



Beechcroft St Pauls CE VA Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134077
LEA Dorset
Inspection number 282448
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector Janet Simms AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Corporation Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Weymouth
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Dorset DT4 0LQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01305 783500
Number on roll	166	Fax number	01305 785286
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Julia Moore
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Sprague

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	5 July 2006 - 5 July 2006	282448

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a new, one-form entry primary school in its third year of reorganisation after being an infants' school. Pupils are now in school up to Year 5. The school is in a disadvantaged area of Weymouth. There are more pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities on roll than is usual. Fewer families than usual are known to be eligible for free school meals. Few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds or have a first language other than English. The headteacher and most staff are new and the school is still growing. Major building work to accommodate this expansion has been delayed, and was creating shortages of space at the time of inspection.

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 which is improving rapidly, already having a few outstanding features. These include provision in the Foundation Stage, excellent relationships with the school's partners and the personal care it provides for pupils. Inspection evidence shows that the school is too modest in evaluating its overall effectiveness as satisfactory. It is now popular and oversubscribed for next year.

Children's skills and experience are very limited on entry. Standards are still below average by Years 2 and 5. This applies particularly to the content of writing, handwriting techniques and to number work in mathematics, although pupils are now progressing quickly in these areas. All year groups are achieving increasingly well because teaching is good. Personal development is strong, particularly amongst younger pupils, who can work much more independently than older ones. The progress of pupils in Year 5 has been adversely affected by inadequate teaching earlier this year.

Teaching and learning are improving rapidly and are good. Staff form a cohesive, enthusiastic team, who are committed to improving the progress of all pupils. The curriculum is good, with excellent additional activities to extend pupils' experience. Care and support are outstanding. Marking and other guidance given to pupils are inconsistent and do not always help them understand how to improve their work. This is rightly identified as a focus for development by the school.

Leadership and management are good. During the headteacher's first year, strong concentration on how to improve standards and achievement has not been deflected by the need to manage very difficult issues, such as those arising from delays with the building work. Governance is good. The school's accurate self-evaluation identifies the same areas for improvement as the inspection evidence. As a new school, there is no previous report but the record of very rapid progress throughout this year shows that the school has excellent capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in the content of writing and of pupils' handwriting.
- Improve pupils' mathematical knowledge, particularly in number work.
- Make marking, assessment and feedback to pupils better to help them understand how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities achieve well. This has not always been the case, as some inadequate teaching in the past has left gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in writing and number work. However, improvement in teaching has resulted in good progress this year in all year groups and pupils are rapidly catching up. Standards are very low when pupils enter the school, but improve to below average by the time they leave.

When children join the Reception class, their language skills and mathematical understanding are particularly weak. They achieve very well in their Reception Year, making exceptional progress in their mathematical understanding. Most of them meet, and a significant minority exceed, the expected goals for learning, so that standards are near average by the end of the year.

Pupils are making good progress in Years 1 to 5, although standards are below average at the end of Years 2 and 5. Pupils often exceed their targets, especially in reading where some achievement is outstanding. Good support helps pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to achieve well. The weakest aspects of pupils' work are the quality of their handwriting, writing content, and their understanding of number. Actions taken this year are starting to raise standards and the school has met challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding which is underpinned by the school's strong Christian influence. Pupils understand health and fitness very well indeed, eating and drinking healthily and participating very enthusiastically in a wide variety of sports.

Pupils enjoy school, including friendly playtimes. They hugely appreciate the extra play space recently provided. They know how to keep safe and who to approach if they are troubled. They say that adults are always willing to help sort out minor differences. Although attendance is below average, it has improved markedly this year. Pupils are now keen to come to school because activities are interesting.

Behaviour is good. Younger pupils are becoming more independent and most have good attitudes towards work. Pupils know their views are valued and the new school council has successfully brought about changes such as new water bottles and bike sheds. Pupils make good contributions to the local community, for instance giving enjoyable concerts, singing to the elderly and raising money for charities. Secure reading and computer skills help pupils prepare properly for future education and work, but writing and numeracy are not strong enough.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and there are examples of outstanding practice. Thorough planning ensures that the learning intentions of lessons are clear and tasks are well matched to all pupils' needs. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress, often because they receive well targeted support from teaching assistants. More able pupils have suitable opportunities to extend learning and they too make good progress. All teachers make particularly good use of information and communication technology to encourage pupils' interest and participation in lessons.

Adults manage challenging behaviour very well, so the atmosphere for learning is usually calm and focused.

The implementation of new initiatives has improved the teaching of writing and mathematics. Good emphasis on shared writing and a new handwriting scheme are improving achievement. As a result, standards are rising, but more time is needed for the many recent changes to improve standards further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. In Reception, it is stimulating and interesting, and pupils learn well from a wide range of carefully planned practical activities.

The strength of the curriculum lies in the excellent cycle of planning and teaching, followed by evaluation and amendment. This ensures that provision is broad, balanced and relevant, as well as linking subjects together so that pupils understand the connections. Aspects of sex and relationships education and drug abuse are included, and pupils understand these well. Subject coordination has improved, particularly in English and mathematics, but has not had time to make a full impact on achievement yet.

The curriculum is considerably extended by an exceptional number of visits and visitors and by the school's excellent relationships with other local schools and colleges. An exceptional range of sports, including tennis, basketball, cricket, football and gymnastics, planned through the local sports partnership, is making an outstanding contribution to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Parents and pupils also value improvements in music provision, such as guitar lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides outstanding care and good guidance and support. All adults are exemplary role models, which results in excellent relationships. The school is a place where everyone is respected, inducing a feeling of calm and enjoyment. Pupils feel safe in school and have no concerns about bullying or aggression. Good procedures exist to reduce absences, but like many things, these have not been in place sufficiently long to improve attendance enough.

Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are good. Pupils' academic progress is very carefully monitored and this is playing a key part in helping staff and pupils to raise achievement. Some marking provides very good guidance for improvement; however the school recognises that this is not universal and there are occasions when pupils are not sure what to do next to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Parents, staff and pupils recognise that the most significant factor in recent improvement is the new headteacher. She is a very good role model for all. She has managed a range of difficulties well. These have included delays with the building work and the need to robustly address inadequacies in some teaching. The outcome is a school which has already improved significantly and is now poised to move forward swiftly.

The headteacher and her new team have radically improved the community's perceptions of the school. Its popularity amongst parents has increased and it is oversubscribed for next year. Parents and others are effectively involved with developments.

Pupils' achievement is improving rapidly and is now good, which augurs very well for the future. Self-assessment is good; it is accurate and thorough. Checking processes focus strongly on school improvement. Resources are now sufficient for all year groups and for a smooth move into the new buildings next year. Able, supportive governors have a good understanding of the school and where it needs to develop. Staff relish and enjoy their newly delegated responsibilities. As a new school, there is no previous inspection report, but significant improvement has occurred in the year since the headteacher has been in post. A pupil, asked about the best thing that has happened at school, perceptively replied '...our new headteacher'. The school's capacity to improve further is outstanding and the school provides good value for money.

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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	1	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	3	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	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	3	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?	2	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

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school on our recent visit. We really enjoyed being in your lessons and assembly, talking with you and looking at your work. I am writing to tell you what we found out about the school.

These are some of the good things we found

- Most of you really like the changes this year. The new headteacher and school staff are really helping to improve things in the school.
- You are making good progress in your work because teachers have organised it well for you.
- Behaviour has got better and most of you like working in groups and by yourselves when you can.
- You play nicely together and enjoy the new playground space.
- All the adults in school care for you a lot and look after you very well.
- Your parents know you enjoy being in this good school and making good progress.

These are the things that could be better

- Your writing is not as good as it could be; this includes your handwriting.
- Not all of you understand number work in mathematics well enough, but this is starting to improve.
- The information you get from teachers about how to improve your work should be clearer.

I expect you are looking forward to the summer holidays. We hope you have a good summer and enjoy working in the new buildings when they are finished.

Yours sincerely

Ms Janet Simms Lead inspector