

Stoborough Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113753
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	289714
Inspection date	12 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Tom Simpson

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	126
School	
Appropriate authority	Interim executive
Chair	Caroline Buxton board
Headteacher	J Grocott
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002
School address	Corfe Road Stoborough Wareham BH20 5AD
Telephone number	01929 552974
Fax number	01929 550960

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving a semi-rural community. It is very popular and nearly half the pupils come from out of its immediate area. Most pupils are from a White British background and none is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities varies from year to year but is currently below average. Attainment on entry also varies from year to year but is broadly average overall. The school has recently gained 'Healthy School' status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Stoborough is an outstanding school. This is because staff at all levels are highly committed to maintaining and raising academic standards while still providing an interesting and creative curriculum and a high level of personal care. The pupils are very well known to staff and the very effective care, guidance and support provided for them is a particular strength. This impacts very successfully on their exceptional personal development. The pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and feel very safe there. Many parents commented very positively on the provision the school makes for their children. One parent wrote, for example, 'I could not be happier or wish for a better school'. Another commented: 'We are delighted and amazed by our daughter's academic progress'.

Teaching is outstanding and pupils' impressive achievement and their love of learning are very well supported by an excellent curriculum. Provision for the Reception class is outstanding in most respects which means that children get off to a very good start in their schooling. However, outdoor play facilities for these younger children are not adequate. The very good progress that children make in the Reception Year is maintained as the pupils proceed through the school. By the time they leave, standards are regularly above, and frequently well above, average in all the key subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are very well provided for and they achieve very well against their starting points.

Leadership and management are outstanding and have a profound impact on all aspects of the school's work. The school has successfully addressed the small number of issues raised by its last, very positive, inspection. For example, the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation is now good, all staff have appropriate job descriptions and there have been significant improvements to the accommodation. The school has maintained the high academic standards and the very good quality of education that was previously identified. There are particular strengths in the way that it evaluates its strengths and relative weaknesses and puts in place very effective strategies to ameliorate these. Improvements are successfully implemented because of the vibrant enthusiasm of staff at all levels and the consummate skills of the headteacher and senior management team. The school has an outstanding capacity to maintain its high standards and improve even further in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve outdoor play facilities for children in the Reception class.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children get off to an exceptionally good start in the Reception Year and by the time they start Year 1, they are well prepared for the rest of their education in all areas of learning. As they move through the school, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, continue to achieve exceptionally well and make excellent progress against their starting points.

For several years, Year 2 national assessment results have been significantly above average overall. In 2006, whilst still above average, the results were lower than in the previous years. This is attributable to the lower starting points and learning difficulties of a significant proportion of the pupils in the group. Boys did less well than girls, especially in English. Mathematics, however, was the weakest subject overall. There is good evidence from preliminary 2007 results

that standards in Year 2 have risen again and are significantly above average in all the assessed areas. No specific group is now achieving less well than another. The school's robust tracking system and the results of non-statutory tests indicate that pupils in Year 4 also consistently attain standards that are significantly above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding overall. A strong Christian ethos at the school results in a very good focus on promoting spiritual development throughout the curriculum. As a result of the wide range of experiences provided for them, pupils have a very well developed understanding of the multi-cultural dimension of the United Kingdom and the wider world. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons. They have a very good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and behave safely. They appreciate the purpose of, for instance, 'walk to school' weeks and 'power walks' around the school grounds. Behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is exceptionally good and pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work and each other. Pupils told inspectors: 'Everyone looks after everyone else'. The pupils thoroughly enjoy taking on responsibility, for example being play leaders or manning a 'friendship bench'. They feel that they have a strong voice in decision-making, particularly through the proactive school council. They very much appreciate the wide range of opportunities they have to support organisations such as the Wessex Children's Heart Circle and a charity in Peru. Pupils gain a very good range of basic skills which prepare them exceptionally well for the adult world. Despite the efforts of the school, attendance is average. This is because a small number of families are obliged to take holidays during term time as a result of their personal circumstances.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Exceptionally good teaching and learning have a significant impact on pupils' achievement throughout the school. A particularly strong aspect of the teaching is the highly effective way in which pupils are managed. As a result, the pupils are enthusiastic about learning and exceptionally well behaved in lessons. A very good variety of methods and resources are regularly employed to support pupils' interest and the quality of their learning. Learning objectives are explored at the beginning of lessons to ensure that the pupils are clear about what is expected of them. These are revisited during and at the end of lessons to enable them to assess how well they have got on. Expectations are high and questioning is skilful and probing. It challenges the pupils to think deeply about the topic they are discussing and supports their very good progress. Very occasionally, however, the pace of a discussion is too slow, which means that a few pupils lose interest in what is going on. Teaching assistants are deployed very well, providing highly effective support, for instance for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are robust procedures in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school. As a result, work set is very well matched to pupils' specific needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is balanced, creative and relevant to the differing needs of the pupils. Although the school has a high regard for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, pupils are

given a wide range of experiences in art and design. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have the opportunity to learn French. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very effectively in all classes to support and extend pupils' learning across the curriculum. A very good range of out-of-lesson activities such as clubs, visitors and visits are used effectively to enhance pupils' love of learning. One parent commented: 'The teachers and support staff do a fantastic job of bringing the curriculum alive so that my kids are interested and inspired to learn'. Provision for Reception children is highly effective in supporting the progress they are making. The outdoor play area provided for these children is inadequate, although the impact of this on their physical development is minimal as a result of staff efforts to compensate in other ways. The school has developed very positive links with other schools which further enhance the curriculum. For example, it has been working closely with other local schools on a joint project to improve pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. The school's motto 'Be a Stoborough person – kind, caring, loving and gentle' is firmly embedded throughout the school community. The pupils receive highly effective pastoral support and guidance. Robust procedures are in place for health and safety, child protection and safe staff recruitment. There are very good links with outside agencies such as the school nurse to support vulnerable pupils and provide advice for parents. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very effectively supported by teachers and teaching assistants. The school has established an extensive range of strategies to support pupils' academic development and these underpin excellent achievement. The school has rightly identified that there is scope to extend the ways that pupils themselves are involved in assessing how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She is highly committed to improving the quality of the school's work and raising standards even higher. She also provides advice and support to other schools in the area. She is very well supported by highly skilled and enthusiastic senior managers who also have significant roles in promoting the school's development. For example, the deputy head successfully manages both the excellent Foundation Stage and the effective provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. She also shares her expertise with other schools. There are stringent strategies in place to monitor all aspects of the school's work, including teaching and the achievement of the pupils. As a result, all staff are very clear about not only the school's strengths but also where it still needs to improve further. For instance, the school recognised that middle and lower ability pupils in Years 1 and 2 were not doing as well as they should in mathematics and addressed this issue very efficiently. The school is modest in its evaluation of its performance because it is continually seeking further improvement.

The governing body is supportive, proactive and well informed. However, its overall effectiveness is slightly impaired due to difficulties in maintaining a full complement of governors. A significant carry-forward of money from the last financial year is being used for further building and site improvements.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	1
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	1
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	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	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.

Annex A

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	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

12 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stoborough CE First School, Stoborough, BH20 5AD

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your work. We found that your school provides you with an outstanding education.

Here are some of the things we found to be particularly good:

- you are very well behaved indeed and your personal development is excellent; it is clear that you are very keen to learn and you care very much for others
- you are very well cared for by the adults at the school
- you are exceptionally well taught and you are given very interesting work to do
- the headteacher and staff are working extremely hard to make the school even better.

Here is what we have suggested the school does now:

- improve the outside play area available to the Reception children.

Thank you again for your help.

With best wishes

Tom Simpson Lead Inspector