



St Gregory's Church of England Primary School, Marnhull

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113805
LEA Dorset
Inspection number 289728
Inspection dates 3 July 2006 to 4 July 2006
Reporting inspector Christine Huard AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	New Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Marnhull
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1PZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01258 820206
Number on roll	146	Fax number	01258 821018
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mitchell Langhelt
Date of previous inspection	11 June 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Jo Hicks

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 3 July 2006 - 4 July 2006	Inspection number 289728
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small village school where almost all the pupils are White British. Children start school with broadly average levels of attainment. An average percentage of pupils have difficulties with learning, although in the current Year 6, nearly a third of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. A new headteacher was appointed in September in 2005.

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, providing an effective education for its pupils. The new headteacher has identified areas of weakness and has taken action to tackle them. As a result, standards across Years 1 and 2 have improved significantly and weaknesses in English in Years 3 to 6 are being successfully dealt with, although there is still more to do to improve pupils' writing, particularly that of boys. Children in the Reception class receive a satisfactory and secure start to their schooling and make overall sound progress, with most meeting the goals expected by the time they move into Year 1.

Teaching is good overall and pupils respond well in lessons and learn effectively because they are interested in what is being taught. Pupils really enjoy school and they participate enthusiastically in all the activities provided for them, both in and out of the classroom. Most have a good understanding of how well they are doing in their work, although the process of setting targets is rather ad-hoc at present and consequently some targets are more focused and useful to pupils than others. Governors are efficient and know their school well, effectively challenging the leadership on progress being made in areas requiring improvement. Headteacher, staff and governors know how well the school is doing because of the rigorous evaluation and monitoring systems in place. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to make further improvements. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils, particularly boys, to write at length in different subjects about topics which they find interesting in order for them to practise the literacy skills they are learning.
- Ensure that the process of setting targets is consistent throughout the school so that all pupils understand what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards attained and overall achievement, are good. Children in Reception make satisfactory progress overall, and good progress in developing their communication, personal and social skills. By the time they enter Year 1, most have met the recommended levels for the end of Reception. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and the good quality teaching ensures that standards are overall above average. This is reflected in this year's national test results for reading, writing and mathematics. The particularly good improvement in mathematics is as a result of the focus on problem solving, in order to increase the challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Good achievement is sustained through Years 3 to 6 and the results of this year's tests indicate that standards are likely to be above average in English, mathematics and science. The school recognised that standards in English in the 2005 national tests were not good enough. As a result, an effective programme of improvements was put in place which is well focused throughout the school. Actions taken have been successful, particularly

in raising the attainment of higher-achieving pupils. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length in all subjects in order to practise the skills they are learning. Boys, in particular, are not always well motivated but when they are really interested in a subject – for example, the Second World War, in history, – they write with enthusiasm. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress because they receive well targeted support in the classroom.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. 'We wouldn't change anything', said a group of Year 2 pupils. All pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning, and their behaviour is excellent. Pupils develop excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness as a result of a well planned programme. Visitors from DEED (Development Education in Dorset) inspired pupils to see 'that we all come in different skins, to be proud of who we are and to respect difference'. Acts of collective worship contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual development and reflect the strongly Christian ethos of the school. Pupils readily accept responsibilities and older ones act as play pals, and buddies. Through the school council class representatives contribute positively to community decisions. Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles, eating only fruit at break times for example, and taking regular exercise. They show a good awareness of how to keep safe and are confident that staff will deal with any incidents should they occur. They develop good life skills for the future through literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) lessons and through the regular practice of sharing ideas with 'talk partners' and group discussion.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching in Reception is satisfactory and there is an appropriate balance of supervised and independent activities for the children. In the rest of the school, planning is comprehensive and ensures that pupils in the mixed age classes are well provided for. Teachers have high expectations and encourage pupils to show initiative and independence in their learning. They are encouraged to explore and share ideas with their 'talking partners'. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 literacy lesson where pupils were experimenting with the use of simile and metaphor in poetry and were bouncing ideas off each other. Boys, in particular, responded well to this activity but they are not always inspired to write so willingly. Pupils learn effectively because tasks generally enthuse and inspire them and as a result, their attitudes are very good. They speak excitedly of the teachers' use of interactive whiteboards which are used imaginatively to help their learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide good support for pupils – particularly those

with learning difficulties or disabilities, who learn effectively as a result. Marking by teachers is constructive and pupils sympathetically assess each other's work, identifying strengths and areas which could be further improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall. There is a wide range of activities for children in Reception which ensures that they make at least satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. In Years 1 to 6, an exciting curriculum includes many stimulating and imaginative aspects that contribute significantly to making pupils' learning enjoyable and successful, for example meeting and exchanging recipes with a famous chef as part of their healthy eating campaign. The curriculum is well matched to the learning needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Planning for English and mathematics is generally well organised but the school has recognised that it provides too few opportunities for writing in subjects other than English. There is a strong programme for pupils' personal development which includes sex and drugs awareness education. An inspiring range of visits, visitors and school clubs enrich pupils' learning and promotes positive attitudes towards school. The gardening club, for example, has transformed itself into an excellent economic business, selling fresh produce the pupils have grown.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pupils feel safe and secure. Classroom 'worry boxes' provide an effective means for pupils to take concerns to staff, in the assurance that they will be dealt with. When asked what they liked best about the school, Year 6 pupils answered 'Our teachers'. Parents are rightly very pleased with the very good level of care provided. Good links with outside agencies help provide additional support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, but there is room for improvement in agreeing and acting jointly on identified needs. Procedures relating to child protection, health and safety and first aid are all secure. Teachers support pupils' personal and academic development well. However, not all pupils are clear about their individual targets. This is because the processes used for setting them are not consistent throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides very clear direction and her commitment to ongoing improvement is shared by all members of the school community. Headteacher, staff and governors have worked together to create an environment where pupils enjoy coming to school and show a real enthusiasm for learning. There is good capacity to improve further. Curriculum leaders have taken a leading role in checking the effectiveness of their subjects in the last year. This has

made a positive contribution to improvements and to the quality and effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation, which is good. Governors know their school well and fulfil their statutory requirements. They show a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are fully involved in formulating the development plan. The school uses data well to check its own performance; for example, mathematics at Key Stage 1 was identified as a concern and the success of actions taken are evident in the improved results and also in the enthusiasm for the subject shown in the classroom. Rigorous checking of planning, lessons and pupils' work assesses the quality of teaching and learning in order to ensure the pupils make good progress. The school listens carefully to the views of parents and takes care to respond to their concerns where appropriate.

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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?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	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	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	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?	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

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. We found a lot of good things in your school:

- you told us very clearly how much you enjoy school and that you learn a lot; you also told us how much you enjoy all the extra activities such as the gardening club
- you make good progress with your learning and reach good standards in English, mathematics and science
- you are taught well and your lessons are interesting, which means that you pay attention, have excellent behaviour and show positive attitudes towards your learning
- the school takes very good care of you and helps you become more confident.
- your school is well led and managed.

Two things could be even better:

- you need to have more opportunities to practise your writing in all subjects, particularly the boys.
- your teachers need to agree a system for setting your targets so that you all understand what you need to do to improve your work.

We are glad you are doing well at school and hope you will continue to enjoy working hard.