

# Sixpenny Handley First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113668
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	311331
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bradley Simmons 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>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	84
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stephanie Chick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clare Shields
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Sixpenny Handley Salisbury SP5 5NJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01725 552356
<b>Fax number</b>	01725 552874

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). HMI evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated achievement and standards, personal development and well-being of pupils, the quality of provision and leadership and management.

## Description of the school

Sixpenny Handley First is a small school that serves the North Dorset village in which it is situated, as well as the surrounding area. The vast majority of its pupils are White British. The school admits up to 20 pupils each year. Children join the school in the September of their Reception Year, but attend mornings only until the following January when they become full time. Around 15% of the school's population has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is in line with the national average. Around one in ten pupils is entitled to free school meals, a figure which is below average and reflects the generally favourable socio-economic context in which the school operates.

At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for a little over three weeks.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Sixpenny Handley First is a satisfactory school with some good features, particularly with regard to pupils' personal development and well-being. The headteacher and chair of governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and demonstrate the insight and determination necessary to improve the school rapidly.

Achievement and standards at Sixpenny Handley are satisfactory overall. The school agrees that when pupils join the Reception class, their developmental levels are generally better than those normally found in children of this age. Pupils make a good start because of good teaching and, by the end of their first year, their attainment, skills and abilities are above those normally expected. Their good progress continues as they move through Key Stage 1 so they attain well in reading and writing at the end of Year 2. Attainment levels in mathematics are slightly weaker than might be expected for children who attain well in other areas, but not markedly so at this stage. However, school data demonstrate that progress slows for pupils as they move through Years 3 and 4, and as the school acknowledges, notably so in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress in line with their peers.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching is stronger in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Here children make a good start on the basics; the teaching of phonics is a strength. It is tackled at a good pace over time, and is accurately assessed so pupils gain a secure phonic knowledge to use in their reading and writing. Wider reading and writing skills are well taught. Teachers discuss learning objectives with pupils, so pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. They ask pertinent questions which are well targeted to challenge and support individual pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities get the help they need to taste success. In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but are capable of better. During the mathematics lesson observed, some key explanations lacked clarity, so pupils were unsure how to approach a task. There was little use of key mathematical terminology by the teacher or pupils. The teacher did not adapt the commercial planning scheme for mathematics to ensure it met the needs of pupils. As a result, tasks were wrongly pitched for some pupils so they struggled.

Across the school, systems of assessment to diagnose pupils' gaps in knowledge skills and understanding are too variable. Although some teachers are clearly carrying out such assessments, there is no evidence that all are doing so systematically or in the same depth. Thus planning is not always securely geared to building on children's prior learning. This limits the impact that teaching has on children's progress during their time at the school.

At present, target setting is supporting pupils to make satisfactory progress. However, pupils are not making the consistently good progress of which they are capable because marking, although carried out regularly, seldom addresses pupils' individual targets. Pupils do not consistently receive clear academic guidance to speed their progress further. Targets for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not sharp enough to ensure these pupils make good progress. Some reports to parents do not give clear guidance on the next steps for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the many and varied trips out of school. Overall, however, children's enjoyment of school is satisfactory because the curriculum, whilst covering all the required subjects, does not capitalise on the learning opportunities presented by such a range of trips. The school relies heavily on nationally produced schemes of work but has not adapted

these to ensure that children receive an exciting and relevant curriculum on a day-to-day basis. Across the school, there is little use by teachers of the information and communication technology (ICT) tools at their disposal as a means to enhance the curriculum and heighten pupils' enjoyment of learning.

Through questionnaires, a small number of parents expressed concerns about the impact of a few pupils' challenging behaviour on the progress made by others. The headteacher has made the improvement of behaviour a priority since her arrival. This work is having an excellent impact. During the inspection, all staff used positive behaviour strategies, introduced since September, quickly and effectively to calm and refocus pupils with challenging behaviour. The learning of other pupils was unaffected. Overall, behaviour is good. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, they are welcoming to visitors and they look after each other at school. Pupils enjoy the weekly 'Celebration Assembly' which rewards social and academic achievement. Pupils make a good contribution to village and wider society, writing articles for the community magazine, participating in the flower show, raising money for the county air ambulance and preparing Christmas presents for those much less fortunate than themselves.

The leadership of the new headteacher is very good. Parents note that she follows a longstanding and much respected headteacher and has thus done well to secure the respect and trust of parents and pupils so swiftly. They appreciate her approachability. She is rightly regarded as a listening headteacher who considers the views of others and acts judiciously on these. In the very short time she has been at the school she has identified a range of very pertinent issues for improvement and is setting out plans to address these. Her swift work on developing common behaviour strategies augurs well for her capacity to move the school forward. The governors are committed. They give freely of their time, but they are unable to hold the school effectively to account for its performance because the school improvement plan does not contain precise and measurable targets.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils settle well into the Reception class. Planning demonstrates that there is a good range of provision across all six Foundation Stage areas of learning. Pupils' ability levels are generally above average when they join the school and teaching builds effectively on these to ensure that they make a good start in their first year. The teaching of reading is particularly strong. Good staffing levels ensure that pupils get the individual help they need.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2, by ensuring that tasks are accurately matched to pupils' ability levels.
- Implement consistent systems of planning and assessment across the school to improve the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.
- Sharpen targets for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and review these regularly so that they receive the focused support they need to make better progress.
- Publish measurable targets within the school improvement plan so that the governors are able hold the school to account for its work.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

<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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

1 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Sixpenny Handley First School, Salisbury SP2 5NJ

Thank you for the very warm welcome that you gave me when I visited your school recently. I would particularly like to thank the school council for the time they spent answering my questions. I am writing to let you know what I found about your school.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. You make good progress in your first few years at the school, but the progress you make in your last two years is not as good as it could be, especially in mathematics. Your teachers know this and have already started to think about ways to make sure you do better in mathematics. I think most of you are working hard and trying your best and that you could learn more quickly in all subjects. To help you do this, I have asked your teachers to make sure that they find out exactly what you can do so they can plan the next steps in your learning more carefully. This will help you to make better progress.

Some of you have individual learning plans because you find some parts of learning difficult. I have asked your teachers to make sure that they think especially carefully about the next learning steps they want you to take, and to make sure that they check regularly how much progress you are making towards your targets. This will help them give you the support you need.

I was pleased to see how well you behave at school, and how kindly you look after each other around the school. It was great to see how much you enjoyed 'Celebration Assembly' and clapped your friends who have done so well. I was also pleased to find out that you know so much about healthy eating; the school council gave me very useful advice on making a healthy packed lunch. You do lots of activities to help people in your village and others around the world. Well done!

Finally, I think that you are very lucky to have a headteacher who is really determined to turn Sixpenny Handley into a good school. You can help her and all your teachers by continuing to work hard and doing your very best.

I wish you every success in the future.

Best wishes

Bradley Simmons Her Majesty's Inspector

**Annex B**

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Her Majesty's Inspector