

Shaftesbury Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113778
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	311369
Inspection dates	11–12 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

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	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wayne Bale
Headteacher	Evelyn Donnelly
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2003
School address	Wincombe Lane Shaftesbury SP7 8PZ
Telephone number	01747 852901
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Shaftesbury is an above average sized primary school. The school was opened as a primary school in September 2004 following reorganisation of schools in the area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. Smaller than average numbers of pupils do not speak English as their first language. The number of pupils registering for free school meals is below average. There is a low proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. When children enter Reception, their attainment is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Standards in the school are broadly average at Key Stage 1 but well below average at Key Stage 2. Pupils move from Reception into Year 1 with average standards so this represents inadequate achievement. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but it is inadequate between years 3 and 6. Learners are failing to make sufficient gains in knowledge, skills and understanding during these years particularly in science. Pupils do not achieve well enough in writing in both key stages.

Personal development is good. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They form good relationships showing care and consideration to each other. Pupils report bullying is very rare. Pupils clearly enjoy many aspects of school life as shown by their good attendance and their participation in a wide range of popular after school clubs. The school meets the legal requirements in safeguarding procedures and in completing risk assessments that ensure pupils' safety. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure.

Teachers do not have a clear enough understanding of learners' needs and are failing to set suitably challenging work for many pupils. As a result, teaching and learning are inadequate. There is insufficient good teaching across the school to improve pupils' progress and help those who have underachieved catch up. Teachers' management of behaviour, combined with the good attitudes of pupils, ensures that the majority of pupils behave well in classes. Assessment is underdeveloped and is not frequent or accurate enough to promote learners' progress.

Leadership and management are inadequate. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are failing to set a clear direction for improvement particularly with regard to self-evaluation and monitoring. Target setting systems are in place but these are not sufficiently embedded across the school, or broken down into precise enough detail, to raise standards. The school is currently operating with a substantial deficit budget. The governors have recently agreed a three to five year financial

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception classes due to satisfactory teaching. They experience a range of activities to promote their learning across the required areas. Teachers generally plan interesting tasks and give children opportunities to choose what they do, and to work with other children. This helps to foster their independence as well as their social skills. Teaching assistants are used satisfactorily. They are most effective when teachers have given them specific guidance so that they are very clear about what they need to do to support the children's learning and development. Learning is less successful when children are sitting on the carpet for prolonged periods. The children start to lose interest and become restless and their learning suffers. Teachers have a helpful system that adults use for recording the small steps that children make, which helps them to monitor their ongoing progress. The school does not use the records about each child's attainment sufficiently when children leave Reception to move to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the capacity of leadership and management to set a clear direction for the school, monitor its effectiveness and improve standards.
- Improve pupils' achievement particularly in writing across the school and in science between Years 3 and 6,
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better to bring about accelerated progress for pupils.
- Use the information from assessments to set suitably challenging targets for individual pupils and to monitor their ongoing progress more rigorously.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children start school with broadly average skills. Children's knowledge of letters and sounds is weaker than is typically found, but their ability to count is a much stronger aspect of their learning. When they leave the Reception classes, most children have reached the expected learning goals for the end of the Foundation Stage. From then on, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, but there are weaknesses in writing and fewer pupils in Years 1 and 2 are working at the levels expected for their age than should be the case. The lack of progress in writing continues across the school. The school has recognised this but has not taken effective action to bring about improvement. Progress in reading is better and results at Year 2 have shown an improving trend over recent years. By the end of Year 6, standards are well below average and exceptionally low in science. Results at Year 6 have varied considerably over the last three years. From being significantly below average in 2005, they rose to average in 2006 but declined again in 2007. This group of pupils made insufficient progress during Key Stage 2. The school was unable to provide convincing, comprehensive evidence of the current progress of pupils at Key Stage 2. The weaknesses in writing and science are continuing and pupils underachieve in both areas. They make better progress in reading and in information and communication technology.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils show caring attitudes towards each other and know right from wrong. They behave well in lessons and around the school. They clearly enjoy coming to school and they feel safe within it. They enjoy mathematics, creative subjects such as art and after school activities. This is reflected in their good levels of attendance. Pupils generally have good attitudes to their learning. Pupils act in a safe manner around the school, in lessons and in the playground. Their views are taken into account and they are allowed to initiate projects, for example to encourage healthy snacks in school. Pupils have a good understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle, including the importance of a healthy diet. They enjoy the good facilities on offer at playtimes and show they understand the need to exercise and keep their bodies healthy. Pupils make good contributions to the school community through opportunities such as class monitors and the school council. They contribute to the local community by fund raising, through their involvement in church services, and by singing to the elderly. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and this is evident in their good social skills. Cultural development is weaker but satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

There is not enough good or better teaching and learning to eradicate the pupils' underachievement. Teachers' management of behaviour ensures that the majority of pupils behave and pay attention in classes. In the better lessons, teachers plan engaging activities to which pupils respond positively. Good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning occurs in some classes. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported satisfactorily by teaching assistants who are most effective when they have a clearly defined role. The quality and impact of marking across the school is inconsistent. In most classes it is not used effectively to plan the next steps in learning. Assessment is neither frequent enough, nor accurate enough, to monitor learners' progress. It does not provide teachers with a clear understanding of learners' needs. This is reflected in the lack of planning that fails to match the full range of learners' abilities. The combination of these factors results in inadequate teaching and learning and in insufficient progress being made.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum covers an appropriate range of subjects and supports pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils are particularly pleased about the good range of clubs that the school provides and many of them attend these. Pupils can also learn a musical instrument and about a fifth of the school take up this opportunity. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development satisfactorily. Some subjects, such as design and technology and science, give pupils opportunities to work in groups and pupils particularly enjoy these activities. The curriculum does not support pupils' academic progress sufficiently well in writing and science. Higher attaining and average pupils, as well those with learning difficulties, are generally given the same work, which results in a lack of challenge. Pupils particularly enjoy doing practical, investigative work in science and say they would like to do more of this.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Pupils' personal development is well promoted. The procedures for the safeguarding of pupils and carrying out risk assessments meet requirements. The school promotes attendance through end of week assemblies and works with other agencies to take appropriate action where attendance is a concern. Good links with other agencies, such as health and social services, and the local churches help to provide good levels of support for vulnerable pupils. The school is working towards Healthy School status and pupils are involved, through the school council, in promoting healthy packed lunches.

The school does not promote pupils' academic guidance sufficiently well. This aspect of care and support is inadequate. The school sets annual targets for pupils but does not monitor how well pupils are making progress towards their targets. It is in the very early stages of collating the information it holds to give leaders and teachers a clearer overview of pupils' achievement. This lack of information means the school is unable to judge the effectiveness of the support it provides for pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Senior leadership and management are inadequate. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are failing to set a clear direction for improvement. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is inadequate as it is not based on a secure and consistent understanding of the school's priorities. Monitoring by senior leaders is failing to identify the specific changes to practice that will lead to raising standards. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have recognised some of the school's key weaknesses, but effective action has not been taken to remedy them. The school has recently gathered information on the current levels of pupil attainment but is not yet robust enough to give an accurate picture of progress. This makes it difficult for staff to identify priorities, plan developments, and monitor the rates of progress. Governors are active and fulfil their roles and responsibilities satisfactorily. They are not sufficiently challenging in their approach to monitoring the school's effectiveness because the information provided to them on pupil progress is limited and unreliable. Subject leaders are beginning to undertake monitoring to give them a more informed view of their subject areas, but this is at an early stage and is not yet effectively raising achievement.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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	2
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?	4
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?	4

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shaftesbury Church of England Primary School, Shaftesbury, SP7 8PZ

We arrived in your school and noticed straight away how well behaved and how kind you are. All of you play well together and help each other out. We saw how proud you were of your school buildings, especially your new swimming pool. You told us how much you enjoy going to the after school clubs. We were pleased with the work that you were doing in the ICT room and saw how confident you are on the computers. You behave well in lessons, especially when the teacher makes learning interesting for you.

Your school test results in writing and science have fallen behind other schools. When we watched you writing in class and looked at the work in your science and English books, we thought that you could do better. We have asked the teachers to explain carefully to you how to do your best. They will look at your work regularly so that they know exactly what you are finding difficult.

Unfortunately, we found your school is not as good as it should be and it needs extra help called 'special measures' to get better. We have asked your headteacher and deputy to be clear about the things that will make the school better. We have also asked them to keep a careful eye on how you are doing in your work and to let you know.

Thank you for welcoming us to your school.

With best wishes.

Mark Lindfield Her Majesty's Inspector



12 December 2007

Dear Pupils

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Mark Lindfield
Her Majesty's Inspector