



Archbishop Wake Church of England VA Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113754
Local Authority Dorset
Inspection number 279238
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Susan Wheeler HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Fairfield Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Blandford Forum
Age range of pupils	4–11		DT11 7AB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01258 453120
Number on roll (school)	274	Fax number	01258 451060
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Sara Loch
		Headteacher	Richard Chapman
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2000		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	17–18 January 2007	279238

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This was previously a first school, but in the reorganisation of schools in Blandford in 2005 it was re-designated as a primary school. The reorganisation also meant that the school had to use two sites during 2005–06 to accommodate over 180 Year 6 pupils from middle schools across the area. The number of teachers also doubled for that period. The school is back in its original building, but is due to move into a new purpose-built primary school with a children's centre in September 2008.

Most pupils come from the local communities which provide a wide social mix. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils come from minority ethnic groups and a small number of these are learning English as an additional language. There is a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties than in most schools and only a few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has a Nurture Group which supports pupils with specific needs. The range of extended provision includes breakfast and after-school clubs and a private pre-school on site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Archbishop Wake is an outstanding school which strives to help all its pupils to achieve their best. There is a strong culture of celebrating every individual's gifts and talents. As a result, the pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Parents are extremely positive about the school and one commented, 'I am very pleased that the school has become a primary, allowing my son to attend there for longer'. The school is very inclusive and works hard to encourage pupils to be independent thinkers who have responsibility for their own learning. This is supported through the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is good. Older pupils readily take on a wide range of responsibilities which support many aspects of their development, but pupils in Key Stage 1 have limited opportunities to take on jobs around the school.

This school is a happy, calm and inspirational place to be for pupils, staff, parents and visitors. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they understand the need to be healthy and to stay safe. Most children start school with below-average skills and their excellent progress is due to the quality of the teaching by the staff team and the effective curriculum, which is carefully matched to their needs. All pupils, including those in the Nurture Group, have great fun because they are very well taught and learning is made interesting and exciting through the wide range of experiences offered. There are numerous clubs, visits and events, including 'Arts Week', which enrich their experiences. Achievement is outstanding. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils receive the support and intervention they require, whatever their backgrounds or specific learning needs. However, the standards some pupils reach are limited by poor attendance. Pupils make outstanding progress and reach broadly average standards overall, and many exceed expectations. This is all the more impressive, given that around a third of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. The more able pupils also do very well. There are close working arrangements with a number of agencies to ensure the differing needs of pupils are met, including those of the more able. The high quality support for pupils new to learning English and those with learning difficulties ensures they make excellent progress. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and plan their teaching to accurately match their individual needs. Pupils know their targets for improvement and are proud of their achievements. Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has been central to the school's success and has carried everyone through the upheaval of last year by keeping pupils' well-being at the heart of all activities. He has developed an extremely effective team who share the vision for the school's future. Subject leaders have clear plans for development based on a secure understanding of their subject and what needs to be done to improve standards. The leadership is unduly modest in its evaluation of the school, but accurately identifies the strengths and priorities for improvement. The governors provide exceptional support and understand what needs to be done next, with a commitment to making it happen. A few parents raised concerns, some linked to communication issues and the disruption caused by the reorganisation last year. However, the school has made tremendous progress since the last inspection and demonstrates outstanding capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance to support the raising of standards.
- Provide opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to take on responsibilities around the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. When children start in the Foundation Stage, their attainment is below and sometimes well below that expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy, but they do extremely well. Pupils in Key Stage 1 reach average standards by the end of Year 2, although in 2006, standards in mathematics were slightly below national expectations. Many pupils, particularly boys, had very low starting points, but their achievement was extremely good and most met their challenging targets. The results of the national tests in 2006 for the large group of Year 6 pupils were slightly below average because of the considerable disruption they had endured, although this was above the local authority's expectations.

Girls tend to do better than boys in Key Stage 1, but the strong foundations established there in English and mathematics mean the gap narrows considerably as they move through Key Stage 2, with particular improvements in the standard of boys' reading. Assessments carried out with pupils in Years 3 to 5 show standards to be good and progress from Key Stage 1 to be at least good, and for many, outstanding. The more able pupils also rise to the school's high expectations. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do extremely well, as do pupils from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language. Each of these groups makes excellent progress because they are given work that matches their needs and they receive outstanding, well-focused support. Pupils in the Nurture Group also make excellent progress as a result of the outstanding individual attention they receive. Extremely good systems for monitoring pupils' achievement ensure they have challenging targets which encourage them to work hard. The school is also very effective in identifying pupils who are not doing as well as they could, and puts action plans in place to support more rapid progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school is outstandingly successful in creating well-balanced, confident individuals who enjoy their lessons. 'I dream about being at school', said one boy, 'and I wake up in the morning so glad I am coming back here again'. They welcome challenge and work with great concentration and enthusiasm. Attitudes and behaviour in and out of the classroom are extremely positive: older pupils are caring and thoughtful towards younger ones. Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe and how to keep themselves healthy. They really appreciate all the different activities available to them in lessons and through lunchtime and after-school clubs. Their high levels of academic

achievement position them well for further progress elsewhere, and the many opportunities they have for teamwork prepare them very effectively for life as adults. The school council members are excellent ambassadors for their school, but all pupils are friendly and welcoming, happy to discuss their work, and they talk enthusiastically about their school. Older pupils take on a variety of roles around the school, including responsibility for the telephones at lunchtimes. Pupils are looking forward enthusiastically to the move to the new school building, and have plenty of opportunities to become involved in its development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

All teaching has outstanding features and no lessons seen were less than good throughout the school. Without exception, staff have good subject knowledge and outstanding class management skills. Teamwork with their teaching assistants is a crucial feature of many lessons and contributes significantly to pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are well trained and very effectively deployed to provide support where it is needed. They are highly skilled and extremely effective both in the classroom and working with small groups. Staff know what their pupils need to learn next and match work extremely well to their abilities to ensure challenge and progress. More-able pupils are very well catered for, as are those who find learning difficult. Pupils find their lessons very interesting and enjoyable and respond with enthusiasm. Teachers' marking and personal guidance is appropriate to the various age groups and helps pupils make outstanding progress. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils have a major impact on learning. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their work and to take pride in it. They want to succeed, whilst accepting that different people achieve and succeed in different ways. They work very effectively with partners, in small groups and in whole-class sessions. Pupils joining the Foundation Stage class quickly settle in and understand the classroom routines. Teaching here is also of a consistent high quality and provides an excellent basis for children's new stage of learning. Those pupils in the Nurture Group receive very high levels of individual attention and tailored support. The outstanding quality of the teaching from its staff enables pupils to make excellent progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. In the Foundation Stage, it is extremely well planned and there is an excellent balance between opportunities for children to select their own activities and those guided by the staff. The curriculum offered to pupils in the Nurture Group is also outstanding and is used creatively to motivate and interest them. There is a strong emphasis on cross-curricular links throughout the school, with a clear focus on oracy to underpin pupils' learning. Information and communication technology is used very effectively across the curriculum, including in mathematics. An incredible

range of activities and other events takes place, including themed weeks, living history lessons where pupils are building a Celtic round-house, and visits to places of interest which inspire and encourage pupils. The school also provides recorder lessons and all pupils in Key Stage 2 learn French. The arts are a strength of the school, as seen in the impressive displays which celebrate pupils' achievements. Some of their outstanding art work is to be displayed at the National Gallery. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities is provided, many of which are devised and organised by the pupils. The breakfast and after-school clubs also offer a valuable extension to the work of the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Robust procedures are in place to ensure the safety of everyone working within the school. All legal safeguarding requirements are met. Pupils know that the adults in the school are trustworthy and will always try to help them with problems. They are confident that any bullying would be quickly dealt with. The outstanding assessment of pupils' academic and personal progress ensures that appropriate teaching and support strategies are put in place for individuals. The school makes very good use of outside agencies to provide additional support, such as speech therapy, when necessary. A variety of excellent systems for reward and celebration encourages all pupils to give of their best. Relationships are exceptionally good: staff really get to know their pupils and try their best to ensure that they feel happy and secure at school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are excellent. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and one parent commented that, 'He has worked hard to turn his school into a place to be proud of'. His clear vision, drive and caring manner have helped steer the school through a very difficult period with the recent reorganisation. His commitment, enthusiasm and high expectations are infectious and he has formed an excellent relationship with those around him, challenging and inspiring adults and pupils alike to do their best. One pupil said that, 'He is the best headteacher in the world'. He is well supported by the two deputy heads, who have worked tirelessly for school improvement.

Management procedures are very good. The school plan for improvement is thorough and involves the whole community. However, some aspects need to be streamlined to be a more useful tool for improvement. Monitoring and evaluation successfully permeate all aspects of school life. There is a very strong commitment to enhance teaching and learning through regular observations of lessons and the provision of extremely good feedback to further improve work in the classrooms. The individual tracking of pupils' progress and the way in which it is used to set appropriate targets for future learning are outstanding. These are having a successful impact on standards, particularly in writing and mathematics. The school has an excellent team of

well-qualified staff. The leadership structure is adapting effectively to incorporate the different age groups since becoming a primary school. Very good opportunities are provided for further professional training to help develop these new management responsibilities.

The surplus budget has been well used to purchase new resources and equipment to effectively support pupils' learning. Governors are highly committed and actively involved in the work of the school. They know what the school should be aiming for and provide an excellent level of support and challenge to help it achieve its goals.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for helping us to feel so welcome in your school, for answering our questions and sharing your ideas with us. As you know, the inspectors visited all your classes and we also saw you at break-times. We talked to your teachers, your headteacher and governors as well as to some of the pupils on the school council. I would like to tell you what we thought about your outstanding school.

Here are some of the things we liked best:

- your school is such a happy, friendly and safe place to be
- your behaviour is excellent and the older pupils really look after the younger ones
- lessons are very interesting and teachers make learning fun
- you do very well in your work and try your best
- the staff take very good care of you and help you to be confident
- there are lots of exciting things going on – the work from 'Arts Week' is wonderful
- you have a great time at the out-of-school clubs and enjoy visits and visitors
- your headteacher and staff do an excellent job and make sure that you all succeed.

Here are some of the things which would make your school even better:

- it would be good if those of you who do not come to school very regularly were to try harder to be there so that you can do even better in your work
- pupils in Key Stage 1 might like the chance to be responsible for some jobs around the school to prepare them for when they are older.

We hope you continue to have a great time at Archbishop Wake and wish you the very best for the future.