

Wimborne St Giles Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113819
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	289735
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Wheeler HMI

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Laker
Headteacher	Christine Goby
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001
School address	Wimborne St Giles Wimborne BH21 5LX
Telephone number	01725 517347
Fax number	01725 517347

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This school is much smaller than average and its 48 pupils are taught in two classes. Almost all pupils are from White British heritage. There are strong links with the Church and the school is part of local partnerships with others including middle and upper schools. The school has been awarded the Active Mark. There is a voluntary sector pre-school on site.

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 which rightly deserves its strong reputation in the community. Parents and villagers see the school at its heart and engage in many shared activities. The relationships developed not only with the local community, but with partner schools and agencies, are excellent and help pupils to make good progress in their learning and development. Staff know their pupils well and have created an environment where all are welcome, supported and well looked after. The school is seen by parents as 'a big family'. This is underpinned by the good leadership and management of the headteacher whose drive and commitment make this school a place where children want to come and do well. As a consequence attendance is good and pupils want to learn. As one parent commented about her son, 'his enthusiasm for learning is insatiable'.

The school knows what it does well and has identified its priorities accurately, supported effectively by its highly committed governing body. However, systems for monitoring and evaluating the difference work on these priorities is making to pupils' learning are not yet sufficiently robust. The school has been successful in building on the areas for improvement raised at the last inspection and demonstrates a good capacity to improve even further.

Children get off to a flying start in Ash Tree Class and this is built on successfully as they move on to Oak Tree Class. Pupils' achievement is good and they reach above average standards. This is as a result of good teaching and a broad curriculum which interests and excites pupils across the mixed age groups in each class, making them want to learn. They are proud of what they achieve. The school works hard to ensure that pupils who find learning more difficult make good progress, often through the support provided by the skilled and effective team of learning support assistants. All groups make good progress including boys in their writing and the more able. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well and have positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. They enjoy taking on responsibilities and are aware that this is one of the many things they do that will help them when they get older. They understand about healthy lifestyles and how they can make sure that they stay safe. Pupils are eager to talk about all the things they do to help others, including raising money for charities, and are keen to see the outcomes of the toilet redecoration project they planned. They value being part of a small school and relationships between pupils and with adults are good. As one parent said, 'The school has a strong sense of community spirit with committed and passionate staff.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage Grade: 2

Children get a good start at school from broadly average attainment on entry to Reception, and are on target to exceed the goals expected of them at the end of the year. Good teaching and support enable all children to make good progress within the mixed age class, including those who find learning difficult and the more able. As a result, they have great fun and do well. Through good arrangements for introducing children to school, together with clear routines and high expectations of staff, children become confident and independent with very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy taking on responsibilities and having a chance to choose some of their activities. Relationships are good and children enjoy working in groups and pairs. Teamwork is good between staff, and children feel secure in the positive environment created. There are very strong relationships with parents; they feel well informed about their children's progress. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and there are strong links with the pre-school on site to further enhance transition and sharing of information and resources. A

huge amount of work has been carried out successfully to make improvements since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards even further through ensuring that staff and governors have effective systems for monitoring and measuring the impact of the actions they are taking for school improvement

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From broadly average starting points pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards at the end of Key Stage 1. In national tests in 2006 standards were significantly above average in reading. Achievement is good throughout the school and pupils also reach above average standards in Key Stage 2. Concerns about boys' writing and some underachievement in mathematics by the more able pupils in Key Stage 2 have been addressed. Those with learning difficulties make good progress, as their work is carefully matched to their needs and they receive very effective additional help from learning support assistants as well as from other professionals as necessary. The more able pupils are also offered extra challenges which help them to make good progress. Being a small school, the numbers taking national tests each year create fluctuations in trends, but last year showed a rising profile. Pupils know their targets and they work hard to meet or exceed them. They enjoy having a say in setting these and their parents know them too. The older pupils realise that their good progress in this school will help them when they move to middle school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning; they want to do their best and thoroughly enjoy school. Pupils are proud of what they achieve and readily point out examples of their work attractively displayed around the school. The school's strong Christian ethos supports pupils' spiritual development very effectively as well as work on helping them to feel positive about themselves. They understand the necessity for rules and are developing an awareness of Britain as a multicultural society. Their social development is good: they are very polite and care about others, and say there is no bullying. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe supported by their 'Streetwise' training. They know about healthy lifestyles including exercise and diet. Responsibilities are taken very seriously whether it is caring for the younger children, volunteering for jobs or working on the school council. They know they matter and that they are listened to. Work on raising money for a number of local, national and worldwide charities is approached with enthusiasm and they have raised significant sums. Pupils are aware that their good basic skills including information and communication technology (ICT) and their personal and social skills will help them considerably as they get older. One pupil commented particularly on their emotional development and that being able to manage their feelings will help them as adults. Their good manners and ability to mix with all the age groups in this small school is also cited by pupils as helpful to them for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Staff work very effectively as a team to promote learning and development. Pupils and staff get on well together and show mutual respect. Staff know their children well and work hard to meet their needs. As a result pupils work purposefully with a clear understanding of what they should be learning. Teachers make lessons interesting, challenging and enjoyable with good use of humour. This results in pupils trying to do their best. They comment that they make good progress as they learn 'one step at a time' and sometimes 'come back to things to make sure they have learnt them'. Good use is also made of interactive whiteboards and pupils of all ages are confident in using them. Pupils care about the presentation of their work and are keen to show their books to visitors. Careful planning and well targeted support for pupils who find learning difficult ensure that they make good progress and participate fully in activities. The more able pupils rise readily to more challenging work and are proud of their achievements. Staff use questioning very effectively not only to make pupils think harder, but for assessing what the children need to learn next. Learning support assistants are also good at monitoring pupils' learning. Good use is made of regular assessments which are carefully analysed, but systems for measuring the impact of specific interventions to improve progress are not yet sufficiently thorough. Marking is good and often lets pupils know what they have done well and what needs to be improved with good links made with pupils' targets. Pupils are developing skills in assessing their own learning and readily engage in partner work to discuss ideas and issues.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It fulfils all the statutory requirements and the school works hard to link subjects within topics including ICT. The weekly creative arts afternoon effectively involves pupils in a number of activities carried out with the whole school working together in project groups. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of the various age and ability groups in each of the classes, including use of specific support programmes. Given the small size of the school, pupils enjoy and appreciate the range of lunchtime clubs available including the popular gardening club. The school enriches the curriculum through its outstanding links with other schools and the community, for example use of the middle school's gymnasium. Local people come in to share their skills too, including artists. The school also invites other visitors including the Life Education Van and pupils go on interesting visits, for example to the Springhead Trust. The older pupils are really looking forward to their residential trip and are well prepared for what will be for many the first time away from their families.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well looked after and offered good support and guidance to help them feel safe and secure, and this helps them to make good progress. As one child put it, 'This school is kind, caring and safe.' Appropriate child protection procedures are in place as well as other policies to support anti-bullying and anti-racism. Pupils are confident about their move to middle school at the end of term and the school's very strong links help this process to be managed successfully. If pupils need advice they know who to go to and are confident that help is

available. In lessons, they are given good support and guidance through additional help if required and discussions which enable them understand what they need to do or think about to make their work even better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher who has established an ethos which encapsulates the benefits of a small school. This was echoed in a parent's comment that the headteacher is 'strong, but kind and thoughtful'. She has set a clear direction for improvement along with her governors and staff team and has a strong commitment to making this school even better. The teaching staff, including the headteacher, have a wide range of responsibilities for subjects and aspects of pupils' education and these are carried out conscientiously. They attend relevant training and feed back information to others to support school improvement. The needs of all learners are integral to the work of the school and they provide good levels of support particularly for those pupils who find learning more difficult, to ensure they make good progress. There is a regular programme of monitoring school improvement, but the current systems are not yet sufficiently rigorous. The links between what the school does and the impact on its pupils' achievement and standards are not well defined or measured specifically. The governors demonstrate high commitment and are well led. The chair is working hard to induct the new governors and to make sure that they are well informed. Governors have established good links with staff particularly related to curriculum responsibilities, and where possible, readily give time to help in school. They provide effective support in managing the budget and ensure that the school is well resourced. However, they are not yet fully involved in holding the school to account.

The school is held in high regard and this was summed up by a parent of a child about to move on to middle school, 'I will continue to sing the praises of this little gold nugget of a school for a long time to come.'

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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>	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?	1
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	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.

Annex A

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	3
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	3
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

8 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Wimborne St Giles C of E First School Voluntary Aided, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 5LX

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 both classes and saw you at break times. I talked to your teachers, your headteacher and governors as well as some of the children in Oak Tree Class. I would like to tell you what I thought about your good school.

What I liked best:

- You really enjoy school and have great fun. Your parents think that this is a good school too.
- You work hard and are very proud of your achievements; you want to do your best.
- There are lots of activities going on especially on creative arts afternoon – the apple and date bar you baked was delicious!
- The clubs you enjoy at lunchtimes are very popular – what a tremendous pea crop from the gardening club team!
- The staff work hard to help make your time in school interesting and exciting.
- You are all so kind, helpful and polite to others including visitors.
- Everybody at school cares about you and wants you to do well.

What I think will make your school even better:

I have asked the staff and governors to work out a very good way of making sure they can check that everything they are doing is helping you to make even more progress. I know that you will keep on trying your best and help your school to be even more successful.

I really enjoyed my visit and hope that you continue to have such a great time at school. I wish you good luck and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Wheeler

Susan Wheeler Her Majesty's Inspector