

# Okeford Fitzpaine Church of England Voluntary Aided School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113810
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	289732
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Wheeler HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	70
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Carr
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Acreman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 June 2001
<b>School address</b>	The Cross Okeford Fitzpaine Blandford Forum DT11 0RF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01258 860530
<b>Fax number</b>	01258 860530

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Most pupils live in the village and are from White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to other schools. The school has recently been through considerable turbulence due to staff changes and movement of pupils. There are three mixed aged classes. The headteacher started in September 2006. The school has the Sport Achievement Gold Award, Sport England Award and the Healthy Schools Award. There is a privately run pre-school based on the school's site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This school presents an improving picture; whilst currently satisfactory it has some significant strengths. Close to three quarters of the staff started last September and the headteacher has been very successful in forming a good team with a strong shared vision for school improvement. This team also includes a good governing body which is very well led. This sense of unity has helped to develop a positive ethos where pupils' achievements are celebrated. As a consequence they enjoy coming to school and want to do well. The school is developing a high profile within the community and the vast majority of parents believe the school is doing a good job. They are particularly positive about the way the headteacher has developed good communication with them.

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and has a number of significant strengths including provision in the Foundation Stage where standards are above average and learning is good. Care, support and guidance of pupils across the school are also good. The good teaching observed in all classes is also supporting the school's drive towards raising standards, but expectations of the more able pupils are not always high enough. Achievement is satisfactory overall. The good progress made by many of the oldest pupils has meant the school has set more challenging targets for their attainment in the national tests this summer including for those expected to reach the higher levels. Year 2 pupils are benefiting from being taught as a separate group for English and mathematics as are the younger children in the same class. There is growing evidence that the new programmes for developing literacy and mathematics are supporting improvement as well as additional activities provided by skilled teaching assistants for pupils with learning difficulties. However, procedures for assessing and monitoring their introduction and impact have yet to be developed.

Parents know their children are safe in school and pupils speak with great assurance about how well they are looked after. Pupils have very positive attitudes and their behaviour is good. They have a good understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles and have confidence in their ability to make a difference to the life of the school; they are listened to. Pupils know that many of the skills they are developing will help them as adults. They enjoy the range of activities provided, especially the new computer suite and the many educational visits.

The school has good capacity to improve as the headteacher and his team know what they have to do to make a positive difference to their pupils' learning and have already made significant strides towards this goal. The pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school; they recognise the benefits of being in a small community, but would like more pupils to come to the school as they feel it is a good place to be.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the more able pupils do as well as they can including those with specific gifts and talents.
- Improve the school's monitoring procedures for analysing the impact of interventions and initiatives on all pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall and in around a third of lessons observed progress was good. There are only four children in the Foundation Stage and they are making good progress from average standards when they started, with many already reaching the levels expected by the end of the year. Weaknesses in aspects of early literacy are starting to be addressed as a result of the school's participation in a pilot programme to support reading and writing and this is showing some signs of success. This initiative is also being used with pupils in Key Stage 1 as reading was an area for improvement highlighted by last summer's national tests. There is a wide spread of attainment in Year 2 and standards are broadly average. In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress, but improving achievement in Year 6 has resulted in more challenging targets with almost half expected to attain the higher levels in English and over a third in mathematics in national tests this year. Mathematics was an area of concern last year and the school has introduced appropriate strategies to support improvement. Standards in science have improved significantly since the last inspection when they were judged to be too low. Support for pupils who find learning difficult is an improving area and they make satisfactory progress. The school uses a number of appropriate intervention strategies to support pupils with learning difficulties as well as introducing new approaches in English and mathematics to raise achievement and standards generally. However, the school's existing monitoring system does not take into account the impact of particular initiatives or interventions on pupils' learning.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The school is a very friendly, welcoming place which fully reflects the schools' Christian foundation. Pupils feel valued and their achievements are celebrated. This can be seen in the colourful displays of their work and the awards they have gained. Behaviour is good throughout the school and pupils are adamant that there is no bullying. This results in positive attitudes, great enjoyment of school and good attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They are confident and have strong interpersonal skills which make the school a happy place to be. They have a voice in what goes on in the school and the school council plays an important role; they know that staff listen to their ideas.

The school has the Healthy Schools' Award and several sports' awards which reflect pupils' good level of understanding of healthy lifestyles. They drink plenty of water, know about diet and find that sports activities, the outdoor play equipment and 'wake up and shake up' sessions at the start of each day help them to keep fit. Pupils have good opportunities to make a contribution to the life of the school through participation in a wide range of special events. They take part in musical productions and have numerous responsibilities including organising water bottles in classes each day, setting up the hall for assembly, being play leaders for the younger children and as peer mediators. However, pupils commented that mediators do not have to do much as it is 'only the little ones who sometimes need help in sorting things out'. Pupils work on many projects to raise money for charities including 'Jeans for Genes' day. They also made Easter cards for troops in Afghanistan and Iraq which were greatly appreciated. Pupils have a very good awareness of the needs of others and one girl commented, 'We are kind and care for people.' Strong social skills, improving basic skills and ability to work well with others are laying a good foundation for adulthood.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching observed was good including in the Foundation Stage. Pupils have very positive attitudes, know what they have to learn and the rate of progress is improving. Work is well presented and pupils take a pride in their achievements. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good and there is a high level of mutual respect shown as well as a good level of humour. As one girl commented, 'Our teacher makes work really fun although it looks hard.' The pace of lessons is good. Staff use a very varied range of strategies to support learning including partner work and quizzes as well as very effective use of interactive whiteboards. Planning is detailed and takes full account of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, but does not always focus sufficiently on the most able. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is improving through the good deployment of committed teaching assistants in each class. Assessment is very good. Teachers use skilful questioning to check on learning and misconceptions and to make pupils think harder. National tests each term are used very well to monitor progress and help with target setting. The progress of the younger children is carefully assessed each week. Pupils are beginning to evaluate their own learning and children in the Foundation Stage use 'thumbs up/down' effectively as an introduction to this process. The best practice in marking has not yet spread throughout the school. It is better for English work where it helps pupils to understand what they have done well and where they need to improve linked to their targets. Parents comment on the disruptions in continuity of teaching in the past, but feel that this is now more settled and things are improving. The introduction of a mid-year report for each pupil is appreciated by parents as it includes information on how well their child is doing and what they need to focus on to improve. Pupils know these targets and strive to achieve them.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and effectively supports pupils' personal, social and health education. It is enriched by games clubs, French, educational visits, residential trips and themed weeks as well as musical productions. The youngest children, whilst often grouped with Year 1 pupils, are receiving the appropriate Foundation Stage curriculum. The recently opened computer suite has added greatly to learning opportunities for pupils and plans are in place to exploit this new resource fully in all subjects. Interventions and specific programmes are effectively supporting a range of pupils with learning difficulties. However, limited work has been done to identify the gifted and talented pupils in the school and provide them with an appropriate curriculum and this restricts their progress.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school provides good levels of care and support for its pupils. Robust systems are in place for their safety and welfare. Supervision at break times is also good with peer mentors and play leaders helping to make these times a safe and positive experience for all pupils. The school has good systems in place for making transition into Reception a happy experience and the recent move of a pre-school onto the school's site offers the prospect for further improvements. One parent commented that preparation for Year 6 pupils to move on to secondary schools is

also good and those pupils interviewed are confident about the transition. Staff know their pupils very well and there are good relationships with parents and outside agencies. Teaching assistants working with pupils with learning difficulties provide good levels of support to help them make appropriate progress. Clear targets for improvement help pupils to focus on what they need to do to improve, although the more able need more consistent academic guidance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory, but improving rapidly. The headteacher has made a very good start and is driving improvement forward through his clear vision and commitment to help pupils achieve the best they can. His strong belief in everyone within the school and the value placed on parents and the wider community are providing the foundation for good improvements. For him 'satisfactory' is not good enough. The headteacher is effectively developing the skills of his good staff team who are rising to the range of new challenges. Through determination and hard work a number of detailed subject action plans have been put into place, but these have not yet had a chance to be tested fully. Subject leaders are fully engaged in moving the school forward and their role is developing. The headteacher and governors know what the school needs to do to improve and have identified the key priorities. These are evident in the school's self-evaluation and strategic planning, but they do not always link planned actions with what they expect pupils will gain. The new computer suite, interactive whiteboards in each classroom and developments in the outside area have greatly enhanced opportunities for pupils. The provision of additional teachers and support staff to provide more fully for the varying needs and abilities within mixed age classes demonstrates an effective use of resources, but it is too early to judge the impact on standards.

The governance of the school is good; governors are well informed and very effectively led. They provide good support as well as asking those 'awkward questions' which hold the school to account for its performance. The school should be proud of its achievements so far. One parent summed it up as 'a wonderful school'.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

27 April 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Okeford Fitzpaine Church of England Voluntary Aided School, The Cross, Okeford Fitzpaine, Blandford Forum, Dorset, DT11 0RF

Thank you very much for helping me to feel so welcome in your school, for answering my questions and sharing your ideas with me. As you know, I visited all your classes and also saw you at break times. I talked to your teachers, your headteacher and governors as well as some of the pupils in Oak class. I would like to tell you what I thought about your satisfactory school which is getting better all the time.

Here are some of the things I liked best:

- Your school is a happy, friendly and safe place to be; you really care about each other.
- You are trying hard to do your best as the huge chart of house points shows.
- There are lots of interesting things going on including after-school clubs and very interesting visits – the younger children certainly enjoyed all the toys they got to play with on their trip.
- You behave very well and enjoy being in school – 'wake up and shake up' was great fun!
- Your headteacher and staff are working very successfully to make your school the best it can be.

I have asked your teachers and headteacher to:

- make sure that those of you in the top groups, who sometimes find work too easy, are given an opportunity to try harder work which I know you will manage as you are keen to do your best
- check that if you do special work, like booster classes, your teachers know if it is helping you to learn more.

I hope you continue to enjoy your time at Okeford Fitzpaine and wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Wheeler

Her Majesty's Inspector