

Pimperne Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113774
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	311367
Inspection date	22 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Oliver
Headteacher	Cathy Rimmer
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2004
School address	School Lane Pimperne Blandford Forum DT11 8UG
Telephone number	01258 452025
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. More than half of the pupils come from beyond the immediate village surroundings. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is well below the national average, partly because the school does not offer hot lunches. Since the last inspection, the school has been redesignated from a first school to a primary school in September 2005. The roll has increased to accommodate pupils in Years 5 and 6. Plans are in place to provide a new school building within the next few years. The school has Healthy School, Eco School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pimperne is a good school. It has made a smooth transition into an all-through primary school. The school is making the best possible use of the available accommodation, and governors are working proactively with the local authority to ensure that a new school is built as soon as possible. Parents value the school's provision, as is shown by the number of pupils coming some distance to attend. A large majority of parents responded positively to the inspection questionnaire with comments such as, 'This is a brilliant school' and 'The school has a friendly feel and teachers are approachable.' Other parents commented on how the school's good curriculum helps their children to enjoy school, for example, 'hatching ducklings was really good for a boy who has little contact with animals'.

Children get a good start in the Reception class and most are on track to meet average levels for their age. Pupils continue to achieve well through the rest of the school because they are taught well and, as a result, standards are a little above national averages. Last year was the first time pupils sat the national tests in Year 6. Results were in line with the national average. Although they had made good progress in their final two years, pupils had not made enough progress in Years 3 and 4 and a few higher ability pupils did not achieve the highest levels. The school now checks pupils' progress more closely so that any child who is not progressing at the expected rate is identified quickly and given additional support. The success with which the school is meeting the targets set for its performance is giving it the confidence to be more ambitious for the future. It is taking the action necessary to achieve further improvement. For example, a key priority is to make the curriculum more interesting and relevant by planning better links between subjects.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because of the high levels of care and guidance the school provides. As pupils are well known as individuals, they gain personal confidence. A number of new approaches are successfully helping pupils to reflect on their own learning. However, not all pupils remember their personal targets and teachers' marking does not always highlight the next steps for learning. Pupils' behaviour is good, and sometimes exemplary. Some parents commented on incidents of bullying but pupils say these are rare. They also report that behaviour has improved and that bullying is dealt with well. They have a clear understanding of the impact of their actions and others and know how to stay safe and report incidents to an adult.

The headteacher provides strong leadership. Governors and staff have a shared sense of direction for the future of the school and work together well to promote improvement. The school makes good use of links with other local schools to share and develop good practice. These are bringing about improvements, for example in raising standards. The success of such actions demonstrates that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Almost all parents of children in the Reception class responded to the inspection questionnaire. All are satisfied with the school's provision, reflected in a typical comment: 'I am thrilled by the progress made'. Good links with a range of pre-school provision and the skill of adults ensure that children settle quickly. Each child's needs are carefully assessed and activities are well planned to enable individuals to develop appropriately from their starting points. For the

last few years, children's personal skills and language development have been generally lower than expected for their age on arrival, but they make good progress and most are working securely within the appropriate levels of their national early learning goals. Children work and play together happily. During the inspection, children were making rapid progress in learning how to combine coins to 'buy' toys because the activity captured their interest. Adults guide conversations in the groups very well to build effectively on what children already knew, so that their spoken vocabulary is extended as well as numeracy skills. The recently developed outside area is a key aspect of the Reception class provision and provides a stimulating environment for children's creative play. The school has still to implement plans to develop this further to give children even better opportunities for imaginative and outdoor play activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teachers' marking and pupils' understanding of their short-term targets to make sure that they are clear about the next steps for their learning.
- Implement the plans to make learning more interesting and relevant for pupils by creating better links between subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in the national assessments in Year 2 vary from year to year because of the differing capabilities in each year group. Relatively low numbers each year make statistical comparison unreliable, but standards are generally a little above national averages. This represents good achievement from pupils' starting points in Year 1. Results in the only set of national tests in Year 6 indicate pupils reach average standards. Progress for this group was good in their last two years but they had not make enough progress when they were in Years 3 and 4 and this had not been picked up early enough. Now pupils' progress is monitored regularly and help is given earlier when any pupils are not making the expected rate of progress. Greater rigour has been brought to the teaching of mathematics and science and has successfully raised standards in these subjects. . Pupils also have good basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT), helping them to be well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school's data shows all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress and pupils' standards are above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and value the contribution they make to their school community, for example as school council members or in developing class rules. Pupils' well-developed personal skills are important factors in their good progress and are supported well by the newly-introduced personal and social education programme. The school recognises that this needs more development to help pupils to understand their own feelings and strengthen further their relationships with others. They have good attitudes to learning, taking pride in the presentation of their work and working hard in lessons. They know about healthy lifestyles and try to apply their knowledge fully in their choice of food. Pupils are physically active at playtimes and derive much pleasure from involvement in extra-curricular sport and sports competitions. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They understand how different beliefs lead to different ways of life, particularly cultures in other countries, and are beginning to develop an understanding of Britain as a multi-cultural society. Pupils' cultural development

is encouraged successfully through many themed activities, including Book Day, Chinese Day and Aboriginal stories. From their earliest days in the school, pupils begin to learn about different occupations, which helps them to prepare successfully for their future economic well-being and eventual world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching has effectively improved standards across the school this year and is ensuring that pupils achieve well. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively so that pupils collaborate well and enjoy their learning together. There is an effective balance between teacher-led discussion and explanation, and time given for pupils to test their ideas out for themselves in independent or group tasks. Pupils are clear about what they have to do to complete their tasks successfully. Activities are generally appropriate for pupils' different capabilities. In the lessons observed, there was good challenge for the most able pupils. However, some pupils said that there are times when they could cope with harder work. Teachers' questioning skills are good and help pupils to assess for themselves how much they have learnt by the end of the lesson. Teachers mark work regularly and provide encouragement for pupils, but this does not consistently identify the next steps for learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has used the opportunity of redesignation well to review and develop the whole school curriculum. It has improved since the last inspection, particularly in provision for ICT. Some specialist teaching in music, French and physical education is successfully maximising pupils' attainment in these subjects. There are some good examples of activities linking subjects, for example by requiring pupils to use their knowledge of different periods of history to produce and perform a play, but the school recognises that this is not a consistent feature across the curriculum and requires further development to make it even more interesting and relevant for pupils. The curriculum is enriched well with a wide range of visits and visitors to the school, and pupils value the opportunities for residential visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff share a commitment to pupils' welfare and provide a safe and welcoming environment where pupils can flourish. Pupils have a sense of belonging to a wider Christian community through close links with the church. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and reviewed regularly to ensure that they are clearly followed by all staff. Vulnerable pupils are given support to resolve issues and build their self-esteem. The school works effectively with a range of external agencies to provide additional expertise when this is required. The school makes every effort to promote regular attendance, and unauthorised absence is rare. Attendance is satisfactory, although a number of parents take pupils on holiday during term time. The information from tracking pupils' progress is used well to provide additional support for any pupils finding learning difficult and leads to good achievement. Although pupils have termly literacy and numeracy targets, many pupils do not remember them because they are not referred to regularly enough, for example in teachers' marking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher effectively involve all staff so that there is a strong sense of teamwork across the school and a shared commitment to improving pupils' achievements. Staff feel valued and are rightly proud of the improvements that have been made since the last inspection and the smooth transition to introduce Years 5 and 6. There is a culture of evaluating practice and sharing expertise so that morale is high, although the school recognises that many of its current initiatives to raise attainment are not yet implemented consistently across the school. Governance is good, with governors providing support and challenge for the everyday work of the school whilst setting the future direction, specifically in driving forward planning for a new school building. Finance is managed carefully to ensure long-term financial stability, whilst making some improvements to the building and quality of resources for pupils now in the school. The school's assessment of its strengths and weaknesses is generally accurate and used well to guide action when areas are identified as needing improvement.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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?	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

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

23 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pimperne CE Primary School, Blandford Forum DT11 8UG

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you. I promised that I would let you know what we found out. Yours is a good school and you are right to be proud of it.

These are some of the school's strengths:

- You enjoy school a lot because you are secure and happy there.
- Your behaviour is good, and sometimes exemplary.
- You have good attitudes to school and work hard so that you make good progress.
- You are lucky to have so many clubs, and the sports activities help you to stay fit and healthy.
- You know whom to go to if you have any problems, and adults take good care of you.
- Your headteacher and governors make sure teaching is good.
- You help adults in the school plan for the future by giving them your own ideas, for example through the school council.

Your teachers are always trying to make things better. We have asked them to do a few things to help you to achieve even more:

- Make sure that they remind you of your targets in English and mathematics more often in lessons and when they mark your work.
- Make work even more interesting by planning topics which make better links between subjects.

You can help by continuing to do your best and by not giving up too easily when you find work hard.

Please thank your parents for returning the questionnaires. It was very helpful to hear what they think about the school. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Hutchings Lead inspector

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