

# Winterbourne Valley Church of England Aided First School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113820
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	311387
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alex Baxter

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	43
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Power
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Horne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Winterbourne Abbas Dorchester DT2 9LW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01305 889297
<b>Fax number</b>	01305 889297

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This very small first school accepts pupils from the village and surrounding rural area. Children's attainment on entry and the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities vary substantially from year to year. Generally, they match the levels expected nationally. A Foundation Unit amalgamating the pre-school with children in Reception was established at the beginning of this school year. The school holds the following quality marks: Investor in People Award, Healthy School Status, Activemark Award and the Football Association Charter Standard for Schools. The headteacher took up her post in September 2006.

## 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 and improving school. Its strengths include a supportive Christian ethos, outstanding leadership by the headteacher and an excellent partnership with parents, the local community and outside agencies such as neighbouring schools. These create a caring community, where pupils' enjoyment and success in learning flourish. Pupils' academic achievement is good and standards are above average. Good teaching and excellent pastoral support are further strengths. These are the key reasons for the pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being, especially their excellent behaviour and relationships. One parent reflected the very positive views of the vast majority when writing, 'My child is extremely happy and well cared for at this school.'

The headteacher empowers staff and governors as a united team committed to continued improvement. Good use is made of the specific skills of staff to promote pupils' learning, for example in music. Self-evaluation is good and has built an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is one of the major reasons for the progress being made. Staff have improved the way they track pupils' progress in order to improve future learning. Year group targets are appropriately challenging and are used well to lift standards. However, target setting for individual pupils is not used as effectively to promote improvement.

Teaching and provision are good in the Foundation Stage where a newly formed Foundation Unit incorporates pre-school and Reception groups. Children make good progress, especially in their personal development. Good teaching and learning and good care, guidance and support, typified by close individual attention for every pupil, ensure that good progress continues in other classes. Teaching assistants give excellent pastoral support, helping to nurture pupils' excellent awareness of healthy, safe living and promoting reading skills. However, they are not always used as effectively to support in other subjects. Teaching and learning have been strengthened by increased challenge in numeracy and literacy, especially for potentially higher attainers. Attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 4, but writing skills, and problem-solving skills in mathematics, are still not as high as the pupils' impressive reading skills.

There is a well-planned curriculum that is enriched by an excellent range of clubs and sporting activities. These have a very beneficial impact on the pupils' personal development and well-being. Children in the Foundation Unit enjoy a good curriculum where there is a precise balance of adult-led and independent activity. Currently, these children do not have ready outdoor access and this limits their choice of learning activity. The school has a proven track record of improvement. This is evident in improved teaching, rising pupils' achievements and developing strengths of the Foundation Unit. The school is well placed to continue this in the future.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The very close interaction between pre-school and Reception children in the Foundation Unit, which started at the beginning of this term, is already a developing strength. The very close relationship with parents, which starts well before their children start school full time, is excellent. As a result, children settle quickly and make a good start, learning with and from each other. Children make good progress

across all areas of learning. Over the past year, most children either reached or exceeded early learning goals set for their age. Currently, the very small group of children in Reception are being challenged effectively in relation to their above average ability and are doing particularly well in their personal and language development. The good number of other adults supports good teaching and learning. This enables staff to provide an optimum balance between adult-led and activities children choose themselves across a good range of stimulating activities. However, children do not have ready access to outdoors and this limits their choice of activities.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that teachers are more consistent and precise in showing pupils what they need to do to improve and in using teaching assistants to help pupils learn.
- Improve outdoor facilities, and their access, for children in Reception so that they can make their own choices about when to learn outdoors.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good for all pupils, including potentially higher attainers and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils reach challenging targets. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage in relation to their capabilities and many develop their skills beyond the early learning goals expected by the end of their Reception Year. An increased and now appropriate challenge, especially for potentially higher attainers, is proving effective across the school. As a result, good progress continues through Years 1 and 2. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are above average and are particularly good in reading. Standards are mostly above average in Years 3 and 4 in English, mathematics and science and show good progress in relation to pupils' differing capabilities. Many pupils have particularly good reading, speaking and listening skills. Literacy and numeracy skills have improved and standards in reading are high. The school recognises the need to work on pupils' writing and problem-solving skills in mathematics to bring these up to the level of reading.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The creation of the new Foundation Unit ensures that children enter a caring community from the moment they start school. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent and they share excellent relationships. Pupils enjoy school as seen in their good attendance. One parent said, 'The pupils' excellent behaviour when taken out of school is such that I am proud to say, "These children are from Winterbourne Valley School".' The school's inclusive Christian ethos underpins the pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their outstanding contributions to the school and wider community. Consequently, pupils say, 'We're safe.' Pupils accept responsibility willingly, for example as members of the school council or in class, when deciding how to spend £100 on equipment in each year group every year. Pupils have an excellent awareness of healthy and safe living and derive great benefit from their wholehearted participation in clubs and sporting activities. The pupils' self-confidence and good academic skills prepare them well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is typified by the close individual attention given to each pupil's needs. All teachers and their assistants know the pupils well, value their contributions and promote the pupils' personal qualities very effectively. These are strengths both in and out of lessons. Teaching assistants give consistent and very effective support to individual pupils in reading. However, they are not always used as effectively to support pupils across the range of learning activities. Teachers have improved the way they emphasise practical work and sustain a good pace in lessons. They match learning activities to pupils' interests and ideas, in the Post Office in the Foundation Unit, for example. As a result, pupils of all ages and abilities work hard, enjoy their learning and make good progress. Teachers have also improved the way they assess and track pupils' improving skills. They use these assessments successfully through effective planning and appropriately challenging questioning to build on pupils' previous learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including children in the Foundation Unit. It is enriched well by excellent links with parents and outside agencies, visits and popular clubs. Opportunities to learn through sports and practical activities are especially good for a school of this size and contribute very well to the pupils' healthy lifestyles. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy in every class. Relatively recent actions to clarify learning objectives and strengthen planning now ensure that all pupils, across the range of abilities, are challenged effectively. However, at times, pupils do not have enough opportunity to practise these skills to best effect in other subjects. Currently, the youngest children can only use the outdoor learning facilities when taken there by an adult and this limits their ability to choose activities for themselves.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils benefit from being part of a small, caring Christian community. Staff provide high quality day-to-day pastoral care and support. They are excellent role models and promote the pupils' outstanding behaviour and relationships. Consequently, pupils rightly say that they feel safe and valued. The school develops very close links with parents and outside agencies at a very early stage in the newly formed Foundation Unit. These are strengths that enable the school to give all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, close individual attention and meet their differing needs. One parent echoed the view of the vast majority and wrote, 'There is a kind, caring environment at the school.' All teachers offer good verbal academic guidance, but written guidance, through marking of pupils' work or individual targets, for example, is not as consistent in showing pupils how to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher plays an outstanding role in providing clear direction to the school. By encouraging teamwork, she has been successful in lifting staff confidence and pupils' academic and personal achievement. She receives good support from staff and governors in promoting a caring ethos that nurtures pupils' achievement and well-being. This is much appreciated by parents, who, with outside agencies, form an excellent partnership with the school that enriches pupils' learning. There are good procedures for monitoring and evaluating performance. Senior managers know what needs to be improved and priorities are identified to good effect in the school development plan. More accurate tracking of pupils' progress is leading to clear learning objectives in lessons and the setting of appropriately challenging year group targets. However, targets for individual pupils are not always used to best effect to promote optimum progress. The new Foundation Unit and the accelerated progress of potentially higher attaining pupils, for example, reflect significant improvements. These show a good capacity to improve in the future.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

9 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Winterbourne Valley CofE VA First School, Dorchester, DT2 9LW

We enjoyed our visit to your school. We were very interested to see you at work and play and welcomed the opportunity to talk to several of you. These are the main things we found:

- It is a good school that continues to improve. Your headteacher is an excellent leader. The staff and governors use their skills well to help you learn and the school to improve. They receive excellent support from your parents and the local community.
- You make good progress in all classes because the teaching is consistently good. The standards you reach in Year 2 and Year 4 are better than in many schools.
- Your behaviour and the way you live healthily and safely together and contribute to the community are exceptionally good.
- Yours is a caring school where you enjoy a wide range of interesting activities.

I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do these things to help your school to become an even better school:

- Make sure that all teachers' marking shows you what you need to improve and that all teachers make the best use of teaching assistants to help you learn even better.
- Make it easier for those of you in Reception to have more opportunities to learn outdoors.

You can help by keep giving of your best.

Thank you once again, and best wishes for the future.

Alex Baxter Lead inspector

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Alex Baxter  
Lead inspector