

William Barnes Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113676
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	325860
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Ken Bryan

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	165
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	peter Lagden
Headteacher	Polly Patrick
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bridge Street Sturminster Newton DT10 1BZ
Telephone number	01258 472257
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school where almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Pupil mobility is higher than average. The children enter the school aged four into the Reception class that forms part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

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. The pupils and adults have developed positive relationships within a climate of trust, care and guidance and as the result of the good personal care they receive. The children behave well and they feel safe and supported. The nurturing environment has enabled pupils to make good progress to reach average standards by the time they leave school. This is a rapidly improving picture following an interim period of decline in Key Stage 1 between this and the last inspection.

On entry to the school, most pupils have skills that are well below national expectations for their age. The children make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as a result of the good provision they receive. Even so, by the end of the Reception class, some children enter Key Stage 1 with below average skill levels. Following two years of declining standards in Key Stage 1, the school's assessment data reveal that this trend has been reversed. Most pupils are now on track to achieve just slightly below average standards at the end of Year 2. This good progress is due to the better provision and the introduction of assessment for learning which carefully tracks progress over time. In addition, the systems for monitoring teaching and the effectiveness of the curriculum are now robust. By the end of Year 6, most children achieve broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science, and many exceed this, especially in reading. This is less evident in writing and the school recognises the need for teachers to have higher expectations of those pupils who are capable of reaching the higher Level 5. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress as the result of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching they receive. Nevertheless, this high quality teaching is inconsistent across the whole school and the school's leadership has rightly identified this as a priority for improvement.

The pupils achieve well and enjoy learning because of the well-planned curriculum. They receive good academic guidance from the teachers and most children can articulate how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. One pupil stated that 'the teachers encourage us to do our best and they make lessons interesting.' Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well served through the effective use of additional support and intervention services. They make similar progress to others pupils.

Good leadership and management underpin the good effectiveness of this school. The leadership provided by the headteacher, her senior team and the governors provides a clear direction. The school's self-evaluation has effectively identified the key priorities and, because the impact from these developments is identifiable in pupils' attainment, there is a good capacity to improve further and ensure that the improvements already evident in Key Stage 1 are sustained over time.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children are well cared for and supported in the EYFS. They are keen to come to school, are happy and most have developed positive relationships with adults and with one another. Most children enter the school with standards well below expectations for their age, particularly in the areas of personal, social and emotional development (PSED) and communication, language and literacy (CLLD). As the result of effective teaching and the good levels of care they receive, most children make good progress. However, despite this good provision, some children still

enter Key Stage 1 below nationally expected levels. Leadership of the EYFS is good. Ongoing assessment of achievement is rigorous and the tracking of speaking and listening is particularly effective. There is clear evidence of emerging reading skills. There is a strong commitment to learning through play and the children are beginning to demonstrate independence. Areas designed to enable children to be creative and physically active are carefully resourced and the children make full use of the role-play area. In addition, the numeracy table includes stimulating games and counting boards. Opportunities for children to write are less evident and many boys avoided the writing area. During the inspection, few opportunities were provided for the children to use the small outdoor area owing to staff absence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Improve the consistency of teaching so that pupils make continuous progress through each year.
- Ensure that recent improvements in pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 are sustained.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress from the start of Reception to the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence confirms that, through the very robust systems for the gathering and tracking of pupil data, the school has effectively reversed the decline in standards of the previous two years in Key Stage 1. While standards are below average by Year 2, significant numbers of pupils are on track to achieve the challenging targets set in reading and mathematics, although their progress in writing is relatively slower. Good progress continues in Key Stage 2 so that standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with national averages. As in Year 2, the numbers of higher attaining pupils exceed the national average in reading, but the school has correctly identified that too few children achieve the same level in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' attitudes towards the school are positive, and particularly in Key Stage 2. In the EYFS, despite pupils entering the school with such low starting points in PSED, they make good progress. The pupils enjoy school and they comment that they feel confident, safe and fully supported by the staff. They have developed good relationships with all staff, and demonstrate caring attitudes to one another. The pupils behave very well in class and routines and procedures are consistently followed. Their attendance is broadly in line with national averages. Through the work of the school councillors, peer mediators and monitors, the pupils demonstrate a positive contribution to school life, which helps the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The pupils' caring nature is exemplified through their fund-raising efforts, support for the local community and care for agencies abroad, such as the Born Free Foundation. The pupils are adept at raising funds. The children know how to stay fit through healthy eating and by taking exercise. This is given a high priority by the school, which is working towards the Healthy Schools Award. It has received the Activemark Award. This translates into the everyday life of the school in the form of the provision of fruit across the school, good provision for physical education, the many clubs and activities and the availability of water throughout the day. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The pupils demonstrate a good

understanding of right and wrong. Spiritual and multicultural awareness are areas for further development and the school recognises this through its emerging community cohesion strategy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good, with some outstanding elements, especially in Key Stage 2. Common strengths include the use of assessments and pupil data tracking, the setting of pupil targets, very good relationships in each classroom, effective use of teaching assistants, and the rigorous and collaborative planning. Consequently, there have been significant improvements in teaching and learning, particularly in Key Stage 1. Parents commented about the good, jargon-free communication regarding academic progress. Robust systems track pupils' progress carefully and good interventions support pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils' involvement in target setting is good and the use of constructive comments on their work is effective in most classes. As a result, most teachers know how to move learning on at a good pace. The leadership has rightly recognised the inconsistencies in some classes at Key Stage 1. It is addressing these through raising teachers' expectations and providing work that is more challenging for the higher attainers, especially in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad, balanced, well planned and engages pupils well. The school provides a good range of enrichment activities that significantly enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment. These include day and residential educational visits, swimming in its own pool, after-school clubs and the use of visitors. In addition, the school makes full use of its unique location above the River Stour to enhance the curriculum and to help pupils appreciate the beauty of the countryside. The introduction of social and emotional aspects of learning known as 'SEAL' has positively contributed to the overall school climate of care, good behaviour and positive attitudes. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT), while satisfactory, does not fully meet the needs of all learners because it is not used regularly enough within all curriculum areas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a safe and nurturing environment where pupils thrive. The provision of good physical and pastoral care results in the children feeling well supported. The parents stated that the pupils are 'encouraged to think diversely and to treat each other with respect' and that 'everyone is friendly and willing to help'. Safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and policies and procedures are routinely followed. The pupils receive good academic guidance through the setting of challenging targets and through the effective use of comments on pupils' work, although this is not always consistent. Parents are kept well informed about the progress of their children, but the school sees this as an area for further development as too few regularly get involved in discussion about their children. The school's systems for gathering and analysing assessment data are robust and effectively managed by the school's leadership team. Consequently, pupils' achievements are carefully tracked and interventions are both effective and timely. The pupils can clearly articulate what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is provided with a clear direction by the headteacher, senior leaders and the governors, who clearly understand its strengths and weaknesses. The school is well led and managed on a day-to-day basis. The good use of the school's middle leaders significantly impacts upon the raising of standards and accelerating pupils' progress. They work well as a team and each subject leader contributes effectively to the development of the school improvement plan. The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate despite certain judgements being too cautious. This is because of the leadership's high expectations about raising standards to the highest level. School governance is good, with governors being well informed and effective in the monitoring of and support for the leadership and management of the curriculum. It has worked hard to improve the accommodation but there are still some areas that require improvement. The school governors have developed good links with outside agencies to develop the school grounds and to support the children. The school contributes to community cohesion through its good links with the local community. The school recognises that this needs extending and formalising through its strategy and by forging stronger links with national and international communities.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

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	3
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?	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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

21 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of William Barnes Primary School, Sturminster Newton DT10 1BZ

I am writing to tell you how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome and for helping us during the inspection. You are obviously very proud of your school and you are happy and very well supported by all of your teachers and other adults. We liked the way you behaved around the school and the way that you help one another. Here are some of the highlights we found.

What we particularly liked about your school:

- The teachers work hard to provide interesting lessons and as a result you make good progress as you move through the school. Many of you are good readers.
- Your behaviour and attitudes in class are very good, which helps you to learn.
- You are very caring to one another and you are well supported by the adults.
- You clearly enjoy the wide range of clubs, school visits and other activities provided by the school.
- You clearly know how to eat healthily and lead healthy lifestyles.

The school runs very smoothly. The headteacher, the staff and the governors are a very good team. They have a clear idea about how well the school is doing and what needs to be improved. We have asked them to work on three things to make the school better.

- Help you to be better writers.
- Make sure that the very good teaching we saw in many classes happens all over the school.
- Make sure that improvements in how well pupils do in Key Stage 1 are kept going.

You can help make these things happen by working hard and continuing to care.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bryan Lead Inspector