

Loders Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Loders, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 3SA

Inspection dates 19 and 25 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Since the previous inspection, the school's leadership and management have declined from outstanding to being inadequate. The headteacher, leaders and governors have been ineffective in securing teaching of a sufficiently high quality to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- The headteacher's and leaders' strategies for engaging with parents and carers are weak. Several parents and carers express little confidence in the school's leadership. They feel their views and concerns are not listened to or addressed.
- Staff morale and confidence in the headteacher are very low. Although development plans identify the correct areas to improve, the headteacher has not ensured that these are consistently followed through.
- Instability within the governing body since the previous inspection has led to a very poor level of support and challenge being provided to the school.
- Teaching has not been strong enough. As a result pupils' attainment has been declining at the end of Key Stage 1 for the past three years, especially in writing.
- The most able pupils do not make the rapid and sustained progress of which they are capable, and too few pupils reach the highest levels in writing at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils' behaviour needs to improve. Some pupils settle slowly to their work and become restless when they are not sufficiently engaged in their learning.
- Activities provided for children in the early years are not always appropriate for their age.

The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils attain well in reading by the end of Key Stage 2. Over half of the pupils attained the higher Level 5 in 2014.
 - Pupils feel safe in school and attend regularly.
 - Good individual care, attention and support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs foster these pupils' personal and academic development well.
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Information about this inspection

- The inspection was called by Ofsted due to a number of complaints being received concerning the leadership and management of the school.
- During the inspection seven lessons were observed with the headteacher. The inspector listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, two acting assistant headteachers, a local authority representative, members of the governing body, and groups of pupils.
- The inspector looked at planning and self-evaluation, improvement plans, assessment information, safeguarding policies and procedures, examples of pupils' work in the Year 5 and 6 class and in displays around the school, and a range of policy documents.
- The inspector took account of 48 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and letters from four parents and carers, as well as consulting informally with many parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day. The views of 16 staff, who responded to the inspection questionnaire, were also analysed.
- Due to unforeseen circumstances the inspection was interrupted and, having begun on 19 November 2014, was completed on 25 November 2015.

Inspection team

Joyce Cox, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.

Information about this school

- This school is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. It is made up of four mixed-age classes. Early years reception children attend full time and are taught in a class shared with Year 1 pupils.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The number of pupils has declined from 79 at the last inspection to 62.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is low. This is additional government funding to give extra support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is roughly 20%, which is slightly above average.
- The school meets the government floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has had co-headship from 2010 until 2012. One headteacher retired in 2012. The remaining headteacher is now full time. The six teaching staff are all part time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be at least good or better throughout the whole school and so raise pupils' achievement, especially in writing, by ensuring that:
 - teaching is consistently challenging and keeps pupils engaged, well behaved and focused on learning
 - all pupils are given work which is neither too easy nor too difficult
 - all pupils are very clear what they have to do when given a task
 - teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in a range of subjects
 - pupils strengthen their grammatical skills by writing regularly at length
 - activities match accurately the levels at which the pupils are working, especially for the most able pupils, and including children in the Reception Year.
- Improve the leadership of the headteacher and the impact of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - devising ways to restore staff and parents' and carers' confidence in the headteacher and developing ways to communicate effectively with all parents and carers
 - providing training for middle leaders so that they can improve their skills of monitoring and evaluation
 - developing the role of the governing body so that it supports and challenges school leaders more effectively.

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

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- The school is in a state of decline. School leaders are unable to demonstrate the capacity to secure further improvement. There have clearly been considerable tensions between the current headteacher and staff and governors since 2012. In January 2014 the local authority commissioned an independent review of leadership and management because of concerns about the headteacher. An action plan to improve relationships, drawn up by the headteacher, staff and governing body, following the review's recommendations has not as yet made an impact.
- There is no common sense of purpose between the headteacher and the staff. Half of the staff have expressed considerable reservations about the headteacher's competency in leading and managing the school. Some doubt that she has the necessary skills to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning effectively. This view was substantiated by inspection evidence which indicated that teaching and learning require improvement and is not good as stated in the school's self-evaluation document.
- Over time the headteacher's monitoring of teaching and the evaluations of actions to improve pupils' learning have not been rigorous enough to sustain improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Additional funding to provide support for disadvantaged pupils is used well. Only a very small number of disadvantaged pupils have attended the school in recent years. The school reviews their progress carefully to make sure that the additional support they receive is helping them achieve well.
- Not all pupils have the same chances of success in their learning because teaching does not always cater equally well for all pupils' abilities, particularly the most able. Thus, the school is not effectively promoting opportunities for all pupils to learn equally well.
- Some middle leaders and managers are new to the post and although very enthusiastic, have not yet received training to develop their skills to accurately monitor and evaluate the school's work.
- The curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in literacy, reading and mathematics through practising them in other subjects. In particular, pupils do not always have enough chances to develop their grammar and punctuation skills.
- The school has begun to consider how to implement the new National Curriculum and ensure pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain, which are identified as priorities in the development plan. However, in discussions with older pupils they said that they wished they had more music and art lessons. They say they used to enjoy these subjects but have not had them for some time. Teachers' timetables and curriculum planning indicate that pupils' views are correct.
- Sports funding is used well to provide specialist sports coaches for cricket, gymnastics and swimming. More sports apparatus has been purchased and there has been additional training for staff.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements.
- The local authority has not acted with sufficient resolve to tackle the problems facing this school.

■ The governance of the school:

- There has been a lack of continuity on the governing body since the previous inspection. Governors have not tackled weaknesses in leadership, teaching and pupils' progress until very recently.
- Governors know that pupils' progress requires improvement and are aware of the urgent need to maintain a strong focus on teaching in order to secure better outcomes for the pupils. They know how pupil premium funding is allocated and that its use is effective in helping disadvantaged pupils to make progress. They receive information about the impact of this additional support. They have a growing understanding of how pupils' achievement compares to that in all schools nationally.
- Performance arrangements for the headteacher and other staff are in place, although governors, until recently, have not been suitably involved in making decisions to reward good performance and tackle areas of weakness. Governors have undertaken training in safeguarding and check that all statutory requirements in relation to protecting children are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Inconsistencies in teaching and expectations of behaviour have had a negative effect on the attitudes of a few pupils to learning. Most pupils want to learn, however a few lose

concentration and do not learn as much as they could. This becomes particularly evident when lessons lack challenge and activities do not accurately match pupils' varying abilities.

- A minority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour but all the parents and carers who spoke to the inspector in the playground said that in their view behaviour is good. Pupils themselves say it is 'mostly good' but disputes can occur when pupils play football at break times and they feel they need a referee.
- Pupils' attendance has been below that of pupils in other schools, but has improved this year, and is now above average.
- Pupils are keen to take on a range of duties in school, including acting as assembly monitors, playground leaders and shed managers. Older pupils realise they have to be good role models to younger pupils.
- The school's commitment to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that they are keen to learn about different people's beliefs and are developing a secure understanding and appreciation of British values.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe at school. They say there is no bullying now and if it were to occur it would be dealt with fairly and quickly. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying including those related to social media and text messaging.
- Pupils have also been taught how to use computers safely.
- The headteacher and staff make pupils' safety a high priority and follow agreed procedures closely. For example, leaders maintain the school site and buildings very thoroughly and ensure that potential risks are thoroughly assessed to keep pupils safe.
- The buildings are secure and new staff are rigorously checked prior to appointment.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is too variable both across the school and between part-time teachers sharing the same class. Not enough pupils make good progress. Too few pupils reach the higher standards of which they are capable, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always provide pupils with enough challenging activities to ensure that all groups of pupils are fully engaged and interested in their learning. Consequently some pupils become restless and do not make adequate progress.
- More-able pupils often have to wait to get started on their tasks while the teacher's attention is being given to other pupils. This restricts opportunities for them to accelerate their progress.
- Mathematics teaching relies too much on number-work with little opportunity for pupils to apply their skills to real-life situations or to engage in problem-solving activities.
- In the Year 5/6 class, English tasks are normally skilfully and successfully matched to all pupils' needs, but this is not yet consistent practice in all classes. In addition, some teachers do not always explain to pupils what they have to do to complete a task and pupils are not sure what is expected of them.
- Teaching of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils is good, with additional support provided when needed. Tasks are accurately adapted to ensure these groups of pupils can take part in all lessons and make good progress.
- Teachers' marking, particularly in the Year 5/6 class, helps pupils to improve their work. This was evident in a detailed scrutiny of older pupils' work, where the guidance marked in their books provided pupils with a clear indication of how they have achieved and what they needed to do next.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been declining since 2010. It was below expected levels in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics. No pupils attained the higher Level 3 in writing or mathematics. The arrangements made to cover high levels of staff absence have not brought about good teaching. Consequently, pupils' achievement has been significantly hampered over the last three years in the Reception/Year 1 class.
- Standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar were below average at the end of Year 6 in 2013. Although standards rose in 2014, too few pupils attained the higher Level 5.

- Pupils underachieve because the work teachers set is not always matched well enough to their needs. The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently because work is often not difficult enough to test their thinking. All too often pupils have to complete work that is too easy for them before moving on to activities that really challenge them and make them think.
- Pupils' attainment over the last three years has been broadly only average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils achieve well in reading, and older pupils can discuss the varied techniques of authors such as Michael Morpurgo and David Walliams with a degree of fluency.
- The proportion of Year 6 pupils making expected progress is in line with national averages in mathematics and English, but too few of the most able pupils reach the higher levels they are capable of by the end of Year 6, especially in writing.
- The school has only a very few disadvantaged pupils but they make good progress, and their attainment is often better than that of their peers in school and pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because their needs are carefully identified, and plans are put in place to enable staff to know how to help them develop their skills and understanding.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children enter Reception with skills that are typical for their age, but the proportion reaching a good level of development on entry to Year 1 varies from year to year. In 2013, it was below average as children did not make enough progress to prepare them properly for the next stage of their education.
- Planning for children's learning and play activities is not always organised well enough. Reception children are often taught alongside Year 1 pupils, but staff do not make allowances to cater for their differing level of understanding. Some of the learning required of them is too difficult for them to comprehend. For example, in following the tale of 'Rama and Sita' they had very little understanding of the story because of its complexity, being suited to the more advanced abilities of older pupils.
- The leadership of the early years requires improvement. The recently appointed new leader is working hard to improve the provision. She keeps detailed 'learning journeys' to chart children's achievement as they progress through the areas of learning. New policies and procedures are currently being formed, and the curriculum is becoming more aligned to the needs of reception children.
- Recent improvement has led to an above-average number of children being deemed to have reached a good level of development on entry to Year 1 in 2014.
- Children make good progress in learning their sounds and letters. This is because the teaching assistant uses a good range of interesting activities which engage the children. Children are becoming more skilled in their phonics and beginning to put sounds together, for example, in deciphering words such as 'cat' and 'hat.'
- The children's behaviour, safety and personal development are good. Children usually follow instructions well, are getting to know class routines, take turns and share resources sensibly.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	113773
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	449397

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	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Dutt
Headteacher	Shirley Gibbs
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2009
Telephone number	01308 423418
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