



All Saints Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113772
Local Authority Dorset
Inspection number 289721
Inspection date 7 November 2006
Reporting inspector Shirley Billington

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bishops Caundle
School category	Voluntary controlled		Sherborne
Age range of pupils	4-11		DT9 5NQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01963 23450
Number on roll (school)	109	Fax number	01963 23450
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	John Hamilton
		Headteacher	Chris Fox
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school serving a widespread rural area in North Dorset. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average and is particularly high in some year groups. When children start school, their personal, social and physical skills are broadly in line with those expected. Their language skills and knowledge of number are often weak. The school is part of a cluster of local primaries working together to enrich learning opportunities for pupils in small schools.

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 in which pupils achieve well, both academically and personally. A positive ethos and careful attention to the needs of individuals ensure that pupils grow in confidence and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Parents are very positive about the work of the school and the way that their children, as they say, 'seem to thrive in the school environment'.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year and make good progress in all areas of learning, but their skills in aspects of language, particularly speaking and listening, are often still limited at the start of Year 1. These weaknesses are also evident for pupils in Years 1 and 2. There are some strategies in place to address this but there is not yet a structured and systematic approach to boosting skills in these areas. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly in line with the national average but there is a variation in different subjects. Pupils do particularly well in science and standards are above average because of the practical approaches to teaching and learning. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Standards in mathematics have improved so that these are slightly above average. In English, pupils do particularly well in reading but standards overall are below average because writing is weak. Whilst there has been improvement over the last year, there is still some way to go to further raise achievement in this area. In particular, there is not enough opportunity for pupils to write at length for a range of purposes across the curriculum.

Effective teaching, a good curriculum and high quality care, guidance and support ensure pupils' good achievement and underpin their good personal development. The school is very concerned to provide for the needs of everyone as individuals and strong links with outside agencies are used well to support pupils who need some special help.

Good leadership and management are key to the school's successes. Rigorous checks are carried out on the school's effectiveness and particularly good use is made of a range of assessment information to identify strengths and weaknesses and to plan for improvements. As a result, standards in mathematics have improved and writing is now appropriately identified as the main priority for improvement. The school knows itself well and has good capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes in subjects across the curriculum in order to raise standards in writing.
- Implement a structured programme to improve pupils' skills in speaking and listening, particularly in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. In the Reception year children make good progress so that they are working within expected levels in most areas of learning at the start of Year 1. However, weaknesses in their language skills persist through to Year 2. Despite this, pupils in Years 1 to 6 continue to make good progress so that standards are broadly in line with, and sometimes above, national averages at the end of Year 6. Results in national tests vary year on year because the number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is particularly high in some year groups and this has an impact on standards overall. However, there is also some variation in how well pupils are doing in different subjects. Pupils do particularly well in science as a result of the strong emphasis on the investigative elements of the subject, and standards are often well above average. Over the past three years, a strong emphasis on boosting pupils' skills in mental calculation means that standards in mathematics have improved so that these are now slightly above average. In English, pupils do particularly well in reading but their skills in writing are much weaker and this brings down the overall standards in this subject to a level that is below average. However, pupils do well in relation to their starting points, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The school sets challenging targets for pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 6 and is often successful in achieving these.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from good support and make good progress against their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and each other's company. Relationships across the age ranges are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a keen appreciation of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle and a good number participate regularly in organised sports. However, their knowledge of the importance of a healthy diet is not always apparent from the content of lunchboxes. The school council, which takes its role in improving the school very seriously, is aware of this and is currently discussing how to tackle this issue. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through taking on responsibilities and expressing their views, for example, by writing them on the 'suggestion board' or discussing them with their school council representative. Pupils feel safe in school and are safety conscious. They enjoy opportunities to work together and particularly appreciate discussions with their 'talking partners', seeing them as someone 'who can help if you're stuck'. Their good skills in collaboration and keen sense of teamwork, together with secure basic skills, mean that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Attendance is satisfactory but levels are negatively affected by the erratic attendance of a few pupils. The school is well aware of any reasons for absences and works hard to encourage regular attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic learners because teaching is good. They are keen to talk about their work and to share their ideas with each other. Lessons are well structured so that pupils have a clear view of what they should be learning through the activities they undertake. Good use is made of resources, particularly the interactive whiteboards, to engage pupils' attention and to demonstrate key teaching points. Teaching of science is particularly strong because teachers have good subject knowledge and there is a strong focus on helping pupils to understand key scientific ideas. The level of challenge in these lessons is high. Occasionally in other subjects, pace slows a little and time is not used as well as it might be. In most lessons, information from assessment is used well to plan a range of tasks to meet the learning needs of pupils. Particularly good use is made of teaching assistants to support groups and individuals. There are times when they could be involved more in introductory sessions in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well organised and planned to cater for mixed-age classes so that pupils' learning builds on what they have already learned and can do. Provision for science and for information and communication technology (ICT) has been improved significantly since the last inspection and, as a result, pupils are achieving well in these subjects. In the Reception Year, there is a strong focus on improving children's skills in speaking and listening and this is beginning to have an impact in terms of extending their understanding and encouraging them to contribute to discussions. However, there is more to do to ensure that specific areas, such as the difficulty that some children have in putting together sentences, are systematically addressed. Strategies to raise standards in writing are beginning to bear fruit, but opportunities are too limited for pupils to use and extend their skills in subjects across the curriculum.

The curriculum is enhanced well through a very good range of opportunities for pupils to attend extra-curricular activities. Good links with cluster schools enable pupils to participate in an outdoor education programme, which includes residential visits, and to participate in a large-scale performance. Very good provision for sport and a strong emphasis on personal and social education extend pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles, safe practices and the contribution they can make to the school and wider community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has a strong commitment to ensuring the well-being of all pupils and good systems are in place to ensure their safety and welfare. There is very good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities so that they are fully integrated into

school life and benefit from all that is on offer. Pupils who get extra help are often appreciative of what is done for them, talking about their 'special time' when they follow a specific programme to boost their skills.

Good systems are in place to track the progress of pupils and to set targets for their achievement year on year. Pupils themselves show a good awareness of what they need to do to improve. The school has identified that there is scope to extend this even further by encouraging pupils to evaluate their successes as learners both individually and with 'learning partners'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership is strongly focused on raising standards and ensuring the personal development and well-being of pupils. Self-evaluation is rigorous and takes account of the views of pupils and parents so that senior staff and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Particularly good use is made of information from standardised tests to analyse where there are areas for improvement and to inform action planning. Improvement in writing throughout the school has been rightly identified as a key priority. Action has been taken to achieve this, and more work is planned, but the checks made on what has been done so far have been too limited to really clarify what is making a difference. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and areas that were found to be weak then are now strong features of the provision.

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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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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	2
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 the help that you gave us when your school was inspected recently. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you about your work. Particular thanks to the school council for letting us sit in on your meeting and to the pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 who talked to us in the afternoon. We know you will be interested in what we are saying in our report. Yours is a good school and you do well in your learning because you are well taught. You are helped to grow and mature so that you are ready for secondary school and even for life beyond that!

- Some of the good things that we found: ?
- You are doing well in science, mathematics and reading. ?
- The school takes good care of you and this helps you to make good progress. Those of you who get some extra help enjoy your 'special time'. ?
- You enjoy school and all the extra activities, particularly clubs, sports, performances and visits and visitors. ?
- Your headteacher, governors and staff are making school an even better place to be. The school council does a good job in helping them with this.
- What we have suggested the school does now: ?
- Give you more opportunities to write so that your writing skills become as good as those in reading. ?
- Help the children in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 to become confident speakers and good listeners.

Thank you again for your help. Keep on enjoying your learning!