

Durweston CofE VA Primary School

Durweston, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 0QA

Inspection dates

29–30 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There have been substantial changes in staffing and in the membership of the governing body, and prolonged absences of the headteacher, since the previous inspection. This has restricted the leadership's ability both to carry out a detailed evaluation of the school's current performance and to have a clear strategic vision for the next stages in the school's development.
- There is no agreed, systematic approach to how school leaders monitor pupils' progress. This prevents subject and other leaders from having a precise understanding of how to bring about further improvements.
- Attendance is too low for a small number of pupils, particularly for some disadvantaged pupils. This adversely affects their progress.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunities to apply and develop their writing skills in subjects outside of English lessons.
- Although enthusiastic and committed, the new governing body has had limited time in which to analyse all aspects of the school's performance in depth and plan strategically for the future.
- Staff targets are not precise enough to help them improve their performance and be more accountable for pupils' achievement

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has improved staff morale and has their full support in building on strengths from the previous inspection.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well in English and mathematics. They make good progress from their individual starting points. The pre-school gives children an outstanding start to their school life.
- Teaching is good. Teachers assess pupils' progress well and make more effective use of teaching assistants to improve learning than at the previous inspection.
- Pupils behave well and are well cared for. They enjoy lessons and other opportunities provided by the curriculum.
- Parents recognise the improvements taking place and are very supportive of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, by:
 - ensuring long-term stability in the school's leadership in order to increase the school's capacity to build on its strengths and secure further improvements
 - developing the ability and capacity of leaders and managers at all levels to monitor learning more systematically
 - ensuring that staff targets are matched appropriately to their individual needs and responsibilities
 - further increasing the knowledge and expertise of the governing body in supporting and holding the school to account.
- Improve the attendance of the few disadvantaged pupils who do not come to school regularly or punctually.
- Give pupils, especially the most able, opportunities to develop their writing in subjects outside of English lessons.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Staff changes and absence have contributed to the difficulties involved in formulating realistic strategies to enable the school to move further forward.
- Although governance is now more effective than at the time of the previous inspection, the governing body, which comprises mostly new members, has not been in a position to hold the school fully to account and plan effectively for future improvement.
- The leadership's evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, while broadly accurate, has not been fully updated because of recent instabilities in staffing.
- Subject leaders and other staff with middle management responsibilities are very conscientious and committed to carrying out their responsibilities. However, the leadership team's monitoring of teaching and learning, although becoming more precise, is not yet as systematic as it might be. This inhibits precise and effective improvement planning.
- Although staff have targets set to make them accountable and to develop their practice, these are not specific enough to their particular needs.
- Although attendance is improving, the school finds it difficult to reduce persistent absence in a small number of cases.
- The great majority of parents are very supportive of the school and the acting headteacher. They recognise her determination and hard work in ensuring that pupils continue to flourish academically and do well in their personal development. A typical comment from parents was, 'My child is happy and looks forward to going to school each day'.
- However, some parents have been concerned at the number of staff changes and uncertainty about the future. Parents who wrote to the inspector or spoke to him felt that the authorities had not given them enough information about what was happening to the school.
- Several strengths from the previous inspection have been maintained and built on further. Pupils' achievement and teaching remain good, and pupils' behaviour has improved. This demonstrates that, with stability, the school does have the capacity to improve still further.
- The school has adapted its curriculum and methods of assessment well to ensure that pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress.
- The leadership has used pupil premium funding to help several disadvantaged pupils make good progress, for example by providing them with more targeted support.
- The leadership uses the primary sports funding effectively to create opportunities for pupils and to increase staff expertise. For example, outside specialists coach pupils, and there are now more opportunities for after-school sports activities and inter-school competition. Pupils told the inspector how much they valued these opportunities.
- Staff work effectively to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. This is done mostly through curriculum subjects, but also in assemblies and opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and help each other. This is a very inclusive school, in which all pupils have the opportunity to do well in a very supportive atmosphere. The school also emphasises the importance of British values. For example,

it shows pupils how to practise democracy and exercise responsibility when selecting older pupils for posts of responsibility in the school.

- The local authority brokered support for the school after the previous inspection and recognises the many improvements which the school has made during this time.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not yet implemented an effective system for matching staff pay closely to performance and responsibilities, and recognise this as an area for improvement. They are also very aware of the need to resolve issues relating to the stability of the school's leadership and management structure. However, governance has improved its effectiveness considerably since the previous inspection.
- Substantial changes in the membership of the governing body have taken place alongside a more systematic allocation of governors' responsibilities and a more active approach to monitoring the school's effectiveness.
- Governors understand how well pupils achieve in relation to other pupils elsewhere in general terms, although new governors have not yet got to grips with the precise achievement of particular groups of pupils. Governors understand the strengths in teaching. They only partially understand the impact of pupil premium funding, although they are more knowledgeable about the positive benefits of the sports funding.
- Governors are now more active in asking questions and challenging the leadership about its strategies for improving the school. They work very well with the acting headteacher and have contributed to improvement in staff morale. Governors take advantage of the opportunities for their own professional development. For example, they are fully aware of their responsibilities for all aspects of safeguarding. They are now better equipped to support the leadership on the path to further improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has addressed safeguarding concerns from the previous inspection.
- There are appropriate policies and procedures in place, covering all aspects of safeguarding, including child protection.
- All staff and governors have received recent training to update them on issues such as combating radicalisation and forced marriage, and they show a good understanding of how to recognise concerns and deal with them appropriately. Teaching staff, teaching assistants and governors all benefit from appropriate training.
- The school has procedures in place to deal with sensitive issues such as the availability and use of mobile phones. The school takes internet security seriously and also gives appropriate advice to parents.
- Staff work hard to keep the school site secure. Any accidents or incidents are recorded and dealt with appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The school has maintained the good quality of teaching found at the previous inspection, even though there have been several changes in teaching staff.
- Teachers comment on the good opportunities they have to develop their skills and knowledge further. Some of these opportunities come from links with other schools

within the local learning pyramid. These allow teachers to establish common expectations of standards across a group of schools. Teachers have found this useful, for example in developing their expertise in mathematics and in assessing writing.

- Teaching assistants work more effectively than at the previous inspection. They now plan and work more closely and regularly with class teachers, as well as working outside the classroom with small groups of pupils. This has assisted the progress particularly of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers have taken on board the expectations of the new curriculum and assessment arrangements. They are now more used to planning for and considering the learning needs of all groups of pupils as well as individual learners.
- Teachers are very successful in meeting children's needs in the pre-school and Reception. Children respond well to teachers' high expectations and make rapid progress.
- Phonics is taught very effectively, as is evident from results in the Year 1 check. These results are well above national expectations. Teachers also teach reading well, so that it is one of the strengths of the school. Most pupils enjoy reading.
- Mathematics has been a focus for improvement in the recent past and this subject is now taught more effectively to all groups of pupils, as is evident in pupils' increased progress.
- Teachers assess pupils well. Pupils told the inspector that they appreciate the constructive comments which teachers make in their books. Pupils also know their targets and feel that they help them make good progress.
- Writing is taught well most of the time, so that pupils usually make good progress. However, occasionally teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in their writing outside English lessons. This occurs when teachers set tasks which are not challenging enough, and when this happens the most able pupils in particular do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils greatly enjoy the opportunity to take on responsibility. The school council functions well, and pupils recognise the positive impact it has made. The head boy and head girl speak eloquently and proudly about their roles, for example in giving out awards, as the inspector observed in an assembly. Older pupils enjoy helping younger children, for example with their reading. Pupils raise funds for charity and help to create class charters.
- Pupils benefit from a breakfast club and an after-school club, which gives an enjoyable start and finish to the school day. Pupils now enjoy a wider range of out-of-class activities, including music and various sports.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about the trips they make outside school, including residential visits. They also enjoy opportunities to use facilities at other nearby schools.
- Pupils, including those who are potentially vulnerable, are cared for very well in school. Pupils are confident of being looked after well, and parents confirm this.

- The school's Christian ethos is celebrated in various ways, including displays and activities in assembly. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils, staff and parents confirm that behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. Behaviour is not outstanding because staff still have to manage the behaviour of a few pupils carefully. Occasionally, there is a small amount of disruption in the playground when energetic games are taking place. However, relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are very positive, mostly because pupils want to learn.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take, but they do not regard bullying as an issue. Instead, they feel very safe and know that staff support them well.
- Attendance is not as high as it should be. Although it has improved, it has been considerably below average for some time. Because this is a relatively small school, the persistent absence of a few pupils has had a marked effect on the statistics.
- A small number of disadvantaged pupils have had a record of persistent absence. The school works hard to persuade their parents of the importance of regular attendance, and the leadership recognises that it needs to continue its efforts.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school has a history of above-average attainment and good progress. This has continued from the previous inspection, despite occasional disruption in the continuity of teaching following changes in staffing.
- Attainment of children in the early years has been consistently above average and has risen still further this year. Attainment in the Year 1 phonics check rose this year even further above the expected level.
- In 2015, pupils at the end of key stage 1 continued the trend of attaining at levels above the national average. National test results for pupils in key stage 2 showed above-average attainment in reading and writing. Attainment in mathematics was less strong, but the school has addressed this in the last year.
- In 2015, pupils' progress by the time they left school at the end of Year 6 was above expectations for all groups of pupils, apart from a tiny number of disadvantaged pupils.
- In the summer of 2016, pupils in Year 6 were assessed under new assessment procedures. The unvalidated results suggest that the majority of pupils progressed at a good rate in terms of their prior attainment, with many achieving at the expected standard and a few working at greater depth in reading, writing, mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling. There are still some variations between year groups and subjects, which is why achievement is not outstanding.
- Attainment and progress in reading are good. The teaching and learning of reading are well organised and supported well at home. During the inspection, pupils at both key stages were heard reading, usually with good fluency and accuracy. Pupils enjoy talking about the books they read.

- Standards in mathematics have risen, as the school has focused on improving teaching and learning. For example, pupils now have more opportunity to apply their numeracy skills to problem solving.
- Standards and progress in writing have improved. Most pupils take pride in their work, including in its presentation. There is a good range and quality of writing, as the inspector saw in books. There is still some variation between pupils in the quality of writing, and between the writing done in literacy compared to other subjects. This is because expectations of what pupils can achieve in other subjects are not always high enough. In history and geography, expectations of what pupils can achieve do not rise sufficiently highly as pupils move up through the school, so that the most able pupils in particular do not consistently do tasks appropriate to their ability. On these occasions, the most able pupils do not make as much progress as they do in most other lessons.
- There are now fewer differences between the attainment and progress of boys and girls than in the past.
- Disadvantaged pupils have traditionally made good progress in school, doing well compared to other pupils nationally. They get good support and continue to do well most of the time. The few most-able disadvantaged pupils in the school make good progress.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities get good support and make good progress.
- Most parents believe that their children make good progress, and the inspector agrees.

Early years provision

Good

- At the time of the previous inspection, children in the early years made good progress. This continues to be the case. The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development has increased even further, and is now well above national averages for their age group. Therefore, children are well prepared for their entry to Year 1.
- Children in the pre-school make outstanding progress. Their skills, levels of knowledge and personal development are well above what is typical for their age. During the inspection, which was early in the school year, many of the children showed themselves already to be confident, articulate individuals. They quickly learn the expected routines and both learn and play together well. Staff give them appropriately challenging tasks; and when children are making their own decisions on what to do, staff ask them pertinent questions to stimulate their thinking.
- Children make good progress in Reception, doing many activities alongside their Year 1 classmates. They continue to follow class routines, listening and learning well.
- In both the pre-school and Reception, children benefit from a stimulating classroom environment and good outdoor space and resources.
- Teaching is consistently good. Early years staff record children's progress, and the results are shared with parents, enhancing children's learning. The school welcomes parents to come into school.
- Children behave very well and show confidence.
- The overall leadership of early years is good, because it ensures that all children's needs are met, including those few who are disadvantaged and the most able children. The leadership also ensures good opportunities for staff to continue developing their expertise.

- The local authority regards the pre-school provision as exemplary and uses it as a model of excellent practice within the authority.
- Staff assess children's progress regularly and accurately, and they record the results.
- Staff have a good understanding of the strengths of the early years provision and how it can be reinforced. However, they confirm that staff targets are quite general. The early years leadership recognises that there is room for improvement in the use of technology and in the rate of children's physical development.

School details

Unique reference number	113798
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10019957

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Bryning
Acting headteacher	Nicola Brooke
Telephone number	01258 452 277
Website	http://www.durweston.dorset.sch.uk/
Email address	office@durweston.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 October and 11–12 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after) is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations of attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school operates a pre-school, which children attend in the mornings. Children in Reception and in Years 1 to 6 attend school in mixed-age classes.
- The school operates both a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The current headteacher has been absent from the school for some time. There has been a period of several changes in the teaching staff and in the governing body. The school currently has an acting headteacher who has been appointed from within the existing staff.
- The inspector was aware during this inspection that allegations relating to child protection were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform the inspector's judgements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a small number of lessons. Two of the observations were carried out jointly with the acting headteacher.
- The inspector heard pupils from key stages 1 and 2 reading.
- The inspector looked extensively at pupils' work, both from the current school year and the previous one.
- The inspector held meetings with several teachers, with teaching assistants and with pupils. He talked informally with parents. He met with several governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, assessment data on pupils' past and current progress, and information relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector analysed 63 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View). He also looked at several written responses from parents and evidence of responses from pupils and parents provided by the school itself.

Inspection team

John Laver, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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