

Western Downland CofE Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 116387 |
| Local Authority | Hampshire |
| Inspection number | 312287 |
| Inspection date | 27 November 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Jo Curd |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 136 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 14 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Forest Paget |
| Headteacher | Mrs Sandra Matthews (acting) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3 May 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Rockbourne Fordingbridge SP6 3NA |
| Telephone number | 01725 518233 |
| Fax number | 01725 518252 |

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| Age group | 4–11 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards and achievement throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, and the current effectiveness of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from school data, records and documents; discussion with pupils, staff and governors; observation of lessons; and parents' questionnaires. The inspectors did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These assessments have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This smaller-than-average primary school is an amalgamation of a local infant and junior school. Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) operate on one site, two and a half miles from the Key Stage 2 site. Children come from a wide range of backgrounds. Nearly all have White British heritage. There are more boys than girls in the whole school. The balance of these varies greatly between different year groups. Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average, the proportions in each year group vary significantly. Most of these difficulties are linked with behaviour, moderate learning difficulties and speech, language and communication. In 2008, three quarters of the Year 6 class were boys and a quarter of the pupils had identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The relatively long-standing headteacher left the school in summer 2008. His position is currently being covered by a part-time acting headteacher. A new substantive headteacher has been appointed to start in January 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school in which all groups of pupils make good progress in their learning and personal development. Parents expressed appreciation about how hard staff work, how kind they are to their children, and how happy the school environment is.

Staff know the pupils within their two relatively small school communities well. Relationships are good. Most pupils behave well and are keen to do as they are asked. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, because this is a priority in the school. The local rector is a regular visitor, contributing to religious education lessons and assemblies, and pupils successfully develop their understanding of different faiths, cultures and lifestyles through lessons and ongoing links to a school in Uganda. The school's successful work to achieve Healthy School Status has contributed to pupils' good understanding of, and commitment to, healthy lifestyles through exercise, vigorous outdoor play and eating fruit and vegetables. Most pupils enjoy the freshly cooked healthy school meals and fruit available in Key Stage 1. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and generally take care to play sensibly on the outdoor playgrounds. They contribute well to the school community through serving on class and school councils, helping with tasks around the school, and acting as playground leaders, teaching skills and activities to their peers. Due to good behaviour, attitudes, achievement and high standards, pupils are well prepared for later life and learning.

Standards within and between cohorts vary considerably. Pupils generally start Year 1 with standards slightly above those in most other schools. Although the rate of progress varies between classes, all groups of pupils achieve well during their time in the school. At the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, standards are well above the national average. In 2007, pupils achieved particularly well at Key Stage 2 and, compared to other similar schools, made some of the best progress in the country, particularly in English. Test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2008 indicate that standards remain high. This is largely because the teaching in some classes is particularly and consistently strong. Although the quality of teaching and learning is less consistent in other classes, it is good overall. Teachers have thorough and accurate subject knowledge, question pupils effectively, make good use of help from teaching assistants or parent volunteers, and manage classes well. Although assessments have developed greatly recently and staff know pupils well, teachers do not always adapt work sufficiently to meet all the various learning needs or styles of individual pupils. Introductions are sometimes too long, and tasks are occasionally too easy or too difficult for some pupils. Marking encourages pupils through praise but does not always show them how they can improve their learning further.

There have been marked changes in the school recently. Numbers on roll have fallen and there have been changes in staff. Although the current acting headteacher is experienced and astute, she is at the school only part time for one term. Formalised structures involving other leaders and managers - including the governors, deputy headteachers and subject managers - in monitoring and evaluating the school's work are fairly new. Although leaders and managers at various levels are developing their roles well, these are still at early stages and are not yet fully implemented or embedded. Until recently, self-evaluation has judged provision too optimistically. However, with external advice and a more collective approach, the school's view of itself is now more accurate and realistic. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. There have been improvements in provision for and use of information and communication technology, and standards in writing have risen. However, the quality of teaching and learning is still inconsistent and remains an area requiring further development. Formalised systems to safeguard

pupils' health and safety are in place but are not always updated as thoroughly or frequently as they could be. Leadership, management and the capacity for further improvement are currently satisfactory given the current temporary leadership position and the relatively undeveloped roles of other personnel.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the EYFS is effective because it is well led and managed. Staff have appreciated visits to other settings recently and are using what they have seen elsewhere to challenge and improve their practice. Relationships are good and children are happy. Procedures to safeguard their health and safety are in place. While accommodation and resources are used well, some aspects of these are rather jaded and not as inspiring as they could be. Children make good progress through effective teaching, a successful balance between adult-led and child-chosen activities, and frequent opportunities to work and play both indoors and out. Regular teaching about numbers, sounds and letters is appropriate and effective. Children respond well to the strong emphasis on personal and social skills. Boys were observed cooperating well using trailers and blocks to build a house. Girls shared their learning well in using torches to explore light and dark through play. Children have a good understanding of how to be safe and how to choose healthy food, correctly explaining what makes up a healthy lunch box and why it is important to wash hands before eating. Assessment of children's progress is frequent and thorough. A recent initiative in which parents report 'wow' moments at home now incorporates experiences from home into children's records and assessments. These are used well to ensure a good match between provision and children's individual learning needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that the style and level of work is appropriate for all pupils, and that all pupils know how they can improve their learning further.
- Ensure that all levels of leadership and management are fully involved in monitoring, evaluating and improving the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 3 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good are 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 |
| The extent to which 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

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| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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? | 3 |

Leadership and management

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| 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 eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 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 |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

10 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Western Downland CofE Aided Primary School, Fordingbridge, SP6 3NA

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. All the things you told us really helped us with our work.

We agree that you have a good school and can see why most of you enjoy being there. We were pleased to see how eagerly and readily you take responsibility and do various jobs around the school. Through being playground leaders or school council representatives, or helping in other ways, you contribute well to your school community. You behave well and are keen to learn. Close links with the church help you understand and learn more about Christianity and you welcome opportunities to learn more about other people and other faiths. Your links with the school in Uganda also help you understand that people across the globe lead different and interesting lives. You do well with your learning and achieve high results by the time you leave.

Although you do well in your learning, activities are sometimes a bit too easy or a bit too difficult for some of you. Your teachers usually mark your work and praise you for what you have done. However, marking does not always show you how you could make your work even better. As you know, you have a different headteacher this term and you will have a new one in January. Other leaders and managers have not always had enough information or opportunities to look at the school and to see what it does well and where it needs to improve. So there are just two things which we have asked teachers to do to make the school even better. These are to:

- use what they know about you all to make sure that the style and level of work is suitable for each of you and to make sure that you all know how to improve your learning further
- make sure that all the leaders and managers are fully involved in looking at, thinking about and improving the school.

Perhaps you can help by telling your teachers what really helps you in your learning, and continuing to share your good ideas about how to make the school better.

With best wishes to you and your families.

Yours faithfully

Jo Curd

Lead Inspector