

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Yetminster

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113781
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	311371
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Deborah Zachary

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	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Ringer
Headteacher	Stephen Williams
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Yetminster Sherborne DT9 6LS
Telephone number	01935 872430
Fax number	01935 872430

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following. • Achievement in writing in Key Stage 2, particularly for more able pupils. • Achievement in mathematics in Key Stage 1. • What features of the school are examples of excellence. Evidence was gathered from the school's data on pupils' progress (especially for Key Stage 1, where the pupils were on a trip on the day of the inspection); visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work; discussions with staff, governors and pupils; and an analysis of responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments of these areas, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. It draws its pupils from the village of Yetminster and surrounding small communities. Almost all pupils are of White British ethnic origin and almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The pupils' attainment on entry to Reception has risen. Over the last four years more pupils have been entering the school with levels of skills above those expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It is very rapidly improving under outstanding leadership. The last inspection report identified standards in Year 2 as the most significant area for improvement. Standards in Year 2 are now exceptionally high, as a result of the excellent progress pupils make in all subjects through the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Over the last four years, changes have been made to the open-plan layout of the school to transform the way pupils can use the library and information and communication technology (ICT), and a detailed system for tracking progress has been established.

Whilst raising standards in Key Stage 1, the school identified through its tracking system that able pupils in Key Stage 2 were not making the progress they should in writing. A very wide range of improvements has been made to teaching and the curriculum to increase their rate of progress. However, the changes were too recent to have an impact on the 2007 Year 6 national test results. Though standards overall were above average, there was significant underachievement among able pupils in English. The measures the school has taken have now had time to have a major impact, and the able pupils in the current Year 6 are now exceeding their very challenging writing targets. Progress in Key Stage 2 is now good in English, mathematics and science. However, the comparatively recent underachievement means that achievement in the school is good overall rather than outstanding.

Teaching is excellent in Reception and Key Stage 1 and good overall in Key Stage 2. It is more variable in Key Stage 2, despite significant improvements having been made. Some good techniques are working consistently well in the key stage; for example, the use of 'talk partners' to develop pupils' ideas, the clear identification for pupils of 'what we are going to learn' and a system of behaviour management that uses a display of names on 'traffic lights' on the few occasions any sanction is necessary. Subject matter is well chosen to raise levels of enjoyment and interest; for example, Year 4 were writing adverts for magical items drawn from the Harry Potter books during a very well constructed lesson about persuasive writing, and Year 3 were thoroughly enjoying singing songs drawn from East and West African traditions. Extensive training on ensuring teachers are consistent in the way they judge the level of pupils' work has resulted in high expectations and lessons that are planned to challenge pupils. At times, however, the pace of lessons is too slow because the teachers are not giving instructions crisply or demanding a rapid pace of work from pupils, and in such cases pupils' progress is constrained.

The curriculum has been extensively improved and is now outstanding. It prepares the pupils exceptionally well for their future lives. It is wide-ranging and highly stimulating, with opportunities for writing taking place across many subjects. The Years 1 and 2 pupils were on a trip to a recycling plant on the day of the inspection, but in the brief discussion before they went they showed a very high level of interest and understanding of the need for reducing, reusing and recycling. The school has recognised its changing intake and the way the curriculum needs to cater for the unusually high numbers of able, gifted and talented pupils now coming through. It is tackling the challenge on two fronts, firstly by making sure that the higher attaining pupils do reach the highest standards that are possible in the national tests, but secondly by enhancing the opportunities that they have in other areas. There is a limit to a score that can be reached in a test but no limit to the enrichment a pupil can receive through studying and undertaking wider-ranging activities. The school's website gives access to examples of pupils' work from all year groups, illustrating a huge variety of activities both within the curriculum and extra-curricular. The school keeps no record, however, of the extent to which

the able, gifted and talented pupils are opting in to optional activities, or the impact all these activities are having on their wider development. As a result, it is hard to establish whether this wider curriculum is what they need to enhance the academic progress that is comparatively easy for them.

The wide curriculum has had a significant impact on the improvement of pupils' personal development, which is now excellent. They are very aware of health and safety issues, and older pupils are able to link ideas about changes to the environment to the impact these changes might have on their health. They know that the recycling work they themselves do in school is necessary if 'smelly'. They contribute to the community in many other ways, including through the school council and the work as playground leaders. They are very articulate about issues of racism and sexism in wider society and the importance of tolerance and acceptance. They enjoy the strong links with the Church and small group discussions about matters of faith and philosophy with the chair of governors, who was the vicar until very recently. Governance is good, with a supportive but challenging governing body.

Behaviour is excellent and pupils say that if any minor bullying occurred, it would be very rapidly sorted out by staff. One parent represented the views of many by writing on a questionnaire, 'The level of pastoral care is exceptional.' Guidance is very effective in writing, with clear targets well known by pupils, and targets are being extended to other areas. Marking gives clear information on how to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported, which enables them to make the same progress as others in the school. Expertise from outside the school is used effectively to identify needs and design learning programmes where needed.

The outstanding leadership reflects a leadership team whose members work extremely well together. The headteacher has a rigorous understanding of what needs to be done and delegates highly effectively, empowering and encouraging both staff and pupils. The deputy headteacher has shown exceptional leadership in the improvements to Key Stage 1 and literacy. The strength of the school's systems of self-evaluation, the reflective way improvements are identified and the drive with which strategies for improvement are implemented mean that the school has an excellent capacity to improve. As one parent wrote, 'It just gets better and better.' One pupil expressed her enjoyment of the school more succinctly: 'It's phenomenal!'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Before children start at the school they benefit from very close links with the pre-school and very good liaison with parents. The most recent year groups entering the school have had a majority of children with levels of skills above those normally expected for their age. The children make outstanding progress and by the time they move into Year 1 standards are high. By this stage of the year, almost all children are speaking fluently and with confidence, and they demonstrate very well developed social awareness. One child said to another, who had joined a small group playing with boats, 'You don't take our boat because we are your friends.' Behaviour is excellent; children share well and listen with interest and attention. The teaching is extremely well planned, with defined lesson aims and key questions for both child-initiated and adult-led work. Pupils' skills are recorded in lessons as they develop and current target sheets are amended and sent home in book bags so parents know what children are working on.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the pace of teaching where it is weaker in Key Stage 2.
- Monitor the way able, gifted and talented pupils take up and succeed in the wider enrichment opportunities they are given.

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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?	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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	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

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?	1
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?	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

1 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's CofE Primary School, Yetminster DT9 6LS

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I really enjoyed seeing you at work and talking to you and your teachers. I was very impressed. I think you have a good school that is being extremely well led by your headteacher and deputy headteacher. You are making good progress, and younger ones are doing especially well.

I was very impressed by your behaviour and by the way you all help each other. I enjoyed hearing about what you do to recycle materials, too. All the grown-ups in the school work hard to look after you and you are given good guidance on how to improve, too. The teaching you get is good, but I think some lessons for older pupils could go a little faster, and I have asked the school to work on this. You have a very wide range of opportunities to learn. I have also asked the school to track how much individual pupils take part in these and find out how well the most able amongst you are being challenged by them.

You can help by working as well as you can, both in lessons and in the opportunities you have beyond the classroom.

With best wishes

Deborah Zachary Lead inspector

Annex B



1 May 2008

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Deborah Zachary
Lead inspector