

Wool Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

High Street, Wool, Wareham, Dorset BH20 6BT

Inspection dates

23–24 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' achievement have declined.
- The progress made by current pupils is inconsistent across year groups. Progress in writing is weaker than in other subjects.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully contributing to school leadership and taking on appropriate responsibilities.
- Teaching, although improving, is not yet consistently good.
- School leaders are not clear about which strategies for improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils have the most impact.
- Until recently, governors did not hold school leaders sufficiently to account. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement were allowed to decline.
- The achievement of children in the early years has not been good enough. Although current pupils are making better progress, some children are not catching up from their low starting points quickly enough.
- Teachers are not yet fully familiar with the school's new assessment system and the new national curriculum. As a result, pupils are not being enabled to achieve at greater depth in key stage 1.

The school has the following strengths

- Current senior leaders have made significant improvements in the last 12 months.
- New governors, including the recently appointed chair, are now rigorously holding school leaders to account.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are well cared for because staff effectively accommodate their pastoral needs.
- Recent external support is helping to improve leadership and the quality of teaching.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They are absolutely clear about what needs to improve.
- Attendance is above average overall and for most groups of pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership by ensuring that:
 - there is continued stability at senior leadership level so that improvements can be fully established and take effect
 - the skills of middle leaders are developed so that they are able to take on more appropriate responsibilities and provide senior leaders with greater capacity
 - governance continues to hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
 - leaders use clear, targeted improvement plans to speed up improvement in the early years.
- Raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers are fully familiar with the school's assessment system and use it to systematically monitor progress and intervene when pupils fall behind
 - teachers plan activities that challenge pupils to make the progress of which they are capable
 - pupils use feedback to identify their mistakes and improve their work
 - teachers are fully familiar with the requirements of the new curriculum
 - additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils is monitored closely to determine which strategies have most impact on improving achievement.
- Improve behaviour by ensuring that:
 - action continues to be taken to improve the attendance of the minority of pupils who are persistently absent.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders have failed to halt a decline in the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils. This is because leadership has been through a period of turbulence which has created instability. Necessary processes and procedures to maintain or improve the quality of the school's work have not been consistently established.
- Until recently, leaders did not have an accurate view of the school's weaknesses. As a result, they were unable to pinpoint the key improvements necessary to raise pupils' achievement and take swift, appropriate action to do so.
- Over time, pupils have not been making the progress expected of them. This is because teaching has not sufficiently met pupils' needs and teachers' expectations of pupils have not been high enough. Leaders have not held teachers to account for the progress of their pupils.
- Leaders do not currently have a firm enough grip on the additional funding provided to help disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, they are not clear which strategies have the most impact on raising the achievement of these pupils. However, work is improving in this area as leaders methodically put in place better systems for monitoring the use of this funding. Leaders acknowledge that this work is at an early stage but 'green shoots' are emerging.
- Middle leaders are not currently being used to best effect. This is because they are not being directed to take on responsibilities that have a more direct impact on the quality and monitoring of teaching. However, middle leaders are committed to their work, morale is strong and they feel a collective responsibility to do their best.
- The acting headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has brought about key improvements while she has been in post. This is because she takes an open, honest view of the school's effectiveness, which is the first step to taking appropriate action. She combines this with a can-do, optimistic attitude and a strong work ethic that is shared by both senior leaders.
- The acting headteacher works in a transparent, collaborative way with staff and external partners; an approach which is valued highly by all. This is because all stakeholders feel that they are being listened to and are genuinely involved in the journey to improve the school. She has raised the morale of staff so that they all feel valued, positive about the future and bound by common purpose. This is complemented by a firm approach when necessary, however. The acting headteacher is unafraid to give difficult messages when performance is not good enough.
- The leadership of teaching is improving. Systems to manage the performance of staff have been tightened up so that there is a closer link between the quality of teaching and the outcomes of pupils. Until the acting headteacher took up post, teachers were not sufficiently held to account for the achievement of pupils. Now, targets are more robust and matched to the needs of staff. They are also linked to pupils' outcomes. The monitoring of the quality of teaching is sharper so that underperformance is identified

and tackled earlier. The acting headteacher has taken action to introduce support packages for underperforming staff where necessary. This has resulted in rapidly improving performance.

- The curriculum is designed to encourage pupils to enjoy their learning and develop skills that are transferable across different subjects. As such, pupils' reading and writing is developed through cross-curricular topic work which will include, for example, science, history and geography. Topics noted in pupils' books included, 'Life cycle of an insect' (science), 'Queen Victoria' (history) and 'Knowing the difference between series and parallel circuits' (design technology). The curriculum also provides ample opportunities for religious education and physical education (PE).
- The additional sports premium funding is well used to enable pupils to participate more often in a wide range of sports activities. These are organised, for example, by the Purbeck Sports Partnership and the local secondary school. The coordinator of PE, who has responsibility for the funding, brings enthusiasm to her role and promotes sport effectively throughout the school. Participation and attendance at sports events are rewarded as an incentive for pupils to become more involved.
- The school has received some intensive support from the local authority and the school improvement partner over the last couple of years. This support has been effective in helping staff to tackle weaknesses in leadership, governance and teaching. However, the view of senior leaders is that there was not enough appropriate support prior to this time, despite repeated requests for it.

Governance of the school

- Until recently, governors have failed to maintain the quality of leadership and teaching, and standards of achievement. In the past, governors did not hold leaders sufficiently to account, or provide the necessary vision, strategic thinking and judgement required because they lacked the necessary expertise. Consequently, this led to leadership turbulence which has only recently settled down.
- New governors with a wealth of experience and expertise, including the chair, have recently joined the governing body. They are using their skills and knowledge to support senior leaders and hold them rigorously to account. As a result, the governing body is now providing a firm steer to ensure that the school is in a financially sound position. Governors are also now ensuring that leaders are focused on the key issues such as safeguarding, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The governing body is now building confidence among staff and external partners that there is greater stability in school leadership. Governors are clear about the school's weaknesses and are showing determination in tackling them. Although governors are providing much-needed support, they are also uncompromising in the level of challenge they are now presenting. This is because they understand that it is necessary for the school to move forward rapidly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- One of the first priorities of the acting headteacher when she took up post was to audit safeguarding practices and ensure they were fit for purpose. As a result, the checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are in place. Staff have been appropriately trained in line with the latest government guidance. Additionally, staff are clear about the procedures to follow should they have concerns about pupils' welfare. Staff are comfortable using the online system for recording referrals and are encouraged to use this for any concern they may have. The system records details in a format which enables leaders to follow the chronology of events. This enables leaders to monitor actions to ensure that an appropriate resolution is reached in each case.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school because staff know that it is their number one priority to keep children safe. Pupils are known as individuals and leaders go to great lengths to accommodate pupils' welfare needs. This includes working with other professionals and external agencies to ensure that children are safe and looked after well. Leaders are persistent in their efforts to get extra support. If they are unsuccessful, they repeatedly look for alternative solutions.
- Recent improvements have been made to site security with new fencing and external doors operated by key code. Leaders are proactive about following up any potential issues with site security and take all reasonable steps to ensure that pupils are as safe as they can be.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently strong across the school, although it is improving. Where it is weaker it is because teachers are not ensuring that activities build on pupils' prior learning. As a result, pupils are not prompted to deepen their learning or acquire new knowledge and skills.
- Over time, the achievement of pupils has fallen because teaching has not sufficiently stretched and challenged pupils. This is because teachers have not had high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Expectations of current pupils in key stage 2, however, are rising. The most able pupils, for example, are being provided with extension tasks to move them on in their learning. However, expectations of pupils in key stage 1 are still not high enough.
- Teaching assistants are now receiving better direction and training to be more effective in their roles. As a result, their work is more purposeful because expectations of them are higher. However, their expertise still needs to develop further to ensure that pupils are better supported to find answers for themselves. Furthermore, the practice of some teaching assistants is not currently flexible enough to meet the needs of the full range of pupils they are required to help. However, leaders are taking action to address this.
- Staff are not yet fully confident in the use of the school's assessment system or the requirements of the new national curriculum. This is because different assessment systems have been trialled and discarded over the last couple of years until the acting headteacher established the current system. This current system is enabling teachers to increasingly measure progress in an accurate, robust way and be clear about what pupils know and can do. However, leaders acknowledge that the system is relatively new so staff have yet to become fully confident.

- Pupils do not consistently use the feedback provided by staff and this slows their progress. This feedback is often informative and useful because it highlights key areas for improvement. However, pupils do not always take advantage of it to boost their progress.
- The quality of teaching is improving. This is because leaders are monitoring teaching more closely and taking action when it is not good enough. Support packages are put in place to ensure that staff receive appropriate training and resources to rapidly improve.
- Staff now have much higher expectations of pupils' work. As a result, work is presented more neatly because pupils take greater pride in it. This is helping them to take a more disciplined approach to learning and to have higher expectations of themselves.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. This is because they enjoy the stimulating, interesting activities that teachers plan and the resources available to them. For example, in an observed lesson the teacher used pictures of a pizza to help pupils decide whether one third or one half was the bigger fraction. Teaching is encouraging pupils to be more curious, to ask questions and take an interest in where the learning will head next.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and the wider staff are highly committed to ensuring that pupils feel safe and are looked after well. Staff communicate well with each other and liaise effectively with external organisations to ensure that pupils receive the emotional and behavioural support they need. A SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning) programme is run by staff to help ensure that pupils who need extra support are ready for learning.
- The school is a warm, inviting place. Leaders have fostered a culture in which pupils know they are respected and valued for who they are. This is because the school culture is informed by leaders' focus upon the key values of courage, empathy, respect and love. It is also because staff are committed to promoting the school's inclusive religious ethos. The school has been recognised by an external body as a 'rights respecting school'.
- Pupils' personal development is enhanced because they are encouraged to take on leadership responsibilities as they progress through the school. For example, pupils are encouraged to join the school council or become head boy or girl. Pupils also assist the staff by taking on certain jobs; on one occasion the lead inspector observed an older pupil ringing a bell at the end of breaktime to summon pupils in from outside.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online and manage cyber bullying. They feel that other forms of bullying are dealt with more effectively than used to be the case. This is partly because pupils feel safer in school; they appreciate the open culture that current senior leaders have nurtured. It is also because of the newly introduced behaviour policy which helps pupils to know what is expected of them.

- Classrooms and corridors feature colourful displays that support pupils' learning, celebrate their work and draw attention to social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues. For example, one display explained in accessible language what British values were, such as democracy and the rule of law. Another display, promoting anti-bullying, featured 'post-it' notes from pupils who talked about ways in which they could be kind to other people. These were accompanied by the call to, 'look in a mirror and think about what you could do to make someone else's day better'.
- Pupils benefit from a range of different experiences that take advantage of the outside environment, such as Forest School.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and respectful to each other, to staff and to visitors. They are confident, self-assured and willing to share their views. One pupil approached the lead inspector so he could introduce himself and welcome the inspector to the school.
- Pupils value the recently introduced behaviour system because, 'they know where they stand'. The system is clear about the rewards that are in place for good behaviour (green cards) and the sanctions in place for unacceptable behaviour (red cards).
- Attendance overall, and for most groups of pupils, is above average. However, it is still lower than average for disadvantaged pupils because of the persistent absence of a minority of pupils.
- Pupils behave well around the school site and in classrooms. They move around the school in an orderly way and are well supervised at breaktimes. Pupils respect the school building and site. For example, communal areas are kept neat and tidy and there is very little litter. Pupils arrive at lessons ready to learn and with the correct equipment.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement over time has not been high enough. Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics at key stage 2 was below average prior to 2016. At the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment has been consistently lower than average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The number of children achieving a good level of development and the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics has been below average over time.
- The progress being made by current pupils in the school, including those who are disadvantaged, is variable across year groups and subjects. Progress in writing is generally weaker than other subjects throughout the school. Pupils are not being stretched to achieve at greater depth in key stage 1.
- In 2016, pupils' progress at key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national average. Current pupils in key stage 2, particularly those who are most able, including the most able disadvantaged, are being challenged to make the progress they are capable of. This is because they are being set tasks and provided

with resources that help to deepen their thinking.

- Pupils' achievement in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 has been consistently above average over time. This is because the teaching of reading has been prioritised to ensure that pupils are in a position to access other curriculum subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are currently being well supported to develop their confidence and personal skills. The special educational needs coordinator knows the needs of individual pupils well and ensures that staff take account of her guidance. She monitors the impact of this work closely. As a result, pupils are beginning to make better progress in their learning.
- Although progress is variable across year groups, improving teaching and higher expectations of presentation in pupils' work are helping to raise standards. This is because pupils now know what is expected of them and are rising to the challenge.
- Pupils are ready to start the next stage of their education by the time they leave school in Year 6. This is because staff have cultivated a close relationship with the local secondary school and different opportunities are provided to pupils to support transition. For example, higher-ability pupils are invited up to the secondary school to participate in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) sessions. These sessions bolster pupils' enthusiasm for these subjects. Pupils who have particular special educational needs and/or disabilities make repeated visits to the secondary school. This ensures that they feel comfortable and familiar with the school when they start.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Outcomes have not been high enough for children by the time they leave the early years foundation stage. In 2016, girls underachieved in all their core subjects. This is because frequent staff changes in the past have had a detrimental effect on the quality of teaching and the monitoring of pupils' progress.
- Some children who are not yet school-ready when they enter Reception fail to make enough progress to catch up.
- Leaders do not currently have specific, tailored improvement plans in place for the early years foundation stage. Although the work of the early years staff is bringing about improvements, their efforts are hindered by the absence of an explicit, coherent, strategic plan.
- There is now greater stability and consistency in the early years leadership and teaching. The staff currently in place have a high level of expertise and experience. This is being used to improve the quality of teaching and assessment.
- The quality of teaching is improving because staff are accurately identifying the needs of pupils. They take greater account of children's starting points so that they are able to plan a range of activities that interest them and deepen their learning. For example, the lead inspector observed children learning about the 'oi' sound during a phonics session. One group of children experimented with making the sound and using mirrors to look at the shape their mouths made when making the sound. Another group of children wrote the word 'oil' in sand to see how the sound looked when written in a

word. Additionally, another group of children formed the word out of plastic letters to improve their manual dexterity.

- Children are well behaved. They work with each other in a quiet and considerate way, letting each other take turns and valuing each other's contribution. The lead inspector observed a group of three children working side by side at a sandpit without adult supervision. They spoke nicely to each other, took turns and were kind in their speech and mannerisms.
- Staff are developing effective transition arrangements with feeder institutions. They work closely with the staff from pre-schools to ensure that children are better able to 'hit the ground running'. For example, the Reception teacher introduced pre-school staff to activities that would help children develop their manual dexterity. This approach is helping more children to be ready for school when they enter Reception. Nevertheless, some children do not catch up quickly enough from their starting points.
- The early years environment is a bustling, dynamic space that uses resources, displays, tactile objects and children's work to make learning seem fun. Both inside and outside areas encourage children to interact with different resources and try different activities.

School details

Unique reference number	113822
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10024936

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	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Glanville
Acting headteacher	Elizabeth Green
Telephone number	01929 462569
Website	www.woolprimary.com
Email address	office@woolprimary.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about additional funding for pupil premium or sports premium on its website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Wool CofE Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The acting headteacher took up post in April 2016. Previously she was the deputy headteacher.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The number of girls in the school is lower than average.

- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who receive support is above the national average.
- The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above average.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed learning in lessons with the acting headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the members of staff responsible for coordinating the pupil premium and sports premium additional funding. Additionally, the lead inspector had discussions with pupils, representatives of the governing body, a representative for the local authority and the school improvement partner.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation, school development plan, governing body minutes, local authority and school improvement reports, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding records.
- The lead inspector jointly scrutinised pupils' work with the acting headteacher and observed their conduct at break and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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