setting. They are well looked after in the stimulating and well-stocked classroom and outside areas. Parents and carers are delighted by the way their children settle in and gain confidence so quickly.
- Exceptional teaching from the childcare manager and the childcare support assistants ensures tasks and activities are challenging and focused on supporting the needs of each child.
- Children continue to make good progress in the Reception/Year 1 class. Good leadership means all staff are trained well to accurately evaluate the progress children are making to meet their individual needs. However, not all of the approaches that work successfully in the pre-school are established in this class.
- It was impressive to see children who had been in the class for only half a term showing the care and concentration needed to carry out challenging reading tasks. They were enjoying the challenging sounds and stories. Children were confident to speak to adults and listened quietly to instructions. Behaviour is extremely well managed and children are kept safe.
- Tasks take into account all required areas of learning and are adapted quickly to follow the interests of the children, which ensures they are engaged at all times. This was observed during a whole-class discussion about kites and whether they were pushed or pulled.
- The outdoor space is used creatively and children look after it well. Children enjoy creating their own trails, which develops their physical skills, and are supported ably by the teaching staff.
- Assessment is thorough and involves parents and carers on a very regular basis. The wide range of evidence is evaluated carefully. Good use is made of the experience of staff in checking and validating their evidence to make sure judgements are accurate.
- Children are well prepared for their future learning in Year 1.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113798
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	444102

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	143
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Angell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz Wesley-Barker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 April 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01258 452277
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