



# Buckland Newton Church of England School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 113776  
**LEA** Dorset  
**Inspection number** 279245  
**Inspection dates** 1 December 2005 to 1 December 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Diane Wilkinson RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Buckland Newton
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Dorchester
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Dorset DT2 7BY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01300 345393
<b>Number on roll</b>	111	<b>Fax number</b>	01300 345393
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr David Pomorey
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Nicola Ralph

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 1 December 2005 - 1 December 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 279245
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Buckland Newton is a small, rural primary school with four classes, some of which are of mixed ages. Most pupils are from a White British background and speak English as a first language. Standards on entry to school vary, but are average overall. The proportion of pupils who receive free school meals is low although that of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is around average. There have been recent changes at senior management level. The school holds the Investor in People and Healthy Schools awards.

## 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 providing good value for money. Excellent support for pupils' personal development ensures they do exceptionally well in this aspect. Outstanding partnerships with parents, other schools and the local community also enhance pupils' education very well.

The good teaching and curriculum and high levels of care help pupils achieve well. Pupils do even better in mathematics and science where the quality of education is very good. As a result, standards in these subjects are well above the national average.

Over the past few years, standards in English have not been as good as in mathematics and science, although the school has successfully raised standards in reading and is now doing so in writing. The curriculum and teaching in the Foundation Stage have improved and are now good, so children make good progress.

Good leadership and management, in particular the exceptionally good support given by the governing body, underpin the school's success. Very astute appointments of new staff have led to an exceptionally smooth changeover of headteacher and the creation of an effective senior management team which is rapidly addressing the remaining weaknesses. The school's recognition that work still needs to be done has led to a modest evaluation of its effectiveness as satisfactory. Lack of effective subject leadership in English in the past contributed to the delay in addressing weaknesses in writing and inconsistencies in the quality of marking. Developments are now helping to improve subject leaders' skills in checking how well teaching is supporting progress. Together, these improvements give confidence that the school's capacity to improve further is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the highly effective writing activities seen in Years 5 and 6 to all classes to improve standards in writing.
- Ensure that the marking of pupils' written work consistently indicates how well they have done and what they need to do to improve further.
- Develop the role of the subject co-ordinators further so that they are able to play a greater part in checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Throughout the school pupils achieve well and reach the realistic targets set in national tests. Small numbers in each year group mean standards on entry vary from year to year but are average overall. There is also a significant variation in standards by the end of reception and Year 2, largely dependent on the number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in the year group. Standards in Year 6 vary less, mainly because the school has had longer to address the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, many of whom reach average standards in Year 6.

Over the past five years, overall standards have risen well, particularly in mathematics and science where they are above average in Year 2 and very high by the end of Year 6 where a significant number of pupils reach the higher levels in national tests. Children now make better progress in the Foundation Stage and currently standards are above average.

After a decline, standards in English are now rising again, particularly in reading, where standards are above average in Years 2 and 6. In the past two years, test results in writing were below average largely because higher attaining pupils did not do as well as predicted. Under the expert guidance of the new headteacher this weaknesses is now being addressed very well and pupils are making rapid progress to gain lost ground.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and apply themselves very well in lessons. Their excellent behaviour, relationships and very good attendance contribute to their good progress.

Pupils' moral and social development is excellent. The caring and supportive ethos of the school helps to ensure high standards of behaviour. Through encouragement to take on responsibilities within the school and the community, pupils develop a very good understanding of democracy and citizenship. In particular, pupils value the consideration given to their views through the work of the school council and the impact it has on improvements. They show a care and concern for others including those in third world countries and are prepared very well for their future role in the community.

Good progress is made in pupils' spiritual development through thoughtful assemblies and links with the local churches and Christian Union. Enhanced by a range of effective activities, their cultural development is also good.

Pupils develop excellent skills that will help them to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. In particular, the school's healthy eating initiatives, links with local rugby and football clubs and visits from 'Street Wise' and the 'Circus Skills' group all help pupils to make very good progress in this aspect of their development. Pupils make good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills which will help them achieve economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Throughout the school teaching is consistently good, a view shared by both pupils and their parents. Flexibility in teaching groups and the very good contribution made by classroom assistants help to ensure the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes, including those with learning difficulties, are addressed well.

Reception children are well taught. Good planning and a stimulating environment help them to make good progress. In other year groups, teaching is good overall and very good in mathematics and science. In these subjects, teachers enthuse and motivate pupils exceptionally well through extremely good subject knowledge and very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Regular use of investigative and problem solving approaches enhances pupils' understanding and provides valuable opportunities to apply their skills.

Reading is well taught through a range of class and small group activities. In the past the teaching of writing has not been so effective, partly because there has been too little challenge for higher attainers. Recent good improvement ensures lessons are now planned to meet the specific needs and interests of all pupils, including the boys. Stimulating and interesting activities are having a positive effect on progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where the teaching of English is of a very high standard.

Accurate assessment information helps planning for the next stage in learning although marking does not always indicate how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve, particularly in their writing.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum meets statutory requirements. That for reception children is now good and fully meets their needs. For older pupils, a two-year rolling programme addresses the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes well and effective activities help pupils with learning difficulties to do well.

Planning takes good account of pupils with different abilities, particularly in mathematics and science, and good liaison with local schools gives gifted and talented pupils opportunities to take part in highly challenging activities. The curriculum has been adapted well to meet the needs of the high proportion of boys in the school.

The excellent range of additional activities, visits, visitors and special events add to pupils' enjoyment of learning and extend their knowledge, skills and understanding. In particular, French lessons are helping pupils to develop very good skills in this subject. The programme for pupils' personal development is outstanding and is a major reason why pupils make exceptional progress in this aspect.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a high level of care. Rigorous attention is paid to pupils' health and safety. A consistent approach to supervision helps make the school a very happy and safe place to be which is recognised by pupils and their parents.

The school's family ethos means all adults know individual pupils very well and is a major reason why the support and guidance they receive for their personal development are excellent. Both pupils and their parents report that staff take a great deal of time and trouble to help sort out any problems.

Pupils are given good advice and guidance in their academic development, particularly in mathematics and science, and have a good understanding of how well they are doing. Targets set for individuals and groups of pupils help them to improve. The school recognises that pupils could be better involved in helping to assess their progress and setting further targets and this is an area of current development.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good overall. Governance is outstanding. Governors play a very strategic role in challenging and supporting senior managers and holding the school to account. They have been instrumental in helping to move the school forward and rightly describe themselves as 'gate-keepers of children's interests'.

The headteacher, staff and governors have a very clear vision for the future development of the school and consult very well with pupils and their parents. Excellent teamwork at all levels means there is a very strong focus on raising standards, which has brought about significant improvements in mathematics and science since the last inspection. The school's liaison with parents, the local community and other agencies is excellent and this makes a major contribution to the school's success.

Comprehensive and effective systems for checking how well the school is doing lead to very good evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in its work for which the school has received an award. Action taken on the result of this information has brought about good improvement in the standard of reading over the last two years, but has not been so effective in raising standards in writing. The senior leadership team, under the direction of the new headteacher, with very high quality support from the deputy, is putting in place highly effective strategies, which are now bringing about rapid improvement. An awareness that further improvement is still needed in some aspects of its work means the school has been modest in judging its effectiveness. The current focus is rightly on the development of subject leadership where weaknesses in English contributed to slower improvement in writing.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	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	2	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	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Buckland Newton Church of England Primary School Buckland Newton Dorchester Dorset DT2 7BY

2 December 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. We particularly want to thank the school council who gave up their time to speak to us. You and your parents think your school is good and we agree with you.

What we liked most about your school

- Your behaviour and attitudes to school are excellent and you make exceptionally good progress in your personal development.
- You make very good progress in mathematics and science and standards in these subjects are much better than in other schools.
- All staff take very good care of you and give you good advice on how to improve.
- You like your teachers a lot and say they teach you well. We agree with you.
- We think the activities provided are interesting and you have lots of very good opportunities to learn extra things like French and gardening and to play other games like hockey at the Gryphon School.
- Your school is well led and managed and all staff are working very hard to improve things for you.
- Governors support your school and look after your interests very well indeed.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help you to do as well in English, particularly in writing, as you do in science and mathematics.
- Help you to improve your work through marking in a different way.
- Continue to develop all teachers' skills in supporting your headteacher and deputy to improve the school.

Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

D Wilkinson Lead inspector