

Salway Ash Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113809
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	289731
Inspection date	24 April 2007
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 category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Brown
Headteacher	Lisa Crew
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001
School address	Salwayash Bridport DT6 5JE
Telephone number	01308 488302
Fax number	01308 488538

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school drawing pupils from a widespread rural area in west Dorset. Children's attainment when they start school in the Reception class is broadly as expected. All pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average. Reception children are taught separately in a small class. Three other classes each have pupils from two year groups. The school is involved in a range of initiatives with other local schools in the Beaminster cluster.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'The teaching, ethos and care are second to none. It's a great little school.' This comment sums up parents' overwhelmingly positive views of the school. They are right to be confident. This is an outstanding school in which pupils thrive, both personally and academically. A number of factors underpin this success. Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher, staff and governors share a clear sense of direction and continually strive for further improvement wherever possible. This ensures outstanding educational provision in most respects, and high expectations for pupils, who achieve exceptionally well during their time in the school. By the end of Year 6, standards are usually exceptionally high in relation to those found nationally. The slight dip in 2006 has been tackled very effectively and current pupils are on course to reach very high standards once more. Pupils with learning difficulties progress as well as others and most reach at least average levels in English, mathematics and science. Teaching throughout the school and the care, guidance and support for pupils are of exceptionally high quality. Children get off to a flying start in the Reception Year and have a very good base of skills when they move into Year 1. Careful tracking of progress ensures that, throughout the school, pupils of all abilities do extremely well. The curriculum is good and there is a superb range of activities for pupils to experience outside the classroom. Good links are made across different subjects so that pupils can apply their developing skills and knowledge in a range of contexts. However, information and communication technology (ICT) is under-used as a tool for learning, partly because until recently, the school has had difficulty in ensuring adequate provision for the subject. Pupils themselves make a significant contribution to the school's success. Their personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are excellent. The older pupils are mature, responsible and well prepared for secondary school and for later life. Through the school council, pupils make suggestions and are actively involved in making decisions, for example about what equipment will be purchased for the playground. Pupils' views are sought regularly and used to inform the school's rigorous evaluation of its effectiveness and to improve provision. Discussions about learning in mathematics, for example, generated more opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and to re-visit ideas when they feel they need more practice. Behaviour is exemplary and older pupils have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to act as role models for younger ones. The school has several pupils with significant difficulties or disabilities who are extremely well supported. Other pupils have very good understanding of the special provision made to meet their needs and ensure that they are included in all activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in subjects across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

As they go through the school, pupils make consistently good progress year on year. This means that by the time they leave their overall progress and achievement are outstanding. From a broadly average starting point in the Reception Year, children make good progress so that by the start of Year 1, almost all are achieving expected levels. A significant proportion exceeds these and children have a very secure base of skills in literacy and numeracy. This is successfully built on in Years 1 and 2 so that standards overall at the end of Year 2 are well above national averages. Reading is a particular strength. Good progress is maintained in Years 3 to 6 so that

standards by the end of Year 6 are exceptionally high. This level of attainment has been evident in test results over several years. However, standards in English and mathematics in 2006, whilst still above average, were not quite as high as in previous years. This was caused in part by disruptions to teaching arrangements for this year group, which meant that the gains from Year 2 were not as good as they usually are. Determined action has been taken to restore standards to their customary very high levels. Tracking systems have been strengthened further and specific programmes introduced to boost pupils' skills in Years 4, 5 and 6 where necessary. Standards for pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are, once more, exceptionally high. All pupils gain knowledge, skills and understanding at a very good rate through their time in the school. For those with learning difficulties or disabilities, well-targeted support is successful in ensuring that they make the same progress as other pupils. Many pupils with learning difficulties attain average levels in national tests at the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils greatly enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to learning. They relish opportunities to take on responsibilities and to use their initiative, for example in suggesting ways of raising funds for a variety of charities. Children in the Reception Year are confident and eager learners, often sustaining concentration on a particular task for a lengthy period. This excellent base is successfully built on so that pupils throughout the school develop good learning habits and show high levels of motivation. Older pupils show sensitive awareness of the needs of others and of the role that they play in the school and wider community. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and readily explain why fruit is the best choice for a mid-morning snack. They are keen participants in a variety of activities with, as one proudly pointed out, everybody doing '15 minutes of exercise a day'. Pupils are exceptionally well aware of safe practices, knowing, for example, why the pond in the grounds is fenced off. They are clear that there is no bullying, 'just a bit of an argument sometimes'. They are equally clear that they usually sort out the odd incident for themselves or with the help of a pupil 'referee' but that there is an adult to turn to if they are particularly worried.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers capitalise on pupils' excellent attitudes and ensure that learning moves on at a consistently good rate. Lessons are well organised and purposeful, with clear objectives that are shared with pupils. Resources are used well to engage pupils' interest and to support teachers' explanations of new ideas or demonstrations of how to tackle a task. Expectations of what pupils will achieve, both in lessons and more generally, are high. This is a key factor in ensuring the high levels of achievement. Marking of work is usually informative and evaluative and gives pupils a clear idea of how they are doing against their targets. Pupils themselves have an impressive insight into what helps them to learn, citing, for example, 'working with partners' or 'going over things at the end of the lesson'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned to meet pupils' needs. This is evident from the Reception Year, where children benefit from being in a very small class. They experience a good balance of practical and directed activities that ensures they get a good base of skills and enjoy learning. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is broad-based and pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. ICT, however, is under-used as a tool for learning. Opportunities are missed to harness its potential to present information or findings in subjects such as science. The curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of clubs, visits and visitors to school, including some who raise pupils' awareness of a range of beliefs and traditions. Provision for competitive sports and music is exceptional, enhanced in part by very strong links with other schools in the locality and the use of specialist coaches. Over the past year, all pupils in Years 3 to 6 have represented the school in a sporting activity or a local festival. Many spoke proudly of their own or their team's achievements in activities such as swimming or tag rugby.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All individual pupils are well known and nurtured in a supporting and caring environment. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, or any who need some extra help with a short-term difficulty, is excellent. Parents are very positive about this aspect of the school's work, making comments such as, 'my children had problems with reading and writing but, with much support and extra help, they are now doing very well'. Rigorous systems to boost attendance, which was a weakness in the last inspection, have resulted in significant improvement so that levels are now slightly above average. There are excellent systems for tracking pupils' progress from the time they start school. Regular assessments check that they are on track to achieve well. The frequency of the checks has been increased, so that any who need an extra boost benefit quickly from well focused support, often provided by specifically trained teaching assistants. Pupils themselves are aware of the levels at which they are working and feel that their targets are useful so that 'you know what you've got to do to improve'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership of the school is successfully focused on securing high standards and ensuring the personal development and well-being of all pupils. Staff and governors share a common sense of purpose. Rigorous systems for checking on the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work ensure that plans for improvement are well founded and their impact is carefully evaluated. The swift action taken to address the slight dip in national test results in 2006 means that current Year 6 pupils are on track to perform at the same high levels that have been the norm in other years. Links with other local schools and a range of providers such as community sports clubs are used very effectively to enhance the curriculum and to extend provision for gifted and talented pupils. The school has made significant improvement since the last inspection. This is particularly evident in the way that the partnership with parents, a weakness at that time, has been strengthened so that parents are now full of praise for the school. Over the past year, effective strategies have strengthened tracking and support systems to ensure

a return to exceptionally high standards and outstanding achievement by the pupils. The school has excellent capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

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?	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	2
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?	2
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	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 April 2007 Dear Pupils Salway Ash Church of England Primary School, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 5JE. You may remember that I visited your school recently to see how you are getting on. Thanks to all of you who explained what you were doing in lessons or who told me about all the exciting activities that you get involved in. Particular thanks to the members of the school council who told me what you all said about the school in the questionnaires you filled in recently. I thought you might be interested in what I am saying in my report. Yours is an outstanding school for many reasons. One of the most important is the excellent way that it is led by your headteacher and governors. Together with the staff, they are always trying to make things still better. Teaching is excellent and this means that you achieve outstandingly well in English, maths and science by the end of Year 6. The school takes exceptionally good care of you and makes sure that you are all on track to do well in each year group. Those of you who need some extra help really do well because the teaching assistants working with you do an excellent job. You make a great contribution to the success of the school because your personal skills are so good. This means that you are keen to learn, work well with others and understand the importance of keeping fit, healthy and safe. Those of you in Year 6 are mature and responsible and well prepared for the move to secondary school. You have wonderful opportunities to join clubs, learn new skills in sports and music, work with visitors and go on visits. Many of you told me how much you enjoy all these extra activities that help to make sure that the curriculum is good. One area that could be better is the way that ICT is used and I have suggested that this is what the school needs to work on next. Thank you again for all your help. With best wishes Shirley Billington Lead Inspector