



Milborne St Andrew First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113672
LEA Dorset
Inspection number 279216
Inspection dates 24 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Barron AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Hopsfield
School category	Community		Milborne St Andrew
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 0JE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01258 837362
Number on roll	99	Fax number	01258 837170
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr T Leech

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 24 May 2006 - 24 May 2006	Inspection number 279216
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Milborne St Andrew is a smaller than average first school set in a rural environment. The school is popular and pupil numbers have risen in recent years. Over one fifth of pupils entered the school other than at the normal admission time during the last academic year. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Presently five year groups of pupils are taught in four classes.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides pupils with a good education. The school judges itself to be good. Pupils enjoy school, and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Staff ensure that pupils are safe and well looked after. This is reflected in the views of parents, who value the quality of care and support given to their children.

Provision in the Reception class is satisfactory and children meet the standards expected of them before they enter Year 1. Pupils make good progress throughout the rest of the school and attain above average standards by the end of Year 4.

Whilst the curriculum is good and supports learning well, the quality of pupils' writing has been correctly identified as an area for improvement. The school carries out rigorous assessments of pupils' progress but needs to use this information more robustly when planning work for more able pupils. The quality of the guidance in the marking of pupil's work is variable. It does not always give pupils sufficient information about how they can improve.

The school is led and managed well by the headteacher, staff and governors who have a firm understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be done in order to raise standards. As a result, the school has made good progress since the last inspection and demonstrates the capacity to continue to improve. The school offers good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement whole-school initiatives to raise pupils' achievement in writing.
- Make more consistent use of assessment information when planning work for more able pupils.
- Develop the quality of guidance given to pupils through marking their work in order to help them fully understand how to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well during their time in the school. Children enter the Reception Year with the skills and knowledge levels expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and achieve the expected gains in learning by Year 1. They then make good progress throughout the rest of the school and attain above average standards overall by Year 4 because the school has high expectations for pupils and sets challenging targets. As a result, standards have improved since the time of the last inspection, when they were similar to the national average.

The school's recent focus on developing pupils' numeracy skills has led to improved achievement in mathematics. However, whilst pupils attain above average standards in mathematics and reading the school recognises that standards in writing are average overall and need to improve.

Standards in Year 2 have fluctuated in recent years and dipped in 2005 because of the high number of pupils with learning difficulties in that year group. However, these pupils still made good progress from their below average starting points. The current group of pupils in Year 2 are working at a good standard and making good progress because of the good quality of teaching. Whilst work in mixed-age classes is broadly matched to the different needs of pupils, there are occasions when the teaching does not always cater for the needs of the more able who are then insufficiently challenged by their work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is good and pupils display a real enthusiasm for school and for learning. Moral and social development is outstanding and is reflected in the very high standard of pupils' behaviour and outstanding attitudes to school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about how they like all aspects of 'their school'. Misbehaviour is rare. The oldest pupils make it clear they are genuinely upset to be leaving in summer and describe the school as 'one big happy family'.

Spiritual and cultural development is good, although pupils' understanding of the multicultural aspects of modern British society is limited. The school's motto, devised by the pupils, of 'learning together, playing together, all for one, one for all', is reflected well in pupils' caring relationships with each another. Pupils feel happy, valued and respected and are quick to help others should the need arise. They feel the School Council gives them a voice in school decision making.

Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community through participation in village events and their support for charities, and sponsorship of a school in India helps pupils to think about others less fortunate than themselves.

Pupils use equipment safely and understand the importance of a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. One pupil, when asked about the importance of a fruit and vegetable school snack responded with 'It's got loads of vitamins and minerals'!

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and ensures that pupils make good overall progress during their time at the school. Activities for reception children ensure a sound balance between independent learning and tasks directed by adults. In Years 1 to 4, teachers plan work to match the needs of the different age groups of pupils within each class. However, assessment information is not always used effectively when planning work for more able pupils and there are occasions when the level of challenge is lower than it should be.

Teachers display good subject knowledge and use a wide range of methods in order to make lessons interesting. Effective teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly when supporting small groups and pupils with learning difficulties.

As a result, pupils are keen to learn, very attentive and work hard. Their work is well presented. However, there are occasions when pupils are unsure of how to improve their work because the quality of marking is inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils well and prepares them for the next stage of their education.

Good planning and provision for personal, social and health education ensure that pupils are well aware of the importance of fitness and well-being. Pupils are encouraged to feel valued as individuals. Suitable arrangements are in place to support pupils' awareness of health and keeping safe.

Children in the Reception class are provided with an interesting range of experiences which reflect their needs in all areas of learning whilst the curriculum for older pupils is enriched through a wide range of popular extra-curricular activities. Pupils also enjoy regular visits to places of interest, whilst interesting visitors to school, including snake handlers, help to bring learning alive! Gifted and talented pupils are supported well.

The school is continually striving to improve curricular provision. A wildlife area has recently been constructed and the school has developed better facilities for information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection. As a result ICT is now used successfully to support learning in other subjects. However, pupils presently only have limited opportunities to develop their understanding of the multicultural aspects of modern British society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has a well deserved reputation for welcoming all pupils, whatever their needs. Parents simply describe the school as 'very caring' and this reflects the good level of care and support given to pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy and are confident that their problems and concerns will be dealt with effectively by adults should the need arise.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties is good, and there is effective involvement of outside agencies and parents. Procedures for child protection, dealing with risks and health and safety, are all securely in place. However, even though the school has developed systems to track pupils' progress, the quality of guidance given to pupils about how to improve their written work is inconsistent. Marking, for example, is not always evident in pupils' books.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and staff share a clear vision and a commitment towards raising standards and placing pupils' needs at the heart of the day-to-day life of the school. Partnerships with other schools and outside bodies are good and effectively extend pupils' learning experiences beyond the school environment.

The school has developed effective systems for checking on its work. Resources are used well and the quality of teaching and planning is monitored on a regular basis. All teachers have subject leadership roles and are continually developing their skills in checking the quality of provision and in identifying where improvements could be made. This has recently led to the successful whole-school focus on developing numeracy skills in order to raise achievement in mathematics. However, the school recognises that it has yet to successfully implement initiatives to raise pupils' achievement in writing.

The governing body supports the school well. Governors have a firm idea of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are fully involved in all major decisions. The school works closely with parents, seeking and taking account of their views regularly. Links with external agencies support pupils' learning well, particularly those with learning difficulties.

The school clearly has the capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us feel very welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed coming into your lessons and looking at your work. We especially enjoyed talking to some of you about your school.

Here are some of the things we like about your school:

- We are really impressed with your excellent behaviour.
- Your headteacher and teachers take very good care of you and work hard to make sure you enjoy school.
- You do well because your teachers make lessons interesting.
- We think you have developed a clear understanding of why you need to keep healthy and eat the right things.

We think your headteacher and teachers can do some things to make your school even better. We have asked them to:

- help you to improve your writing
- make sure that more able pupils are given harder work to do
- make sure that you are given more help on how to improve your work.

We wish you the very best for your future.