

Charlton Horethorne Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123901
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314761
Inspection date	8 October 2008
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	53
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Hall
Headteacher	Judith Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Charlton Horethorne Sherborne DT9 4NL
Telephone number	01963 220345
Fax number	01963 220345

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Almost all pupils in this small rural school are white British and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The majority of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has three mixed year group classes. The few children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in a class with pupils who are in Years 1 and 2. A recent fall in the number of pupils in the school has resulted in some re-organisation and re-allocation of staff responsibilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The school's self-assessment rated it as good. Satisfactory provision, which leads to satisfactory achievement and average standards, indicates that this view was over-generous. However, the school has a number of strengths. Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school very much and attendance is above average. Behaviour is good and pupils relate very well to one another and to all adults in the school. These strengths create a positive atmosphere that is supportive of learning. However, pupils have limited knowledge of the rich diversity of multi-cultural Britain and the wider world.

Parents think highly of the school and express few concerns. Their main worry has been a recent reduction in the number of staff and changes in responsibilities. In the main, these changes have been well managed. However, the school acknowledges that recent changes in the EYFS management have yet to bed in fully and plans additional support to develop its effectiveness. A typical favourable parental comment is, 'the school has a fantastic family atmosphere.... the staff know my children very well.' Parents really appreciate the care for their children's well-being.

Children enter school with the skills expected for their age and leave with average standards. Pupils' progress is satisfactory throughout the school and across all subjects. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory but there are some inconsistencies. In particular, planning and the delivery of lessons to pupils in Years 1 and 2 sometimes fails to take sufficient account of their individual learning needs and, across the school the more able pupils are not always challenged fully. There are not enough opportunities for children in the EYFS to learn through independent activities or outdoors. Care for pupils is satisfactory. All adults look after pupils' personal welfare well. Much is done, and with success, to help pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles and to help them to stay safe. However, pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not receive the effective guidance they require to enable them to understand how they can improve their work.

The restructured leadership and management are satisfactory. Self-evaluation is accurate and used effectively to enable the school to plan for the future and set appropriate, challenging priorities. Accommodation is satisfactory but the school lacks a secure covered outside play area for the EYFS. Some recent developments in provision, such as action taken to improve pupils' performance in mathematics, show that the school has an adequate capacity to move forward.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children in the EYFS are well cared for and welfare arrangements are good. As a result, children's personal development is good. Constructive partnerships with parents assist children to settle into the school quickly and they behave well. They show caring, positive relationships with staff and one another and enjoy school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but lessons do not always provide the right balance of adult-led activities and those that children select for themselves from a range provided. As a result, there are missed opportunities to develop children as active, independent learners.

Achievement is satisfactory, given children's capabilities and starting points, which are variable but broadly similar to expectations for their age. At the end of the EYFS, children's standards

are broadly average, although these standards can vary from year to year, given the small numbers of children involved.

Leadership and management of the EYFS are satisfactory. The leader is newly appointed. She is developing an awareness of the strengths and areas for development. In particular, the school recognises the need to give a better balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and the importance of dealing with the restrictions posed by the lack of a dedicated outside play area. Plans are in place to address both of these concerns and action is beginning. Thorough records of children's progress are starting to be gathered through careful observations.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that children in the EYFS receive the right balance of adult-led and independent activities and more opportunities for outdoor learning and play.
- Closely match teaching to pupils' individual learning needs in Years 1 and 2 and provide them with clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Make sure that lessons always provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils of all ages.
- Broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of the rich diversity of multi-cultural Britain and the wider world.

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

Children enter the school with a range of skills but they are generally at the expected levels. Pupils leave Year 6 with broadly average standards. Their achievement, including that of pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties, is satisfactory. Children settle well into the EYFS and steadily develop the good learning habits that prove valuable in later school life.

Pupils' positive attitudes and satisfactory teaching contribute to satisfactory achievement and average standards at all stages. However, teachers do not always challenge the more able pupils sufficiently in lessons. One outcome is that the proportion of pupils at the school who reach the higher grades in national tests and assessments is below average. The school uses its assessment information thoughtfully to help identify where improvements may be required to address concerns. For example, an improved focus on mathematics teaching in the last year has raised standards in this subject, which had previously lagged behind.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' positive attitudes are reflected in their great enjoyment of school life and high standards of behaviour. Attendance is above average. Pupils feel safe at school and are very clear about what they should do if they are troubled. Good relationships are evident throughout the school. Pupils are confident that their views are listened to. The extent to which pupils feel that their views matter has been enhanced still further through the recent establishment of a school council.

Pupils make a good contribution to school and village events and take on increasing responsibilities. They particularly enjoy the wide range of after school clubs provided, especially

the 'study' club where they are supported in growing and cooking their own vegetables. Pupils have a comprehensive understanding about how to eat healthily and of the need to participate in regular physical activity. They feel well supported in the preparation they receive to move on to the next stage of their learning. Their basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology are average and their preparation for future life is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, pupils' awareness of Britain as a multicultural society and of wider national and international communities is less well developed than normally found at this age.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching promotes satisfactory progress. While there are a number of good features to teaching and learning, there are some inconsistencies. Pupils and activities are usually managed well. As a result, all lessons benefit from pupils' good behaviour and enthusiasm to learn. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and tackle tasks with gusto, working effectively on their own, in pairs and in groups.

Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good. Planning is usually thorough, with work carefully adapted to provide the correct degree of support and challenge. However, some lessons for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not planned to take enough account of their individual learning needs and, across the school, the more able pupils are not always challenged fully. When this is the case, the pace of learning slows. Activities are often stimulating, such as a mathematics game on the characteristics of shapes in where Year 3 and 4 which involves a lot of fun and active participation. Teaching assistants are capable and confident. They are effectively deployed and do much to support pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Careful planning ensures full coverage of the National Curriculum and offers a variety of stimulating topics, which pupils enjoy. The strong personal, social and health education programme makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Links with a local secondary school provide additional, varied activities for pupils, such as extra mathematics lessons for some pupils. Restrictions in accommodation limit the occasions when children in the EYFS can work and play outside. There are not enough opportunities for these young children to work on activities that they select for themselves from a range provided.

The school offers a wide and varied range of after school clubs and these are both appreciated and attended by large numbers of pupils. Visits, including a residential trip for older pupils, are, for them a highlight of the school year.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are well cared for in a secure, friendly and supportive environment. The school meets all formal safety requirements and risk assessments are satisfactorily undertaken. It works closely with outside agencies to ensure all pupils are cared for and supported. There are robust procedures for maintaining high attendance and following up any persistent absence.

Constructive relationships and a caring environment support pupils' personal development. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are confident in knowing how well they are doing in key subjects like English and mathematics and are able to talk about what they need to do to improve. Younger pupils are less well informed and so less confident in this respect. Work is carefully marked but insufficiently linked to pupils' targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

A recent fall in pupil numbers and changes to funding have entailed a reduction in staff and re-allocation of responsibilities. The complexities of this involved senior staff and governors in protracted negotiations. In the main, the process has gone smoothly and most staff are settling well into their new roles. The school deploys skilled teaching assistants to help it deliver the curriculum. The school acknowledges the need for further development of the management of the EYFS in particular, to ensure that the curriculum and teaching meet all children's needs fully all the time.

The school undertakes regular self-evaluation. Monitoring of teaching and learning and assessment information provide a clear picture of strengths and areas for development. Assessment information, in particular is used to identify trends in standards and achievement and this feeds into future plans, often leading to improved provision. This is evident, for example, in the success of the school's efforts to raise mathematics standards. However, the school recognises that there is still some way to go to eradicate inconsistencies in teaching that prevent pupils' achievement from being better than satisfactory.

Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. However, the school provides only limited opportunities to improve pupils' understanding of multi-cultural society in Britain and across the globe. Governors support the school strongly and are regular visitors. They are involved in setting priorities for the future but, although they act critically at times, they are not sufficiently pro-active. The school plans for the future are straightforward, relevant and manageable and now provide more challenging targets than in the past. The school has satisfactory capacity for improvement.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	3

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

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	3

The quality of provision

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

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 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**

9 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Charlton Horethorne Church of England Primary School, Sherborne, DT9 4NL

Thank you so much for your help during the recent inspection. It was good to meet you and hear your views. You told us how much you like school. Inspectors found that your behaviour and personal development are good and are real strengths of the school.

All in all, the school provides a satisfactory education. The standards of your work are similar to those of most pupils of your age and your achievement is satisfactory. The main reasons for this is that teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. You are well looked after, but not all of you receive enough information on how to improve your work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. You will have noticed fewer staff in the school this term. Planning for this has meant a few changes and most have gone well, but the organisation in the Reception class is not quite right yet and needs some improvement. Like most schools, some things could be better. We have asked the school to concentrate on these main areas:

- The planning in the Reception class must provide the correct mixture of activities for children and give them more outdoor experiences.
- Teaching needs to be at the right level for each of you in all classes, making sure that those of you who need harder work always have it.
- All of you should have clear guidance on how to improve your work.
- The curriculum should develop your understanding of the wider world and of the variety of people from different backgrounds living in this country.

Once again, thanks for all your help. It was great meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector