

Burton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113789
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	311376
Inspection dates	22–23 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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	264
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Surman
Headteacher	Stuart Calvert
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Campbell Road Burton Christchurch BH23 7JY
Telephone number	01202 482588
Fax number	01202 475709

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size. Attainment on entry is slightly below that usually found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and none is at the early stages of learning English. A small number of pupils come from Traveller families. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007. The school holds the Activemark Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The quality of education is satisfactory. Over the previous two years progress in Years 3 to 6 has declined and writing has been particularly weak. However, the strong, determined and supportive leadership of the new headteacher has led to rapid improvement and standards are rising again. Effective systems have been put in place for monitoring and development and the headteacher has ensured that staff and governors are fully involved in this. Leadership and management are satisfactory, largely because the full impact of these developments has yet to be seen. However, the hard work and commitment of staff and governors is already helping to successfully address weaknesses and bring about good improvement in several important areas. This gives confidence that the school is well placed to improve further. Parents are full of praise for what has been achieved in the last six months. One parent summed up the views of many: 'I've noticed a vast improvement within the school both academically and emotionally since last September.'

The satisfactory curriculum has some strong features. In particular, the new English programme enhances progress, especially in writing. The good range of extra-curricular activities encourages pupils' enjoyment of school. Some aspects of the curriculum are still in development. However, revised planning helps pupils to build on and extend their skills, ensuring that teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, although they benefit from a good curriculum.

Teaching is consistently good in Years 1 and 2, where pupils achieve well. As a result, standards by the end of Year 2, which have been around average for a number of years, are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Although there is some good teaching in other year groups, the quality is variable and often the pace is slow. In addition, there are too many occasions when all pupils work on similar tasks, which limits the progress of the higher attainers. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, including in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Reception, standards are slightly below those expected as they were on entry to the school. With the support of the local authority, the strategies put in place to improve writing this year have resulted in pupils making good progress in English throughout the school. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, standards are broadly average, indicating satisfactory progress from when they began in Year 3. Standards remain below average in English because, despite recent improvements, pupils have not had sufficient time to make up for past weaknesses in writing.

Pupils' good personal development is evident in their good behaviour, confidence and harmonious relationships. They are well aware of how to keep healthy and safe. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and like their teachers. Attendance has been slightly above average for the past few years, but has declined because of weaknesses in the current procedures for checking on those pupils who are occasionally absent or late. Care, support and guidance are satisfactory overall. Many of the systems to support pupils' progress are relatively new and the full effect of these has yet to be seen. The level of pastoral care is good and pupils feel very safe and happy in school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The bright and stimulating classrooms provide an effective learning environment. Together with the good curriculum, this encourages children's enjoyment of school and helps them to learn. Very good induction procedures and links with the playgroup on site help children settle into school well. Personal development is good and children behave well. Communication, language and literacy are promoted especially well and children make good progress in this area, particularly in their speaking and listening skills. Progress in other areas is satisfactory and overall standards are slightly below those expected. Teaching is satisfactory. Interesting and motivating activities are planned, although the pace of these is often slow. Very good systems have been introduced to monitor children's progress and set new challenges, but these are fairly new and their full effect has still to be seen. Senior staff are playing a greater role in managing and developing the provision, and this aspect is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that all pupils, especially the higher attainers, are given appropriately challenging work to help them do their best.
- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching and ensure all teachers set a brisk pace in lessons to increase the rate of learning.
- Raise attendance levels by strengthening the systems for monitoring absence and lateness.

A small proportion of the 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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pockets of underachievement have been eradicated this year. Achievement is now satisfactory overall and progress in English is good. In Years 1 and 2, where activities are consistently challenging, progress is good and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average because more pupils are achieving the higher levels. Although Year 6 pupils have made especially good progress in writing this year, there has not been sufficient time for them to catch up on past weaknesses and standards in English remain below average. Standards are around the national average in mathematics and science. Pupils who have specific needs, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils from Traveller families, make the same progress as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Reception children's good start is built on well throughout the school. Pupils behave well. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare, although inconsistent behaviour management allows pupils to become too noisy or boisterous on occasions. Relationships are harmonious. Pupils are friendly, polite and helpful. Their good spiritual development is enhanced through many links with the local church. Cultural development is only satisfactory as pupils have few opportunities to learn about the multicultural aspect of British society. Pupils are especially keen on the many opportunities for exercise, which helped the school gain the Activemark award. Pupils feel very safe and secure in school, saying, 'Teachers do treat us fairly and sort

out our problems'. Over the past year pupils' contribution to school life has been greatly enhanced through the new school council and their responsibilities as team leaders. Pupils' preparation for their future economic well-being is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Effective monitoring and support have improved teaching and learning this year. However, although there is some good teaching in all phases of the school, the quality is too inconsistent. In particular, the pace of activities is sometimes slow and pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet rather than getting on with their tasks. Lesson planning to an agreed format is much improved and encourages teachers to identify appropriate tasks for pupils who are working at different levels. However, on some occasions when all pupils follow the same activity, this limits the progress of the higher attainers. The increased number of teaching assistants this year is having a beneficial effect on learning, especially for those pupils who need extra support. Good quality marking helps pupils to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Many innovations have been introduced this year, although the full effect of these has yet to be seen. However, the success of the new programme of work is evident in pupils' good progress in English. Effective links between subjects help pupils to use their skills in different situations. Regular tracking of progress allows staff to intervene more quickly when this slows. A new series of special programmes is improving the progress of those pupils who find learning difficult. Productive links with parents and other schools and the good extra-curricular activities support learning well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Effective systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' academic progress in English and mathematics have recently been put in place. This allows the school to set individual pupil improvement targets and encourage consistent progress. However, these have had insufficient time for the full effect to be seen and have yet to be implemented in other subjects. Support for pupils' personal development is good, especially through the popular new reward system. However, the revised procedures for monitoring attendance are not rigorous enough in checking on pupils who are occasionally absent or late. This has led to a decline in attendance levels. Parents are fully confident that their children are well cared for. Very good individual records are kept and parents say how well their children are known and understood by teachers. Health and safety audits are up to date and child protection procedures and staff vetting arrangements fully comply with government guidelines.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

In the past, systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work were not regular or rigorous enough to provide a clear picture on provision and pupils' progress. In addition, subject leaders and governors did not have sufficient opportunities to carry out their roles successfully. However, the new headteacher has demonstrated a very good capacity for driving improvement forward. In particular, the systems he has put in place since last September have given the school an accurate picture of how well it is doing. These have allowed the school to set more challenging improvement targets and put in place effective strategies to achieve them. This is already helping to raise standards, most notably in English. The school is well aware that still more needs to be done and is working hard to bring about further improvement.

Staff with management responsibilities have increased their skills in monitoring and development and this is successfully supporting targeted improvement areas. However, the need to prioritise the weakest areas has inevitably meant that some subject leaders are still developing their roles, especially in the monitoring of teaching and learning. Governors are better informed and are beginning to play a more effective role in monitoring and development work. During this academic year the school has strengthened its partnership with parents and other agencies, which is already bringing benefits to pupils' education.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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

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?	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	3
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

24 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burton Church of England Primary School, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 7JY

- Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. I particularly want to thank the school council members and team leaders who gave up their time to speak with us. We think your school is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education and agree with you and your parents that many good things have been happening this year. Here are some of the good things we found out about the school.
- Progress is better this year, especially in writing. Those of you in Years 3 to 6 are catching up and standards in these year groups are improving.
- Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good and standards are above average.
- Your personal development is good. You like your teachers, enjoy school, behave well and get on well together.
- Your headteacher has done a lot to help your school improve this year and staff and governors are working hard to help him make it even better.
- New systems have been put in place to regularly check your progress and help you to improve. You can help by looking carefully at the advice staff give you and working hard to do well.
- Here are some of the things we would like to see improved
- Make sure that teachers do not keep you sitting on the carpet or working on your individual tasks for too long.
- Always give you activities that will help you to do your best, particularly if you are quick to learn. You can help by making sure you try hard.
- Raise attendance levels, especially by keeping a better check on those who are late or absent. You can try hard to ensure you attend school unless there is a very good reason not to.

Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs D Wilkinson Lead Inspector

24 April 2008

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Christchurch, Dorset BH23 7JY**

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Yours sincerely

Mrs D Wilkinson
Lead Inspector