



Wimborne First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113679
Local Authority Dorset
Inspection number 289692
Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007
Reporting inspector John English

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

Type of school	First	School address	School Lane
School category	Community		Wimborne
Age range of pupils	4–9		BH21 1HQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01202 882532
Number on roll (school)	222	Fax number	01202 883135
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Peter Williams
		Headteacher	Kate Curtis
Date of previous school inspection	27 May 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school in the centre of the town. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. There are a small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Most of the children are White British. There have been considerable staff changes in the last two years. The acting headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the third member of the senior leadership team all started at the school in September 2006.

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 rapidly improving because of the leadership of an energetic and charismatic acting headteacher supported by a strong leadership team. Their outstanding achievement is to have set a clear direction for the school which has united the teaching and non-teaching staff, raising their morale after a very difficult period of instability which led to falling standards. However, the school is quickly recovering, and is now delivering a good standard of education, with some outstanding features. Many parents recognise this and praised the work of the new leadership team in answers to the inspection questionnaire, but others also underlined some very good practices that have long been a feature of the school, particularly support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. One parent wrote, 'My child's individual needs have been recognised and met, and talents celebrated.' The overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with the provision at the school. Governors provide knowledgeable and effective support. Overall, leadership and management are good, and the school gives good value for money. The pupils enter the school with standards that are below average and leave with standards that are broadly average. Their achievement is good. Some pupils with learning difficulties make outstanding progress because of the high quality dedication and support of the special needs department and the teacher in charge. Standards of writing are lower than they should be and in some classes higher attaining pupils do not yet achieve the standards of which they are capable.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, with particular strengths in cultural development because of the school's commitment to ensuring a caring, understanding attitude towards others of all backgrounds. Pupils also make an exceptional contribution to the community and to the school itself, involving themselves with a variety of community activities, and participating constructively in the school council. Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy school because they find lessons interesting. They feel safe at school, and there is very little unkind behaviour between pupils, because as one pupil put it, 'Most of us are very caring.' Awareness of how to live healthy lifestyles is outstanding; the pupils know what food and exercise is good for them, and what should be 'occasional treats'. Overall, the pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding.

Teaching and learning are good because the teachers present the curriculum using a variety of learning styles and activities which meet the pupils' needs well. The curriculum is good, particularly in numeracy and literacy and in the Foundation Stage. However, information and communication technology (ICT) is insufficiently used for learning. There is an outstanding range of enhancement activities. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are given good guidance to help them improve their standards, and vulnerable pupils are exceptionally well cared for.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in writing, and of higher attaining pupils.

- Improve provision for ICT, and use it to enhance learning across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most pupils joined the school with standards that were below average, although for the 2006 year group they were broadly average. They leave school at the end of Year 4 with standards that are broadly average, and achievement overall is good.

On entry to the Foundation Stage there are weaknesses in communication, language and literacy, especially amongst the boys. Pupils make good progress, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, and enter Year 1 with standards that are broadly average. By the end of Year 2, standards in recent years have been above average, although in the tests in 2006 they were broadly average, affected by the serious staffing uncertainties of the past year. In the current Years 1 and 2 pupils' achievement is good, although writing continues to be weak. In Years 3 and 4 achievement overall is satisfactory, and standards broadly average. Boys make good progress, especially in mathematics.

Most pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress, but some individuals make outstanding progress because of the range and quality of support offered them by the learning support department. Higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could, because they are not consistently challenged in all classes with work at a suitable level.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils thoroughly enjoy school life. They respond to lessons and other activities with enthusiasm. Most pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Attendance is above average.

Pupils get on extremely well with one another and with the staff, and even the youngest show a keen sensitivity regarding the needs of others. They feel safe, and say that instances of unkind behaviour between pupils are rare. They understand the importance of making healthy choices. The school's determined focus on supporting independent learning makes them increasingly responsible for their own learning. They readily embrace opportunities to take responsibilities in school or take part in activities which contribute to the wider community. They understand how their actions make a difference to themselves, to their community and their environment. They have a strong understanding of multicultural issues. Consequently, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their grasp of key skills and sense of personal responsibility prepare them effectively for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons comprise a range of different activities that the pupils enjoy, and which enhance their learning. One pupil said that he expected to find literacy and mathematics boring but 'the teacher makes them interesting'. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good, because good learning habits are established as soon as the children start at the school.

Planning is good, and the pupils are told what they are going to learn and how it links to what they have already learned, and to other areas of the curriculum. At the end of the lesson they take part in a useful review of what they have learned, which helps the teacher plan the subsequent lesson effectively. Assessment is used well to ensure that the activities the pupils are set are appropriate to their learning needs. Higher attaining pupils are sometimes given additionally challenging tasks to do, although this practice is not yet found in every class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage, and for literacy and numeracy throughout the school, is particularly vibrant and has been strengthened by ensuring that the cycle of topics takes account of mixed year classes. A particular strength is the school's personal, social and health education programme, including multicultural education, which contributes well to the pupils' excellent personal development. Interactive whiteboards are used well to support teaching but the current provision of computers limits opportunities for pupils to use ICT for learning.

The range of activities outside lessons is excellent, including those for pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities. There is a wide variety of lunchtime activities, clubs after school and close links with other providers. Residential opportunities, visits, visitors and very strong community involvement further enrich the learning opportunities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a caring school which is determined to meet pupils' needs and raise their attainment. The systems it has put into place to analyse pupils' performance and track their progress are now strong. These result in high quality planning for personal and academic support. Pupils are given good verbal feedback on how they are doing in lessons, but are not yet fully involved in setting their own targets and evaluating progress towards them.

Those pupils who are vulnerable or who have particular learning needs are extremely well supported in the classroom and in the special needs area. Excellent teamwork

with a range of outside professionals, such as occupational therapists and speech and language therapists, and carefully set targets, enable these pupils to achieve well and sometimes exceptionally.

The school has appropriate systems to protect pupils from harm, including all new safeguarding requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting headteacher and the senior team provide outstanding leadership through their clarity of vision and the direction they give the staff. They are addressing all the key requirements for improving standards at the school, and have won full support from all the staff. Early signs of impact are already clearly discernable in standards and in the personal development and the welfare of the pupils. Performance is rigorously monitored, and planning for improvement is good. Day-to-day organisation and management are good.

The subject leaders for literacy and numeracy and the special needs co-ordinator fulfil their responsibilities effectively and are also good role models as teachers and middle managers. This is a highly inclusive school, with outstanding support given to vulnerable pupils. The governing body fulfils its role effectively, and the financial management of the school is sound. The school has shown a good capacity to improve both through the way it has tackled issues raised in the last inspection as well as the impact of measures introduced by the new leadership team.

The senior managers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and believe that it is now an effective school. Inspectors agree with them.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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?	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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 welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed visiting you very much. We think that yours is a good school and that it is getting better all the time. We are particularly pleased to see how well you are getting on, especially as we know that in the last year or so there have been big changes at your school. Your acting headteacher and all the teachers are doing a very good job helping you to improve your work and enjoy school and learning.

We were very impressed with the way you contribute to improving the school and doing things to help your community, like raising money for charities. Your behaviour is excellent, and we were also very impressed with how much you know about other people who live in different lands and have different lives from yours.

Your teachers teach you well and make lessons exciting for you. You are very well cared for and looked after by all the staff. Some of you get exceptionally good help when you work in the 'lair'. You have not yet got good enough computer equipment in your school, but we are told that this will be arranged soon. We have also encouraged your teachers to help you improve your writing, and make sure that those of you who sometimes find the work rather easy, are given some more difficult things to do.

Finally, I know that by the time you receive this, you will know who is to be your headteacher for the future. We wish that person, the staff and all of you the very best for a bright future at your school.