

Burton Bradstock Church of England Voluntary Controlled School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 113758 |
| Local Authority | Dorset |
| Inspection number | 311361 |
| Inspection date | 23 April 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Deborah Zachary |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 108 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sue Moore |
| Headteacher | Mark Stratta |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 February 2004 |
| School address | Church Street Burton Bradstock DT6 4QS |
| Telephone number | 01308 897369 |
| Fax number | 01308 897369 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Burton Bradstock is smaller than most primary schools. It serves two small local communities but is popular, and half of the pupils come from outside the catchment area. Almost all the pupils are from White British ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, but has been increasing since the last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Parents are right to greatly value the education their children are getting. One commented that 'Burton Bradstock has a culture of kindness and inclusion', and this sums up the atmosphere among staff as well as pupils. The headteacher promotes a very high level of teamwork in an unobtrusive manner. He empowers staff and governors to make very valuable contributions to the running of the school. Above all, the excellent leadership and management has ensured a baseline of consistently good quality provision in which the many and significant outstanding features are rooted, particularly the outcomes for pupils.

Pupils' achievement is excellent. The numbers of pupils in each year group are small, so the results of individual pupils have a big impact on the school's results from year to year. However, standards by Year 6 are consistently above average. Last year's Year 6 performed outstandingly well. Their national test results showed their overall progress was in the top 1% of schools, and the English results were phenomenally strong. This group of pupils had broadly average standards when they were in Year 2, but by the time they took their tests they were, on average, about five terms ahead of their peers nationally in the subject. The general picture in the school is that pupils make consistently good progress in each key stage. This includes the Foundation Stage (Year R) where the standards of significant numbers of children were below, and in some years well below, those expected from when they started school. This rapid progress builds up year on year to excellent progress through the school as a whole.

The pupils' impressive progress is rooted in teaching and a curriculum that are consistently good. From this base, pupils are enabled to do so well through outstanding care, support and guidance that help them to feel very secure and take a high level of responsibility for their learning. This not only stands them in good stead when working up to the Year 6 tests, but also prepares them especially well for their future lives. Their personal development is excellent. Very close links with parents ensure that from the moment they enter the school, children are helped to settle and develop in an atmosphere of high expectations of both behaviour and independence. They have a very good understanding of other people's needs and of the views of those from different cultures. They also make a very big contribution to the running of the school through both class councils and the school council.

Pupils' progress is tracked very closely through termly assessments, and a range of baseline tests are used to set them challenging targets that most reach. Test results and other such monitoring are used effectively to identify areas that need improvement. Most recently, science in Key Stage 2 has been significantly improved from a position in which progress was much slower than English and mathematics. Writing in Key Stage 1 has also improved. Pupils' skills in composition and their use of vocabulary are now impressive in Key Stage 1 but handwriting is not yet as strong, and remains a weaker area in Year 3. For example, handwriting is not sufficiently joined up, and this can restrict fluency.

The school accurately identifies the important things that need to improve, and has been successful in the improvements it has made. However, the way in which it evaluates such initiatives is not always crisp enough to celebrate their success and identify which strategies have been most useful. The success criteria on the school development plan are not always helpful. This is not a major issue but in the context of this outstanding school, it is an area that is not yet sufficiently fine-tuned.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall, but very good in personal, social and emotional development. Strong teamwork between the teacher and teaching assistant ensures children have a consistent experience, and there is a very good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The regular 'welly walk' is greatly enjoyed by the children. Work is generally very well matched to their needs, but opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage more extended spoken responses from them and thus consolidate their use of language. Children of all abilities make good progress. Both this year and last year, the Reception group had a wide range of abilities on entry to the school, and a significant number of children had skills well below what is expected nationally. In 2007, the children reached broadly average attainment by the start of Year 1, and this year's group are on target to reach similar levels.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the handwriting of pupils in Years 1 to 3.
- Fine-tune the evaluation of actions taken to improve the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' progress is at least good in all key stages, and for all groups of pupils. It is sometimes exemplary – for example, the progress made by last year's Year 6 pupils. As a consequence, achievement in the school is judged outstanding.

The current Year 6 pupils are on target to reach mathematics and science standards that are broadly similar to last year's, and even though English results are unlikely to reach the heights of last year, their progress through the key stage has been good. Other year groups in Key Stage 2 are also making good progress.

Results at the end of Year 2 in 2007 were a little above average. This year's pupils have built well on their skills at the end of the Foundation Stage, and are on target to reach above average results. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported to make the same progress as their peers. This ensures that they too make rapid progress in every key stage, leading to excellent achievement by Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They demonstrate high quality relationships and there is a genuine harmony throughout day-to-day activities and learning. Behaviour is excellent, both in class and beyond. Pupils play energetically but without boisterousness; they take great care of the well-being and safety of the little ones. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'We know we are expected to provide a good example for younger children and we do our best.' The pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to keep healthy, and all those spoken to said how much they enjoyed school. Attendance is above average, and improving.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good throughout the school. All teachers have high expectations and good management skills; they teach at a good pace and use effective assessment to ensure they challenge pupils well. As a result, learning is rapid. Individual strengths in teaching include a high level of organisation combined with the ability to react quickly to pupils' responses and use them for learning, a very lively and interesting delivery, and well designed activities that bring in all pupils. Any areas of minor weakness are identified well by the school through monitoring. They include developing evaluation and feedback by pupils in Key Stage 2 lessons to improve their learning. In Key Stage 1, teachers do not use generally use joined handwriting on whiteboards or for displays, so some opportunities to encourage pupils themselves to join their writing are missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well matched to individual needs. The limitations in facilities for physical education are being managed well, being supplemented by planned trips elsewhere. Outdoor facilities for the youngest pupils have improved since the last inspection, but there are limitations on their use because of safety constraints resulting in a need for adult supervision. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of clubs, and provision for personal development is excellent. It has been considerably improved through work on the 'social and emotional aspects of learning' (SEAL) project. Trips, including three residential visits a year, visitors and very strong links with the church also support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral care is outstanding, and safeguarding requirements are fully secure. Lunchtime supervision is quiet and unobtrusive; it allows play to flourish but staff are immediately available when needed. Pupils feel strongly that they are well looked after. Individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well focused and structured to help give pupils the support they need, and links with health and welfare agencies are very good. Links with other schools are also very well established. Guidance is a strong feature of the school. The high quality support and guidance are key factors that mean good quality teaching and curriculum can lead to outstanding achievement. Marking is constructive and detailed. Pupils use their targets well - they understand what they are aiming for and what they have to do to improve. There are individual termly consultations involving pupils, teachers and parents. These things involve pupils in their learning: as one said, 'we can take responsibility for ourselves'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Inclusion and achievement for all is a concept that is central to the ethos of the school. Leadership is, in many ways, low-key, but the headteacher has successfully steered the school

to a point at which pupils show high standards and achievement combined with excellent personal development. There is also a real sense of belonging for all pupils and staff. The headteacher, assistant headteacher and subject leaders work together very closely. In this small school, all teach, but leadership time has also been effectively programmed. There is a very strongly shared sense of direction and high morale, despite the challenge of staff changes over the last year. Similarly, finances are well managed despite changes on the governing body. Governors are highly supportive but also well organised, lively and challenging. They greatly value the leadership of the headteacher.

Monitoring is very effective. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and teaching quality regularly and rigorously checked. Areas for development are efficiently and effectively identified, for example science in Key Stage 2 and writing in Key Stage 1 have recently been targeted and improved. The introduction of very successful strategies associated with the SEAL project reflects innovative thinking, as do recent changes to the building. The success of developments is evaluated less clearly, and the school's evaluation of its strengths is over modest; nevertheless the capacity to improve further is good.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

Overall effectiveness

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| 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 | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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? | 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**

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| 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 | 2 |
| 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 |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

24 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burton Bradstock Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Bridport DT6 4QS

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school yesterday, and a particular thanks to those of you who helped by sharing your views with us. We think you have an excellent school and you are right to be very proud of it. You yourselves make a very good contribution to how good it is. We especially liked the way you all get on well and behave so exceptionally well.

You make excellent progress in your work because you feel secure and you know exactly what you have to do to improve. Another reason is that your teachers give you good lessons and make sure you really enjoy your learning. They are helped to do this because your headteacher is leading the school really well.

Even an outstanding school can improve and we have identified two things for the school to concentrate on.

- We would like pupils in Years 2 and 3 to improve their handwriting. You can help by making sure you always join your letters up neatly.
- The school makes many good changes to improve things, but isn't quite so good at checking how well the changes worked. We want them to improve this.

With best wishes

Deborah Zachary Lead inspector