

Charmouth Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113662
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	311328
Inspection date	19 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roy Churchman
Headteacher	Chris Vincent
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003
School address	Lower Sea Lane Charmouth Bridport DT6 6LR
Telephone number	01297 560591
Fax number	01297 560591

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards and achievement in the Foundation Stage; achievement in Years 1 and 2, particularly in reading; and the progress of girls in Years 3 to 6. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, analysis of school tracking and assessment data and discussions with the headteacher, senior leadership team, members of the governing body and pupils. The views of parents were gathered from the returns of the Ofsted questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its SEF, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Charmouth Primary serves the village and surrounding area. Attainment on entry varies from year to year, but is around that usually found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average, but varies significantly between year groups. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds although none are at the early stages of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

In this outstanding school pupils thrive because of the exceptionally good attention given to their individual needs. Most parents recognise this and typically one wrote, 'Charmouth is a wonderful, friendly school which not only educates, but also nurtures our children.' A major reason for the school's success is the excellent leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher's outstanding leadership encourages staff to perform at their very best, which has resulted in impressive curriculum innovation that enthuses pupils and has raised standards. The senior leadership team makes an excellent contribution to school development and there is exceptionally good teamwork amongst all staff and governors. This results in a consistently high standard of education throughout the school. Governors provide excellent support being fully involved in monitoring and development work, particularly through their regular interviews with pupils to check their views on how well they think the school is helping them to make progress.

The school is very modest about how well it is doing, largely because it is continually striving to become even better. This has led to a strong culture of self-evaluation with a very effective range of systems in place enabling the school to judge the quality of its provision and pupils' progress. The information is used particularly well to rectify areas of weakness, which are speedily and successfully addressed leading to a continually improving quality of education. As a result, pupils' achievement is exceptionally good, including that for pupils in Years 1 and 2, for reading, and for girls in Years 3 to 6. Standards are generally significantly above average by the time pupils leave the school. Any variation in standards is due to the differing proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in each year group, but the school's excellent tracking records show that the exceptionally good rate of progress remains.

Pupils' good personal development and well-being have some particularly strong features. Pupils love coming to school and their very positive attitudes help ensure their hard work and progress. Despite this, attendance is around average largely due to the number of parents taking their children on holiday in term-time. However, the school has successfully improved levels over the past year. Behaviour is good although it is much better in the older classes. This is largely because a growing number of children entering the school have underdeveloped social skills, and some in Reception and Years 1 and 2 find it difficult to behave well in lessons. By the time pupils leave, their behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They are thoughtful, friendly, polite and helpful and are acquiring an excellent range of skills to help them in future life. This is especially evident in their work on environmental issues, for example as Young Wardens at the local Heritage Coast Centre which is also a strong feature of their excellent contribution to the school and local community. Pupils are very proud of their roles as 'Peer Mediators,' which they say are helping to eliminate playground disagreements, and also their contribution to governors' regular risk assessments. This helps pupils develop a good awareness of safety issues and they also talk knowledgeably about the importance of achieving a healthy lifestyle.

The outstanding curriculum is exceptionally well tailored to meet individual pupils' needs. Very effective schemes of work ensure pupils build on and extend their skills especially well in all subject areas. Excellent links between subjects, and activities which capitalise on pupils' interests make learning relevant and meaningful. For example, the Year 6 pupils found a science experiment on water erosion an excellent stimulus to help write their 'Cliff Poem'. The outstanding range of programmes to help pupils whose progress slows to catch up are carefully adapted to their needs, helping most to reach at least average standards.

Underpinned by this outstanding curriculum, teaching and learning are excellent and pupils benefit greatly from the consistent approach seen throughout the school. All staff have very high expectations of what individual pupils can achieve and they plan challenging work taking very good account of the levels at which pupils' are working. The pace of lessons is rigorous and staff use resources, especially the interactive whiteboards, very well to stimulate pupils' interest, as was observed in a Year 3 writing lesson on shipwrecks. Skilled teaching assistants make an important contribution to learning, especially for those pupils who have specific needs.

Care, support and guidance are outstanding with the most striking feature being the way in which staff constantly encourage pupils to evaluate how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The 'Learning Walls' in each classroom are an excellent way of celebrating pupils' success. As a result, pupils have an exceptionally good idea of the level at which they are working and have developed very high expectations of themselves. Vulnerable pupils or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive outstanding support including that gained through the excellent links the school has forged with other schools and agencies. Rigorous safety checks, together with effective staff vetting arrangements and child protection procedures, ensure pupils are safe.

The majority of parents who completed the Ofsted questionnaire praise the school's work although a few raised concerns about behaviour of which the school is aware and is addressing through its current development work.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The outstanding provision gives children an exceptionally good start to their education. This is due to the excellent leadership and management. Very good induction procedures help children to settle in to school well. Both the curriculum and teaching are excellent, ensuring children's needs are met especially well. An outstanding feature is the way the curriculum seamlessly feeds in to that for Year 1 pupils, ensuring continuity in learning. Every opportunity is taken to encourage reception children's progress, for example in helping them to find out which container was the largest and which the smallest when playing in the sandpit. Learning is fun, with lots of role-play and games so children are enthused and easily learn new things. The high quality interaction between staff and children also supports children's progress which is very good, including in their personal development. Nearly all reach the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1, particularly in their language and number skills. However, a few children, mainly boys, still find it difficult to take turns or listen to others and are sometimes noisy in activities. The care and support children receive are excellent and assessment of their progress is used exceptionally well to move children on from the stage they have reached.

What the school should do to improve further

- Investigate and implement ways to ensure that younger pupils behave as well as those in the older classes

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Charmouth Primary School, Charmouth, DT6 6LR

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I was particularly impressed by how friendly and helpful you were and I want to thank the 'Eco-Reps' who gave up their lunchtime to talk to me. You think your school is a fantastic place to be and I agree with you. It is an excellent school.

This is what I thought was especially good about the school:

- You have an outstanding headteacher and all the staff and governors are very good at making sure you have an excellent education.
- You are making exceptionally good progress and standards are much better than those seen in other schools.
- Teaching and learning are excellent, as are the activities staff plan for you, which is why you enjoy your lessons so much.
- Staff know individual pupils particularly well so they can give each of you work that will help you do your very best.
- You are given outstanding advice on how you can improve. I particularly liked the 'Learning Walls' and I think they encourage you to do well.
- You are very good at taking on responsibility and helping your school to improve even further. I was very impressed by the work you do as Junior Wardens at the Heritage Centre and your work as 'Peer Mediators'.

What I have asked your school to do now;

- Help all the younger pupils to behave as well in lessons as pupils in the older classes. You can help by trying to focus on your work all the time in lessons.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson Lead inspector



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