



Three Legged Cross First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113678
LEA Dorset
Inspection number 279219
Inspection dates 17 May 2006 to 17 May 2006
Reporting inspector Anna Sketchley AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Church Road
School category	Community		Three Legged Cross
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Wimborne, Dorset BH21 6RF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01202 822460
Number on roll	73	Fax number	01202 822460
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Justine Turner

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 17 May 2006 - 17 May 2006	Inspection number 279219
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Three Legged Cross is a small rural school. The majority of pupils come from the immediate area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average but that of those with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. There are three pupils with a statement of special need and this is high for such a small school. A very low percentage of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and currently no pupils are in the first stages of learning English. Occasionally pupils from the travelling community attend the school for short periods.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Three Legged Cross is a good and improving school that gives good value for money and excels in the way in which it includes all pupils in its life and work. It sets out to ensure that every child enjoys their education and makes the best progress they can. The diverse needs of all pupils are taken seriously and the very real family feel results in happy pupils who really enjoy coming to school. This makes an important contribution to their good progress. Pupils begin school with standards below those normally expected for their age but are taught well and, by the time they finish their reception year, most are average in all areas of learning. Progress remains good throughout the school.

The leadership and management of the school are good. Through rigorous and effective self-evaluation and successful identification of areas for development, the school has made rapid improvement. Results are already evident. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 underachieved in the recent past, but are now doing well. Nevertheless, the full impact of the changes made will take time to be realised as pupils move through the school. Curriculum, care and guidance have become outstanding. The school is fully committed to further improvement and has the capacity to achieve this. Governors know the school well, but as yet are not involved in evaluating the success of new developments the school has made.

Teaching is good. Work is carefully matched to the needs of all pupils, who benefit from the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. Each one responds very well to the way they are treated as an individual, to the praise and encouragement they are given and the targets they are set. Occasionally in lessons, however, pace can drop as pupils sit for too long just listening.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make the good teaching and learning still better by ensuring that a brisk pace is maintained and pupils are consistently involved.
- Involve governors in monitoring the impact of actions the school takes to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start school with lower knowledge and skill levels than is usually the case for their age, especially in their reading, writing and their personal and social development. They make good progress throughout the school, reaching average standards by the time they leave. Under the new headteacher, the school has responded quickly since identifying that some pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4, were not making enough progress in reading and writing. The challenging targets the school sets have now been exceeded. All groups of children now make good progress, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those from travelling communities. The school

knows the needs of its vulnerable children well and provides good support so that they achieve success.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They have a zest for everything and really enjoy all aspects of school life. The caring family atmosphere and the very good role models provided by adults make a significant contribution to their personal development. Pupils are well behaved and have good attitudes to their work and towards one another. Rewards for good behaviour are much appreciated. They value the friends they make from the travelling community and show a real interest and understanding of the differences in culture. They know how to deal sensibly with any occasional unkindness but were at pains to say that such things were very infrequent and dealt with immediately by adults.

Pupils know how to keep healthy and many enjoy walking to school. They take a very active role in the community by visiting the elderly, for example, and by taking part in the local "In Bloom" competition. Through the school council pupils have the opportunity to discuss, make decisions and bring about change. The emphasis the school places upon literacy and numeracy skills and the good provision for information and communication technology prepare them well for the future.

Attendance has been rising steadily over the last four years and is now satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, with some considerable strengths. An outstanding feature in teachers' planning is the way they cater for the wide range of pupils' needs in each class. They use their in-depth knowledge of each individual to plan the appropriate next steps in learning. This is shared with pupils through the setting of individual targets so that they are clear about what they need to do next to improve, and is followed up with helpful hints in marking. Reception pupils make good progress because activities are well planned, interesting and appropriate for their age. Teachers identify a wide range of strategies in their planning, including arranging for pupils to work together and support one another. All these features, and the effective use of skilled teaching assistants, ensure that all pupils are fully included and make good progress. There is a brisk pace to most lessons but occasionally sessions listening to the teacher are a little too long and opportunities are missed to involve pupils. Teachers have a warm manner, praising, encouraging and motivating pupils to do their best, resulting in them having a pride in their work and enthusiasm for their lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum has been significantly developed and is now outstanding. There is a very wide range of interesting activities for children in their reception class. Very well-planned tasks, which cater for the full range of learners' needs, help all to do well and develop the skills they needs.

In Years 1 to 4 the curriculum is broad and interesting. It has been adapted well by breaking up the long morning sessions so that numeracy does not follow on from literacy. This helps to promote good behaviour and concentration as well as maintain motivation and enjoyment. The curriculum is exceptionally well matched to pupils' needs, helping them to catch up, or move ahead at a faster pace. Recent initiatives introduced to improve reading have already been particularly successful and those for writing are beginning to demonstrate a significant impact upon standards. These improvements will have a cumulative effect as pupils move through the school.

There are exceptionally good links with neighbouring schools to enrich opportunities for pupils, through, for example, creative mathematics sessions. An exciting range of extra activities both during and after school makes an extra-special contribution to learning which is very much appreciated by the pupils. They spoke with enthusiasm about opportunities to tend the school garden. This and other activities help pupils to understand the importance of creating something special and making a valuable contribution to the school environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are outstanding. This is a school where every single pupil is valued and where each pupil's welfare is given a high priority. The school has extensive links with a range of agencies to provide tailored support where necessary. There is an exceptionally strong emphasis on the individual pupil. The headteacher and staff have a detailed knowledge of each one and all are supported exceptionally well. Arrangements for child protection, health and safety, drugs awareness and sex and relationships education are secure. There has been considerable development in improving the school's use of assessments to make sure that all pupils make sufficient progress. As a result, academic progress is well monitored and this is playing a key part in helping all pupils to do well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. School self-evaluation is rigorous and thoroughly embedded in the available data. Each pupil is very thoroughly tracked. This has helped to raise questions and identify the needs of all pupils, producing a school development plan that is a very useful tool for improvement. As a result, standards in reading and

writing have risen from below average to average in a short period of time. Behaviour in school has also improved significantly. The headteacher is dynamic and positive and her contribution to the school's most recent improvement is outstanding. This has been secured by excellent team building and attention to the professional development of teachers, resulting in the assistant headteacher and subject managers developing their roles well. Parents are very supportive of the school and are especially appreciative of the good progress their children are making. One said, "I am proud of my son's school work and how he has come along since he was five years old."

Governors carry out their duties satisfactorily and are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school but their role in monitoring the impact of new initiatives is as yet underdeveloped.

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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?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	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	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	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?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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	1	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	3	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 welcoming us to your school and for being so polite and helpful. We thought you would like to know what we found out about your school and what we have suggested the school can do to make things even better.

What we liked about your school:

- The school is like a very happy family where everyone feels included.
- You really enjoy coming to school and try to do your best in lessons.
- You behave well, and find learning exciting because of all the interesting things that your teachers plan for you to do.
- Teachers plan your lessons very carefully so that each one of you can succeed at what you do.
- You feel safe at school and are very well cared for.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Make sure that you are always learning at a quick pace in your lessons, not sitting and listening for too long without joining in.
- Involve governors more in deciding how effective improvements have been.