

St George's Church of England First School, Langton Matravers

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113803
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	311383
Inspection date	21 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Malcolm Greenhalgh

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Wollem
Headteacher	Angela John
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003
School address	High Street Langton Matravers Swanage BH19 3HB
Telephone number	01929 422973
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is below average in size and situated in the middle of Langton Matravers, a village close to Swanage. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Pupils leave in the middle of Key Stage 2 for Swanage Middle School. There have been a number of staff long-term absences in the last few years.

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 has retained the good standards and provision seen at the last inspection even though the school has had to manage the long-term absences of the headteacher and other key teaching staff. Parents are extremely supportive of the school's good work and a typical comment sums up the school well: 'I think the school is a fine example of the benefits of a small village school. It is firmly rooted in the community and provides an environment that encourages happy, confident and interested children.'

Pupils achieve well in all classes. Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage and make good progress. This is maintained through the rest of the school and as a result, standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. The pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Their behaviour, relationships with others, and their attitudes to learning are excellent. They enjoy learning in all situations, in and out of the classroom. There is a strong family atmosphere in the school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives. They make good contributions to the school and local community and make good progress in key skills so they are well prepared for the next stages of their education. This is the result of the very good care, support and guidance provided by the school, the good teaching and the very good level of learning resources in the classroom and playground. Together, these stimulate the children's interest as well as supporting their learning effectively. The school has recently looked to improve teachers' marking and increase the opportunities that pupils have to assess and evaluate their own work. Not all pupils are benefiting from these developments because they are not applied consistently across all classes and subjects. The quality of the curriculum is good and the school provides some excellent additional activities as well as daily and residential visits to help bring relevance to the curriculum. Personal, social and health education is very strong and helps to ensure that pupils make good progress in their personal development.

Leadership and management are good. The school has continued to improve and has ensured that pupils make good academic progress and sustain high levels of personal development. All teaching staff and governors take responsibility and work closely together for school improvement. The school has created good working relationships with parents as well as other schools in the area and the local authority. Good progress has been made since the last inspection which indicates that the school has the capacity to get even better.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle into school very quickly because of the care and support the school organises and provides now and before the start of term. The quality of teaching, the curriculum and learning resources are good and this enables the children to make good progress in all aspects of their learning. The outdoor area for the Foundation Stage children is inadequate. There is no outside facility attached to the classroom, which reduces the opportunities for the children to learn in an outside environment. Despite this, the school does its best to ensure that the children's physical development and progress in other areas of learning are not adversely affected.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers' marking provides all pupils with sufficient information on how to improve their work and that pupils are given good guidance on how to self-assess.
- Improve the outside area for the Foundation Stage children by creating an outside learning facility attached to the classroom.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above the national averages. Children enter school with below average attainment. They settle very quickly into the Reception class and make good progress in all areas of their learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and by the end of Year 2 the attainment of pupils in these areas is above the national averages. In Years 3 and 4, pupils also make good progress and continue to attain standards above the national expectations. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are provided with good quality support. Standards in information and communication technology were a concern at the last inspection but these have improved and are now in line with the national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 4.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a key strength of the school and reflects the strong emphasis the school puts on developing the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development as well as their academic development. Weekly services by the local church contribute well to promoting the pupils' outstanding behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning. The pupils, from a very young age, show a willingness to care for the well-being of others. During playtimes, for example, the oldest pupils enthusiastically take on responsibilities such as ensuring those entitled to daily milk receive it. In lessons, pupils work with others in a supportive manner and are always happy to give guidance to their peers when needed. Their exemplary behaviour contributes to everyone feeling safe, secure and very happy to come to school each day. Most pupils attend school regularly, although a few take holidays in term time, despite the school's best efforts to discourage this practice. Pupils have a limited understanding of the different cultures found in modern society. They are very aware of how to live healthy lifestyles. The oldest pupils are very conscious of what they have in their lunchboxes to ensure a balanced diet and believe that they attend a 'fit' school because of the amount of time pupils spend in physical activities in and out of the normal school day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan well to meet the pupils' academic needs, which enables them to make good progress from the Reception class through to Year 4. Resources are used effectively to stimulate pupils' interest and this encourages them to settle down to tasks quickly. For example, in the mornings before the start of school, a range of resources are set out for pupils of different abilities and in different learning areas for pupils to work on with their parents. Lessons provide

plenty of opportunity for pupils to work independently and in groups. The pupils enjoy this and the opportunity to develop excellent relationships. Teachers are encouraging pupils to take responsibility for assessing their own and others' work, but this practice is not consistently applied in all subjects or classes. Not all pupils are provided with enough guidance on how to make judgements about their work. Teachers' marking does not always offer sufficient information to pupils on how to improve their work or move on to the next stages of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to excel in all areas of the curriculum. Lessons are planned well to meet the needs of different abilities and focus effectively on improving literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. They are supplemented by additional activities out of lessons and by trips to local places of interest, which makes the curriculum relevant to the pupils' needs and experiences. Good emphasis is placed on the pupils' personal development in all lessons and this is complemented by a strong focus on personal, social and health education. The pupils have insufficient opportunities to look at the multicultural nature of our society to ensure that they have a good enough understanding of the different cultures and beliefs that can be found in modern Britain.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a caring and supportive family atmosphere where pupils feel safe and secure. This enables pupils to enjoy their activities and make good progress in their academic and personal development. The school meets all statutory requirements in relation to child protection and risk assessment. The successful focus on healthy lifestyles has ensured that the pupils are very conscious of how to eat healthily and to take regular exercise. The school has developed good academic tracking systems and is working closely with other local schools to develop these further. This will allow the staff to track individuals' progress across different subjects even more rigorously.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has coped extremely well with the long-term absence of the headteacher and two members of the teaching staff. The contribution of all staff to monitoring and evaluating school improvement and setting challenging targets has enabled pupils to continue to make good progress in their academic and personal development and ensured the school has met its clear vision for improvement. The governing body has made a good contribution to ensuring stability in the school and has shown good levels of support as well as effectively monitoring and evaluating aspects of the school, such as the budget. Some new initiatives, such as improving assessment procedures in the classroom, have, however, not been embedded as quickly as they might. The monitoring and evaluation of these new initiatives are not robust enough to ensure they are having the necessary impact to improve the quality of teaching and learning further. Although the outdoor area for the Foundation Stage children is inadequate, the staff and governors have continued to improve other facilities and resources since the last inspection. The classrooms and playground provide a very stimulating environment in which the pupils can thrive.

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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?	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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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**

Thank you for the way you greeted us when we inspected your school. It was a delight to see so many happy faces during lessons and at playtimes. We think that your behaviour, the way you support and help each other and your attitudes to learning are excellent. These things contribute much to making the school good.

You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from the time you enter Reception to the time you leave in Year 4. You also show that you enjoy the good teaching and the activities the teachers prepare for you. We think that the school is heading in the right direction but could improve even more by giving you better information on what you need to do to make your work better and giving you more responsibility to assess your own work. The school provides you with a good curriculum and with good care, support and guidance, particularly for those of you who find work difficult. We were impressed by all the extra activities you are given to ensure you eat healthily and take regular exercise. The school also provides you with lots of things to help you to work well and to enjoy your time in the playground. However, we expect the governors to continue to work hard at improving the facilities for the youngest children in school so that they have more opportunity to work outside to help their learning.

We were very pleased that you continued to make good progress despite the changes you have had in the teachers in school in recent years. It is great credit to you, the staff and the governors that the school has continued to do well and is in a good position to improve further.

We wish you every success for the future.



22 September 2007

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St George's C of E First School, Langton Matravers,
BH19 3HB**

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Yours sincerely

Malcolm Greenhalgh
Lead inspector