



Motcombe CE VA Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113808
Local Authority Dorset
Inspection number 289730
Inspection date 14 February 2007
Reporting inspector Diane Wilkinson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Motcombe
School category	Voluntary aided		Shaftesbury
Age range of pupils	4-11		SP7 9NT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01747 852018
Number on roll (school)	80	Fax number	01747 855283
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	J Rose
		Headteacher	Ann-Marie Kampf
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Motcombe is a small village primary school of four classes, the majority of which have more than one year group. The area is comparatively advantaged, but pupils come from a range of backgrounds. Attainment on entry is at the level usually found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average, although it varies between year groups. All pupils are from a White British background. There have been a considerable number of changes of headteacher in recent years. The school holds the Healthy School's award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Motcombe is a good and improving school, with strengths in all areas of its work, and provides good value for money. Parents recognise this and one wrote, 'The school is supportive and enthusiastic in the approach to learning and a happy child is a happy parent'.

The headteacher's exceptionally determined leadership has successfully raised staff morale and improved the quality of education. As a result, the previous unsatisfactory achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 has been eradicated and provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils achieve well and especially well in some areas, most notably in writing and music. Standards are rising and, by Year 2, are above average. Standards are significantly above average by the end of Year 6 where the majority of pupils reach the higher Level 5 in national tests.

Leadership and management is good. Comprehensive monitoring procedures give the school a clear picture of how well it is doing. Effective prioritisation of what needed to be improved has resulted in the most important weaknesses being successfully addressed. Staff and governors share the headteacher's determination to improve provision and standards even further. As a result, the remaining areas for development are beginning to be successfully addressed, for example in increasing the number of pupils who achieve the higher Level 3 in the Year 2 tests. This indicates that the school is well placed to improve further.

Care, support and guidance are good. Very effective liaison with other schools and agencies benefit pupils' education and welfare. Pastoral care and support is effective so that pupils feel safe and secure in school. Their personal development is good. Most pupils get on well with each other and behave very well. Pupils' excellent knowledge of how to achieve a healthy lifestyle resulted in the school achieving the Healthy Schools Award. Pupils enjoy the way the school takes their views into account and appreciate the advice and support they are given to help them improve. As one pupil put it, 'If you are stuck, your teacher helps you to understand'. This, together with the rich range of activities on offer, ensures pupils enjoy school and try to do their best. Pupils also benefit from their individual improvement targets which help them to make good progress. The school is continuing to develop procedures to help pupils review their own work, although the full effects of this are not yet evident in all classrooms.

The curriculum is particularly good and helps all teachers plan activities which encourage pupils to do well so that teaching and learning are consistently good throughout the school. Teaching assistants make a major contribution to meeting the needs of pupils, especially in the mixed age classes. Pupils' good attitudes help them to concentrate and work hard in most activities although on a small number of occasions, the pace and challenge in whole-class sessions is not appropriate for all pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that in lessons, pupils are provided with information to help them recognise how successful they are in their work
- in whole-class sessions, make sure that the activities are well paced and sufficiently challenging to help all pupils to make good progress throughout lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported and make the same good progress as their classmates.

Until recently, progress in Reception was satisfactory and standards on entry to Year 1 were around those expected. Reception children are now making good progress and standards are rising. The decline in standards for Year 2 pupils has been successfully halted and standards in the 2006 national tests were above average. Virtually all pupils achieved the expected Level 2. Above average standards are being maintained this year and the school is working effectively to increase the number of pupils who achieve the higher Level 3 in the tests.

In the comparatively short time that the school has catered for Years 5 and 6, pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 have been significantly above average. A considerable number of pupils exceeded the level expected in the 2006 national tests. The school reached its challenging targets and is well placed to do so again this year. Standards for the current Year 6 are above average and indicate good progress since these pupils took the Year 2 tests. Across the school, progress in writing is exceptionally good, so standards in this aspect are very high. The school is now working hard to raise standards in reading to the same high level.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and children in Reception make good progress in this aspect of their development. Despite there being a small number of pupils who find it difficult to behave well, most pupils get on well with each other and their behaviour is very good. As one parent wrote, 'My daughter loves the way that younger and older children mix, and the friendships'. Pupils like their teachers, enjoy school and work hard, which helps them to achieve well. The school is a happy and harmonious place to be and attendance levels are above average. Through effective links with the local church and well-planned assemblies, pupils have a good understanding of the spiritual side of life. Pupils' knowledge of Western culture is good and they have a secure knowledge of other countries' cultures, for example that of Nepal where the pupils help sponsor a child.

Pupils are exceptionally well informed on how to achieve a healthy lifestyle and their participation in sports activities is excellent. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and

are confident about helping to keep themselves safe. They helped organise a campaign to promote safe parking outside the school, which also demonstrates their effective contribution to the school and village community. Pupils are developing confidence and responsibility as well as other skills which are equipping them well for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school has created a very positive climate for learning in all classes. Effective teaching gives Reception children a good start to their education. Pupils like their teachers and respond well to the praise and advice they are given. Classrooms are well organised to meet the needs of pupils in different year groups, to which classroom assistants make a major contribution.

Over the last two years, there has been a rise in the level of challenge given to pupils. In group and individual work, all pupils are now provided with activities which are well matched to the stage at which they are working and which help them to make good progress. However, on a few occasions when the teacher is working with the whole class, the pace is rather slow and some higher-attaining pupils find the work too easy, which limits progress. The school's focus on ensuring that assessment is an integral part of learning is helping pupils recognise what they need to do to improve. Pupils say teachers give them good advice when they find things difficult. The specialist teaching that the school provides in subjects such as music and physical education ensures that pupils make very good progress in these subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Good attention has been paid to ensuring that the curriculum meets different pupils' needs, including for children in Reception. Planning to improve standards in writing has been exceptionally effective and this year the school has introduced a similar scheme to raise standards in reading. Intervention strategies to help pupils who find learning difficult are having a positive effect on their progress and school leaders have now successfully extended these strategies to encourage more pupils to reach standards above those expected for their age. Curriculum enrichment is excellent. Pupils benefit exceptionally well from high quality music and sports activities, partly through productive links with other schools. The Friday activities such as for dance or textiles are very popular with pupils. Development of information and communication technology activities has been delayed by the recent building programme, but the school is now addressing this as a priority.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school pays good attention to pupils' health and safety, and arrangements for child protection and vetting of staff are fully in place. Vulnerable pupils are particularly well cared for. Most parents are very appreciative of the level of care offered to their children and one parent wrote, 'Teachers take great care and are very committed to the pupils and the school'.

Pastoral care is good and pupils appreciate the reward system which encourages them to behave well and work hard. Attendance is monitored effectively, ensuring levels continue to rise. The school uses a wealth of evidence very effectively to track children's progress which allows staff to intervene swiftly when progress slows. Pupils' individual targets encourage them to improve, and helpful advice is given when pupils find learning difficult. The identification of 'success criteria' in lessons to help pupils recognise how well they are doing is still being developed in some year groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's very effective leadership has led to the raising of staff morale and improvements in the quality of provision which turned around the decline in standards. In particular, good teamwork amongst staff has led to a consistent approach to teaching and learning which has improved pupils' progress. Effective systems have been put in place to monitor the school's work so that the school has an accurate picture of how well it is doing and can pinpoint where improvement is needed. As a result, the school has successfully addressed the majority of areas of weakness and is effectively targeting those that remain. It is well placed to improve further.

Governors are very active, knowledgeable and supportive. They make an important contribution to monitoring the school's work and planning for future developments. The school's links with a range of other schools and agencies benefit pupils' education and welfare especially well. Pupils and their parents are regularly consulted about the school's work and parents now receive more information about how well their children are doing, enabling them to support their progress. The school also plans to improve the arrangements for parent consultation evenings.

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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	2
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	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	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 for welcoming us to your school and being so polite and helpful. We particularly want to thank the school council who gave up their lunchtime to talk to us. You and your parents think your school is providing you with a good education. We agree with you and think your staff and governors are working hard to make things even better.

This is what we thought was especially good about the school:

- Your headteacher has been very successful in helping your school to improve and staff and governors are supporting her well.
- Teaching is good and staff give you good advice on how you can improve so you are making good progress in all classes. Standards are above average in Year 2 and considerably above average in Year 6.
- The activities teachers plan for you are very good and you have lots of exciting things to do, especially for sport and music.
- Adults look after you well and you feel safe and happy in school. You get on well with each other, behave very well and are becoming mature, confident and responsible.
- You have an exceptionally good understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy. In particular, very many of you regularly take part in sports activities

These are the things we have asked your school to do now:

- In lessons, make sure that all teachers show you what you need to do to be successful in your work. You can help by regularly checking to see how well you are doing.
- Make sure that the activities help everyone to make the best progress they can when you are all working together in the class.

Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.