



Witchampton Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113821
LEA Dorset
Inspection number 279258
Inspection dates 20 June 2006 to 20 June 2006
Reporting inspector Alexander Baxter AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Witchampton
School category	Voluntary aided		Wimborne
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Dorset BH21 5AP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01258 840684
Number on roll	36	Fax number	01258 840684
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Maureen Bowers

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 9	20 June 2006 - 20 June 2006	279258

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Witchampton is a very small school. All pupils are of White British origin. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average, but the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is higher than average. Mobility is above average and this means that the number of pupils on roll fluctuates throughout the year. The children's attainment on entry generally matches the level expected for their age.

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 where pupils achieve well and learn very happily. Strengths include the pupils' excellent personal development, nurtured by outstanding care, support and guidance and the school's inclusive Christian ethos. One parent exemplified these by saying 'The one to one care at Witchampton is beyond expectation.' The headteacher provides excellent leadership and, despite a fluctuating roll, promotes good improvement and ensures good value for money. An increasing number of pupils progress very well in speaking and listening, reading and information and communication technology (ICT). Most make good progress in mathematics and writing and all pupils reach the challenging targets set for them.

Attendance is good and reflects the pupils' enjoyment of school. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are good overall. Provision for children in Reception is also good. Learning is affected, very occasionally, by the need to adjust class organisation to cater for the varying numbers of pupils in the different year groups, but the school compensates effectively by the careful deployment of teaching and support staff. However, teaching and planned activities do not always enable pupils to learn independently, or to solve problems in mathematics sufficiently quickly, limiting progress on occasions.

Leadership and management are good and the headteacher receives good support from staff and governors. Parents and outside agencies also contribute very effectively. Procedures for self-evaluation are good and the school's views match the judgements of the inspector. The school has a good capacity to move forward further, as illustrated by its improvement since the last inspection, for example, in the provision for physical education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan more opportunities for pupils to learn independently by deciding for themselves how they are going to find things out.
- Further develop the pupils' problem solving skills in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good for all pupils, including potentially higher attainers and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and pupils reach challenging targets. A fluctuating roll has necessitated changes to class groupings, particularly for children in Reception. At the same time, children now have a wider range of learning needs when they enter school. Nevertheless, pupils' good progress has been sustained since the last inspection. Children enter the school with the skills normally expected, but this can vary substantially from year to year. They make good progress in Reception in relation to their capabilities and many develop their skills beyond the early learning goals expected by the end of their first year in school. A beneficially low pupil to adult

ratio allows pupils to receive close attention and supports good progress through Years 1 and 2. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are above average, with strengths in reading and writing. Standards are mostly above average in Years 3 and 4 in literacy and numeracy and show good progress in relation to pupils' differing capabilities. Many pupils have particularly good speaking and listening and ICT skills. Although numeracy skills have improved, problem solving skills in mathematics should be better.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, including for children in Reception. Behaviour and attitudes are also excellent. Parents say 'Pupils develop a real team spirit.' They appreciate the pupils' very good manners and gain great comfort from their children's great enjoyment and happiness at school. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school and say 'There are lots of helpful people here.' Attendance is good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is exceptional and is underpinned by the sincere way staff promote the school's Christian ethos. These qualities are promoted most effectively in school assemblies where the pupils show great empathy for each other. Cultural development is good and pupils respect the differing customs and beliefs of others, for example, by visiting a mosque and studying aboriginal art. Pupils are very knowledgeable about exercise and healthy eating and safe practice, and benefit from a well planned physical education curriculum that includes visits to the village hall and other schools. Pupils are considerate of others, for example, when working in pairs or teams, and have a strong sense of community. They make good contributions to local and wider groups, for example, through church events and concerts. Pupils undertake several responsibilities sensibly, for example, as 'Huff and Puff' monitors of playground equipment. They develop good skills, including ICT, that equip them effectively for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use a variety of strategies and meet the pupils' differing needs in the mixed age classes effectively. These include giving pupils full information about what they are learning and discussions with individual pupils to review what they have enjoyed learning during the week. Children receive a good start to their education, particularly in developing their personal, literacy and numeracy skills. This was illustrated in a good mathematics lesson where pupils were challenged at appropriate levels and built well on previous knowledge of number and time. The teachers' well organised and questioning approaches and effective use of ICT ensure that good learning continues in Years 3 and 4.

Teachers assess work carefully. They involve pupils beneficially in setting challenging targets. Pupils say 'Teachers know us well and we check our own work.' Pupils enjoy lessons and reach their targets because teachers plan carefully and provide interesting tasks. Teachers are beginning to work on developing pupils' thinking skills, and this is helping pupils to learn more quickly. However, learning is constrained on occasions, because pupils have limited opportunities to learn by deciding for themselves how to find things out. Teachers promote warm relationships and teaching assistants give good support to pupils, especially to those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum for all pupils. The curriculum is enhanced by the good provision in physical education, specialist teaching in music and curricular projects, such as '150 Years of Learning'. There is good provision for the different needs of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils say 'We have lots of practical activities.' There is good enrichment from a wide range of clubs, which include 'Tri Golf', and links with other schools. However, planning does not always include enough opportunities for pupils to solve problems in mathematics, and to learn independently.

There is strong emphasis on developing pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles and safe practice. Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to develop ICT and library skills, work in teams and contribute to the community events. These develop skills for their future economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Teachers and assistants develop and safeguard the pupils' personal qualities and well-being extremely well. In this small school, the staff know the children and their families personally and any issues are quickly addressed. All adults working in the school treat pupils as individuals and value their efforts. Parents show their appreciation when they say 'The school focuses strongly on individual children's needs.' Arrangements for child protection are thorough and reviewed on a regular basis. Academic and personal guidance are good. Pupils know the targets they are aiming for and say 'We know what we have to do to get better.' Liaison with parents and outside agencies to support pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable, are very effective and can be seen in the confident and happy way that pupils approach their work at school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets high aspirations and is a strong and fair leader. She is particularly skilful in meeting the challenge of a

fluctuating roll. She ensures that pupils' individual personal and academic needs continue to be met through her imaginative deployment of staff. The headteacher receives good support from staff and governors. The school is committed to a curriculum that celebrates diversity and consults widely with outside agencies to address pupils' differing needs.

Self-evaluation is effective and takes into account the views of staff, governors, parents and the pupils. There is a systematic programme to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The focus on how this will impact on pupils' particular skills should be sharper. The school uses assessment information to set appropriately challenging targets and plan effective support. These are reviewed regularly by staff, pupils and their parents. Parents say 'Teachers know what our children need and bring out the best.' Subject leaders and staff with responsibilities make an effective contribution to raising standards, for example, in physical education, which also reflects the good improvement made since the previous inspection. Staff and governors collaborate as a good team. They provide strategic direction through a carefully formulated and evaluated school development plan that has clear priorities for improvement. This is exemplified by the pupils' improving numeracy and ICT skills and shows that the school has a good capacity to improve in the future.

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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	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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?	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	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	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

I really enjoyed the day I spent in your school. You all made me feel very welcome. Your friendliness, and the way you show respect to others, is a credit to you all. You and your parents think your school is good and I agree with you.

What I liked most about your school:

- Your behaviour, attitudes and relationships are outstanding.
- You are cared for and looked after extremely well by all adults in school.
- Your headteacher is an excellent team leader and she receives good support from staff and governors to be sure you make good progress.
- Staff work very effectively with your parents and with outside agencies to help you to learn.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- Your teachers should plan more opportunities for you to make your own choices about how you are going to learn.
- Your teachers should give you further help to solve problems in mathematics.

I wish you all the best for the future.