



St Nicholas and St Laurence Church of England Primary School, Broadwey

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 113834
Local Authority Dorset
Inspection number 289739
Inspection dates 29–30 January 2007
Reporting inspector Martin Kerly

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Broadwey
School category	Voluntary aided		Weymouth
Age range of pupils	4–11		DT3 5DQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01305 812534
Number on roll (school)	243	Fax number	01305 812606
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	R Simmons
		Headteacher	Joanne Ashdown
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 29–30 January 2007	Inspection number 289739
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size in a larger than average building. The number of pupils has declined significantly in the last four years, broadly in line with population changes in the area, although a small proportion of pupils have been transferred to schools in another area. Around half the pupils are in mixed year group classes. The admission number has recently been reduced from 45 to 30 for each year group. Almost all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties or physical disabilities and with statements of special educational need are lower than the national average, although their distribution between year groups is a little uneven. The school has had four headteachers since the last inspection in 2002. The current headteacher took up post in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which is improving rapidly, following a period of uncertainty when it lost its sense of direction. It has a growing number of strengths, including pupils' personal development, the good progress made by older pupils and good features within leadership. It is responding well to some longstanding weaknesses related to inadequate achievement but has not yet fully overcome them. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and judges many aspects of its performance accurately. Although it is a shade over-generous in its judgements in a few important areas, including pupils' achievement, it is very clear about what needs to be done next. Improvements since the last inspection have accelerated in the last two years and the school is well placed to improve further.

The overall achievement of pupils is satisfactory and standards are average. In recent years, progress by many pupils in Reception, and in Years 1 and 2, has been too slow. Although this has been largely addressed, particularly in Reception, too many pupils have not yet caught up to where they should be by Year 3. As a result, they are still working below their full potential and national expectations for their age. Pupils' progress accelerates thereafter and in Year 6, many make excellent progress because of some outstanding teaching in their final year. The quality of teaching is improving, but remains too varied and consequently is satisfactory overall. The standards and quality in Reception are now good as a result of significant recent improvements to the quality of teaching. There is some good teaching elsewhere but a significant proportion, whilst satisfactory, does not lead to the rapid gains in learning needed for pupils to catch up from previous slow progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good throughout the school and promoting this is a high priority within the school's aims. Pupils behave well and are exceptionally sensible when they move around the large building. The school makes sure that all pupils are well cared for and supported, and they receive good guidance. Parents are very positive about this aspect of the school's work. Typical of the comments received was, 'We are very pleased that despite the upheaval of the last three or four years, the school has retained its excellent pastoral care'. The curriculum is satisfactory and includes many good experiences for pupils outside the classroom and school day. However, the curriculum is not balanced. There is a heavy focus on literacy, with some activities failing to inspire pupils, and only limited planned opportunities to make links between other subjects.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and this has led to many recent improvements across the school. Increased monitoring of the whole school's performance is beginning to be delegated to members of the leadership team and subject leaders, but this shared monitoring practice is not fully established.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils make faster progress, particularly in Years 1, 2 and 3
- use creative ways to broaden the curriculum and ensure more links and a better balance between subjects
- strengthen the involvement of all staff with lead responsibilities in monitoring the performance of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are in line with the national average. The achievement of pupils of all abilities is satisfactory. The attainment of most children on entry to the school is broadly in line with national expectations. Progress by children in Reception was too slow for a number of years but this improved last year. Children in Reception this year are making good progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been consistently below the national average as a result of weak progress continuing in Years 1 and 2. Progress in these year groups is now improving and most pupils are on track to meet their targets by the end of Year 2, although standards in this year group remain below the national average. Older pupils have consistently made very good progress from their low starting points in Year 3. This continues and is a result of some inspiring teaching, particularly in Year 6. Standards at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated a little between average and above average. In 2005, they were above average, particularly in mathematics. In 2006, they were average in English and marginally above average in mathematics and science. The current Year 6 pupils are working effectively and are on track to meet their targets maintaining last year's broadly average standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although their awareness of Britain's cultural diversity is limited. Relationships are strong and pupils reflect thoughtfully on how to care for others in assemblies. Pupils enjoy school activities, especially the various trips and outdoor activities. However, in some lessons, a few become uninterested and fidgety when required to sit on the carpet for long periods listening to a teacher. Although most pupils' attendance is good, overall attendance is below average. The school works effectively to improve the attendance of the very small minority of pupils whose attendance is poor. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and are aware of the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise. The recent renewal of the Healthy Schools Award indicates the good work that goes on in this area. Pupils contribute very well to the school and wider community. Many are keen to take on responsibilities, often competing for the right to care for younger pupils or answer the school phone. They are gaining a good range of skills and attitudes needed for their next stage of education and adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is improving as a result of a number of important developments, including the appointment of new teachers and introduction of strategies to spread good practice. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching remains too varied. In Reception and Years 5 and 6, teaching is consistently good, and sometimes outstanding in Year 6. In these year groups, careful planning to match work to pupils' specific needs, imaginative activities, high expectations and a brisk pace all promote good learning. In Year 6, the pupils become very involved in their own learning, for example in the excellent ways they are helped to review their own writing. In Reception there is a good balance between teacher-directed and independent activities although limited direct access to outdoor facilities restricts children's opportunities to choose when they are going to work independently outside. In some lessons, particularly in Years 1 to 3, the planning does not take full account of the range of abilities, so that activities are not always matched to pupils' needs, and this slows learning. In some lessons, not enough is done to involve all pupils in thinking and contributing their ideas. As a result, some pupils become passive and 'switch off'. The deployment of teaching assistants is satisfactory. At times, the assistants contribute well, for example when leading a session on using computers or supporting pupils with complex problems.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Most subjects are planned as discrete units of work and this means there is no systematic approach for making links between subjects or adopting a more flexible approach to the timetable. Some pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties or who are behind the standard expected for their age, spend up to two hours a day on assorted English activities. Some of these activities do not inspire the pupils who are often removed from the class and sometimes miss other subjects. The good personal, social and health education curriculum is being developed further with new materials and contributes successfully to the pupils' personal development. There are exceptionally good opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of stimulating activities beyond the classroom, including overnight camping and visits to France in Years 3 to 6. The curriculum is further strengthened by the contribution of specialist teachers and coaches in physical education and the arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel secure in school and confident that any problems they have will be resolved. There are good links with outside agencies to ensure coordinated support for those pupils with physical disabilities and other complex problems.

The school carefully implements the statutory procedures designed to safeguard pupils and there is an ongoing training programme to keep staff up to date with requirements. Arrangements for providing academic guidance are good but there is some variation across the school. There are excellent procedures for older pupils who know exactly what they need to do next. Marking of work in Year 6 and in a Year 3/4 class gives pupils particularly clear guidance on how to improve. Some of the targets for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are too general, for example: 'My target is to get better at writing'. Such targets do not explain exactly what the pupil needs to practise or improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher accurately assessed the strengths and weaknesses within the school on taking up her appointment. Many parents recognise the positive impact she is having. One summed up their views by saying, 'The arrival of this headteacher was like a breath of fresh air'. The headteacher has high expectations for pupils and of staff and is promoting a culture of continuous improvement. Individual members of the recently configured leadership team have introduced improved practices, for example in provision in Reception and approaches to teaching writing. The headteacher has established detailed and effective systems for tracking individual pupils' progress and this is helping to identify variations in achievement and increase progress. Little use is made of computers to make the storage and management of this data fully efficient. The headteacher has introduced a good range of formal and informal procedures for checking on the school's performance, many of which she carries out herself. Some teachers with lead responsibilities are beginning to play a more active role in these procedures, for example analysing data or observing lessons. However, they have had relatively little training or time for this and some of them have not yet gained a whole-school perspective within their area of responsibility. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are involved in important decision-making and have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development.

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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?	3
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	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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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	3
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	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

Thank you for making me and my colleague feel so welcome when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing some of your work. Yours is a satisfactory school in which lots of important things are quickly improving. We are pleased to say there are several aspects that are good but there are also some things which need to get better. Here are some of the 'highlights':

- most of you are making at least satisfactory progress in your lessons. Those of you in Years 5 and 6 are making rapid progress
- the children in Reception settle in very quickly and learn lots of things
- you behave exceptionally well as you move around your large school building and lots of you do useful jobs to help to run the school
- some of the teaching is very good indeed, especially in Year 6
- you enjoy many of the things you do in school, especially things like camping on the school field and going to France
- all the staff take good care of you and help you when you have a problem
- the headteacher works very successfully to make sure the school keeps getting better.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on these things:

- make sure that teachers help you progress more quickly, especially in Years 1, 2 and 3
- think about more ways of linking the work you do in different subjects, so that enough time is spent on all subjects and all your lessons are really interesting
- help all the staff leaders to become more involved in ways of checking how well things are going in the areas that they lead.

I hope you continue to enjoy your time at St Nicholas and St Laurence School.