



Somerford Primary Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113736
LEA Dorset
Inspection number 279231
Inspection dates 1 February 2006 to 2 February 2006
Reporting inspector Arnalena (Nina) Bee AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Draper Road
School category	Community		Christchurch
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Dorset BH23 3AS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01202 485436
Number on roll	448	Fax number	01202 482359
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Michael Peirce
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jocelyn Smail

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Somerford Primary Community School is a large primary school with a Nursery, which opened in 2003. It serves a community with high levels of social deprivation. It is a Full Service Extended School with a Children's Centre. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as their second language. The children's attainment when they start school is significantly lower than normally found.

Approximately a third of the pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. This is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Somerford Primary Community School provides a satisfactory standard of education and provides satisfactory value for money. It is an improving school, which has the capacity to make further improvements. At times, pupils could do better in their work. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. In Year 2, standards are below average but these pupils make good progress in relation to their low starting points. Standards in Year 6 are well below average. However, despite serious underachievement in the past in Years 3 and 4 caused by some unsatisfactory teaching these pupils are now making satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory but there are weaknesses in the way that some lessons are planned. Pupils' behaviour is good and pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils' personal and social skills are developed well. Pupils are all well cared for and feel safe and secure. However, there are weaknesses in the academic guidance given to pupils. Parents are pleased with how the school helps their children but a significant minority do not support the school with issues such as attendance. Attendance is unsatisfactory because it is below average.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leaders and managers have a good idea of the school's main strengths and weaknesses but some aspects of their self-evaluation are over optimistic. However, the headteacher and senior management team have worked tirelessly and very successfully to improve behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning. This is despite having a large number of teachers leaving and joining the school and a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Subject coordinators have identified areas for improvement but have focused too little on the raising of pupils' standards and achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science and improve pupils' achievement by making better use of information gained from assessments of pupils' previous work.
- Develop the role of the subject coordinators so that they are better informed in order to improve standards and pupils' achievement in their subject areas.
- Improve attendance by developing pupils' and parents' awareness of the importance of attending school every day.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall, standards are well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science by the time pupils leave school at the age of 11. However, progress is satisfactory. Most children join the Nursery with standards that are well below those normally found. Communication and personal and social skills are particularly low. Progress is satisfactory throughout Nursery and Reception. However, by the start of Year 1, standards continue to be well below average. Progress is satisfactory in the

Foundation Stage overall but the children make good progress in acquiring personal and social skills.

At the end of Year 2 standards are below average in reading writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in relation to their low starting points. Good teaching in some classes and extra teaching support from the deputy headteacher has resulted in this good achievement.

Standards are well below average at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics and below average in science. After underachieving in Years 3 and 4 because of some unsatisfactory teaching in the past, these pupils are now 'playing catch-up' but are on course to reach the challenging targets that they have been set in English and mathematics. This is an improvement on last year and is the result of the school constantly checking how well pupils are doing and then planning suitable work for the pupils who are not doing as well as they should.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of pupils and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and say lessons are interesting. They respond positively in lessons and work effectively together, as shown when pupils in Years 6 sensibly discussed the arguments for and against drinking alcohol. Pupils are polite and friendly and clearly understand the reasons for school rules. Behaviour is good. All pupils have a good understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle, feel safe in school and are offered a wide variety of responsibilities. The work of the school council is impressive and has been responsible for a number of school improvements including setting up and running a healthy tuck shop and instigating a squad of 'litter pickers' to help keep the school environment a clean and pleasant place. Attendance is below average.

There are good procedures for checking attendance but there is too little whole school focus on promoting how achievement is affected by pupils' absence. Pupils have lots of opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills to help them in later life. However, adults occasionally miss the opportunity to reinforce and develop these skills in some literacy lessons and when pupils write in other lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In all lessons relationships are good and teachers effectively use ICT in the form of interactive whiteboards to support and develop learning. Teaching assistants are regularly used to help in classes and withdraw pupils for more intensive support. This support is generally of satisfactory quality. In good lessons teachers use information collected on pupils effectively as they plan activities

that suit all abilities. This results in good learning. Although teaching can be good, at times the same work is given to pupils of very different abilities or activities are not accurately matched to the needs of all pupils. When this happens lessons lack pace and pupils are easily distracted. Higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently and lower attaining pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are unable to finish their work because it is too difficult. Although the school has correctly identified this as an issue it has not been effectively addressed and learning is negatively affected in some lessons. At other times adults miss opportunities to improve pupils' writing skills during lessons. All pupils are set individual targets to aim for in English and mathematics but as yet there is little evidence to show how these are helping to raise standards because they are not consistently well promoted during lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which is interesting and varied and promotes the need to develop a healthy and safe lifestyle. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills. In the Foundation Stage the children receive sound opportunities to select activities themselves and work in groups directed by an adult. The activities that the children are encouraged to try in the Foundation Stage ensure that they get off to a satisfactory start and that learning successfully builds on their previous experiences.

The school rightly places much emphasis on the teaching of basic literacy skills but some teachers and teaching assistants do not consistently promote and reinforce these skills in lessons. For example, adults were seen working with pupils and allowing them to write sentences without using a capital letter at the beginning. The curriculum is enriched well by a wide variety of out of school activities, residential trips and visits to interesting places that pupils much appreciate, enjoy and support with enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school pays good attention to pupils' care and safety and works closely with parents and outside agencies to provide the best support it can. For example, when pupils have difficulties acquiring English language skills because they speak a different language at home the school has them assessed by a specialist for more advice. Pupils and their families are supported well in many ways. Parents have been invited to Family Learning Days and meetings to inform parents of what is taught at school. However, the school has identified that the support the school receives from parents is not so well developed.

Pupils' views and opinions are valued. The provision of suggestions boxes gives pupils the chance to influence how their school can be improved. The school monitors pupils' personal development very effectively and there are good procedures in place to deal with child protection, racial harassment and bullying. Staff are fully trained to deal with these. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall. Pupils are involved in setting targets designed to improve their skills in English and

mathematics but at present there is too little evidence of how these have raised standards. The information gained from more formal assessments is not always used successfully to pinpoint exactly what is needed to raise the attainment and achievement of individual pupils and this restricts progress

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior leaders have worked well together to achieve a calm environment with a positive atmosphere for learning. Initially they rightly gave a high priority to tackling behaviour and poor attitudes to learning amongst the older pupils and have been very successful in bringing about improvements. Standards are still too low, in particular at the end of Year 6, because there has been too little whole school focus on the reasons why this is so and pupils did not achieve as well as they should have done in Years 3 and 4.

The school's evaluation of its own work is satisfactory but over optimistic in some areas. However, there is a sound understanding of where improvement is needed. Weaknesses in teaching have been correctly identified but they have not been successfully addressed. Subject coordinators have begun to identify what is needed to move their subjects further forward but they have not focused sufficiently on raising standards and achievement of pupils.

The work of the governing body is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met. However, governors have not been challenging enough in relation to the standards pupils have been achieving and the progress they have been making. This is because they are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the school's results data. There are now signs that standards and achievement are beginning to improve. The school has a sound capacity to improve further

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	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	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	3	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	No
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 so welcome when we came to visit your school. We especially enjoyed coming in to some of your lessons and talking to you.

What we liked most about your school

You have told us that you are happy in school and feel safe and well looked after

Your behaviour is good both during lessons and when you go outside

You are given lots of different activities which you think are exciting

Your parents and carers think the school is a nice place for you to be

There are just a few things we have suggested to the headteacher which could help the school improve further

Make sure that you all get work that is not too easy or too hard so that you all improve in English, mathematics and science

Some of you need to come to school more often.