



The Minster CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126368
Local Authority Wiltshire
Inspection number 293537
Inspection dates 13–14 March 2007
Reporting inspector Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Emwell Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Warminster
Age range of pupils	4–11		BA12 8JA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01985 213265
Number on roll (school)	224	Fax number	01985 847187
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Amanda Robson
		Headteacher	Susan Worringham
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school serving Warminster and the surrounding villages. Pupils' attainment on entry is similar to that of most schools, as is the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The proportion entitled to free school meals is low. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. In 2006 the school achieved 'Investor in People' status and gained the sports Active Mark. There have been several changes to senior management in the past few years. The current headteacher took up post two years ago, whilst the deputy headteacher joined the school in January 2007.

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 with strengths in the pupils' good personal development and well-being and in their excellent behaviour. Very good relationships amongst all concerned with the school and close links with the church have established a very caring and Christian ethos.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. From broadly average levels of attainment when they enter the school in Reception, pupils make satisfactory progress to Year 2 to reach average standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Their overall progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and good in mathematics. By Year 6, standards are average in English and above average in mathematics. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are usually interesting and planned to make sure that pupils are well managed and their needs met. However, in some classes, particularly in Years 1 and 2, planning is not this sharp. Then, the challenge for more-capable pupils slackens and they mark time, whilst tasks are sometimes too hard for lower-attaining pupils. Pupils enjoy their lessons and this is reflected in their good attendance.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides good enrichment opportunities through visits and after-school clubs. The school has recently improved its provision in reading and writing and this is having most impact on improving pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, systems for hearing pupils read and helping them improve are not sufficiently rigorous and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to read and write at length in different subjects.

Pastoral care is strong and pupils feel they have someone to turn to if they need help. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy and they take advantage of the good sporting opportunities offered to them. Pupils make a good contribution to their community by collecting for charities. The care, support and guidance of pupils are satisfactory, but there is still work to do to improve systems for checking their progress.

The school's systems for checking pupils' achievements are satisfactory, although recording is cumbersome. This prevents school leaders and staff easily checking pupils' progress through the school and gets in the way of them evaluating how well provision meets pupils' needs and knowing swiftly what is needed to improve the different aspects of pupils' achievement. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has identified the right priorities for improving pupils' achievement but does not take enough account of how successful efforts have been when judging its overall effectiveness. This has led to the school having an overgenerous view of its effectiveness, which is more positive than that of inspectors. School leaders are beginning to have a positive impact on raising achievement after a drop in standards during an unsettled time in senior staffing. However, the roles of subject leaders in monitoring intended improvements and checking their colleagues' work are still insufficiently developed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 by creating more rigorous systems for hearing pupils read and helping them learn in reading and writing across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure work is always well matched to the needs of the more-capable and lower-attaining pupils.
- Make subject leaders more effective in their roles of raising pupils' achievement.
- Refine assessment records so they show standards and progress across classes so better checks can be made on pupils' progress and swifter action taken to improve it.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly at the level expected and, by Year 6, pupils reach average standards in English and above average standards in mathematics.

Children make satisfactory progress in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Reception, standards are similar to those expected for this age group, including in literacy and numeracy. Standards remain average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. However, by Year 2, a small proportion do not recognise enough common words and also have weak writing standards. Handwriting and punctuation skills develop well but the lack of opportunities for pupils to write at length in Years 1 and 2 prevents standards rising. Opportunities for pupils to read to adults in school lack the rigour and purpose needed to enable pupils to reach higher standards.

Over the last two years, standards have shown a little improvement in Year 2 compared with the standards previously reached. However, standards for boys have not been as good as those for girls, especially in reading. Also, pupils born in the summer did not do as well as other pupils.

In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress is satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in mathematics because of good teaching. Recent work on improving literacy provision was reflected in Year 6 pupils' improved achievement in the 2006 national tests in English. However, by Year 6, considerably fewer pupils reach higher levels in writing than do so in reading. This is a consequence of some earlier underachievement rather than the progress now being made.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. This is good in literacy and numeracy in Years 3 to 6 but is slower in Years 1 and 2, when the steps expected in learning phonics, reading and writing are sometimes too hard.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is a happy and harmonious community where pupils get on well together. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Consequently, pupils feel valued and secure. They are keen to learn and the attendance rate is above the national average. 'I love school because I have lots of friends and the teachers are kind,' commented one pupil. Pupils are polite and well-mannered and their behaviour is exemplary. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good, overall, although the school is sensibly taking action to increase their multicultural awareness. Pupils respect the feelings of others and have a well-developed sense of fair play. They respond positively when given responsibility, for example, as members of the school council or as playground buddies. However, school council members tend to rely too much on adults to set their priorities.

Pupils are safety-conscious and are concerned for the welfare of others. They enjoy a good range of physical activities and understand the importance of healthy eating. Pupils have a strong social and community awareness, and are keen fundraisers for a range of charities. Their satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy helps them to be soundly prepared for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with instances of good teaching in Reception and in Years 3 to 6, where teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' achievement and their application. In these classes the pace of pupils' learning is brisk. Throughout the school, teachers manage their pupils and use interactive whiteboard technology well to capture pupils' interests. Lesson planning is generally satisfactory. However, on occasions, teachers do not provide enough challenge for more-capable pupils when there is too much repetition of earlier learning. In Years 1 and 2, time is not used effectively when pupils mark time because they are given too many colouring activities. In these years, the literacy work provided for lower-attaining pupils is sometimes too hard and this too limits their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, including that for pupils with learning difficulties. Provision is satisfactory in Reception, where there is an appropriate balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. In Years 1 to 6, provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory, overall. However, opportunities are often missed in Years 1 and 2 to develop pupils' literacy skills through work in other subjects. Good provision for pupils'

personal development is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour. Physical education also receives a strong and effective emphasis across the school. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors and school clubs. These are greatly enjoyed by pupils and make a valuable contribution to their learning. After reflecting on a visit to the Roman Baths, one commented, 'It was great and was much more interesting than just learning about Romans from books'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils feel safe and know that the staff will listen and act if they have any problems. Parents are justifiably confident that their children are well looked after at school. Child protection procedures and health and safety checks are robust. The school works well with external agencies to provide support for pupils when this is required. Thorough and effective procedures help children to settle in quickly in Reception and prepare Year 6 pupils for the next stage of education. Pupils benefit from effective support and guidance for their personal development. Their academic support and guidance are satisfactory. Teachers' marking is generally sound, although the most capable pupils, in particular, sometimes need more guidance about how to achieve higher standards. Most pupils know their learning targets but some are unclear about how well they are progressing towards them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good pastoral leadership and has built good team working across the staff. She has put initiatives in place for improving standards, especially in reading and writing. These are beginning to have a positive impact in Years 3 to 6. The headteacher has been without a consistent deputy until very recently and there have also been several changes in subject leadership. This has hampered the development of the school's systems for checking pupils' progress.

The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate. However, the systems for analysing and recording pupils' achievement are cumbersome and prevent teachers, school leaders and governors easily evaluating pupils' standards and progress as they move through the school. This limits the ability of the school to evaluate the success of its strategies for raising achievement.

Subject leaders are beginning to play an important part in establishing and monitoring the curriculum and planning. However, most are not yet fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning in their colleagues' lessons. This limits the rigour of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Governance is satisfactory. Governors provide good levels of support and satisfactory levels of challenge. They have had a significant impact on improvements to the accommodation since the previous inspection. The satisfactory rate of improvement since then shows the school has satisfactory capacity to continue to do so.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	1
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	3

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?	3

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	3
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	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

Thank you for being so welcoming, polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

The school gives you a satisfactory education and provides some good things. These are the good things about your school:

- You make good progress in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 because you are well taught.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are a credit to your school.
- You get on really well with each other and help others who are less fortunate.
- You have some really interesting opportunities for sport and for learning through visits, visitors and clubs.
- Teachers make sure you are cared for well and you are kept safe.
- Your headteacher and teachers are working hard to make the school better.

Here are the things we are asking the school to change:

- Improve your progress in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2.
- Make sure your work is never too easy or hard.
- Make better checks on how well you are learning.

You can help your teachers by making sure you work hard at improving your reading and writing.