

Corfe Castle Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113760
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	325877
Inspection date	4 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Anna Sketchley

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	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	69
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	James Sabben-Clare
Headteacher	Nigel Beckett
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	East Street Corfe Castle Wareham BH20 5EE
Telephone number	01929 480428
Fax number	01929 480428

Age group	4–9
Inspection date	4 February 2009
Inspection number	325877

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Corfe Castle is a small village school drawing children from the local rural area as well as from the village itself. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There have been significant staff changes since the new headteacher took up his post in September 2007. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award (2008) and the Gold Arts Mark (2007). Children start school in Reception as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. A newly built privately run pre-school setting is situated on site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Corfe Castle is a good school. Since the last inspection, there has been rapid improvement and significant staff changes. The headteacher is dynamic and enthusiastic and has a clear vision of excellence for the school, built upon a 'can do' culture. He has forged a new and dedicated staff team, and along with governors and parents everyone is wholly focused upon school improvement and determined to ensure that pupils achieve the highest possible standards of which they are capable. At the heart of this is a detailed and rigorous tracking system. This effectively informs teachers on a regular basis of how well pupils are progressing towards their challenging targets. The work of the school is consistently monitored and where this raises actions, plans for improvement are implemented speedily and successfully. This is evident in the constant pursuance of good teaching and the rapidly rising standards, especially in reading. The school demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

Children join the school with skills expected for their age although the levels of skills required for linking sounds with letters and calculation are below those expected. Because of good Early Years Foundation Stage provision, children make good progress. By the time they leave Reception, they reach the goals expected nationally, and in some cases exceed them. This good progress is built on in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average, and in the case of writing, significantly above. By the end of Year 4, standards are maintained and are usually above the range expected for this age group nationally. However, pupils' progress is not as rapid in Years 3 and 4 because of recent disruption to staffing and a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching. This has been recognised by the school and appropriate action has already been taken. Across the school there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their independent learning skills in all subjects but they are beginning to respond well to the newly established, more creative curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported and make the same good progress as all other pupils.

Pupils' good personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development plays an important part in supporting their good achievement. Pupils enjoy school, know how to keep healthy and safe, take good care of one another and behave well. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community. Excellent relationships abound between both adults and pupils. Parents offer first-rate support on a daily basis, for example helping pupils with their reading before school begins. All of this creates a very positive climate for learning and is underpinned by the warm, Christian ethos of the school, and the outstanding care, guidance and support pupils receive. Many parents feel very strongly about the recent good progress the school is making and wrote comments such as, 'We are very pleased and encouraged with the way the school has improved and progressed over the last year' and 'an excellent learning environment that is going from strength to strength'.

The school's partnerships with others and links with the local community are excellent, especially those with the pre-school on site, and good links have been established globally. There are plans to involve pupils in virtual links with other communities nationally in order to address differences in culture that they would otherwise not experience. However, these initiatives are unproven and community cohesion is currently satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Due to the excellent partnership that has developed between the pre-school and Reception, young children get off to a flying start. Good induction procedures mean that children are well known to adults before they start school. Relationships are warm with a calm, well organised atmosphere in the classroom in which young children rightly feel secure and very well cared for. As a result, children settle in quickly, helped by sensible routines that build their confidence and independence. They learn quickly and make good progress because teaching and the curriculum are imaginative and exceptionally well planned. Children love to sing the alphabet song and join in the actions with alacrity. A fine example of good learning was when their attention was completely caught when the teacher spoke to the zoo keeper on the telephone whilst reading a book with them about the animals at the zoo. This gave rise to excellent speaking and listening opportunities. Very good daily assessment procedures lead to children's needs being well met. The new and exciting outside area allows children to develop well their curiosity for the world around them and their physical and creative skills. However, its use is limited because there is currently no covered area for when the weather is inclement and this restricts learning opportunities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good across the school so that all pupils, especially those in Years 3 and 4, make the best possible progress and reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- Ensure that the newly established creative curriculum provides sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop and use their independent learning skills in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Due to a number of successful strategies, pupils make good progress. Standards are rapidly rising, and are above expectations at the end of Year 4. Throughout the school, daily reading practice is supported by parents. A good selection of fiction and non-fiction books to interest boys makes a significant difference, especially for boys in Year 3 who are performing better than last year. A gifted and talented scheme for mathematics and more problem-solving activities helps to raise standards in numeracy across the school. Standards in writing are especially good, and in the current Year 2 significantly above average. Despite inconsistencies in teaching, Year 4 pupils now work above the expected range for their age in English and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and make an outstanding contribution to the school community through their council. They use and develop their skills for the future well when representing their school at the local area school council meetings. The school council have set up their own children's newspaper. The many projects all pupils are involved in throughout the local, wider and global communities show their strong concern for others, from eco projects to fund raising for national charity events. All pupils know how to keep safe as they move carefully around the building and play well together outside. Playground buddies enjoy looking after younger children in the playground. Pupils realise the importance of being healthy by eating fruit snacks

and enthusiastically joining in the daily 'Wake and Shake' and other sports. They know who to go to if there is a problem and are very confident about the help they will receive. Although pupils take a pride in their school, there are not enough opportunities for all of them to develop independent learning skills and to take on responsibilities around the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Excellent relationships throughout the school create a positive climate for learning for all pupils so that they are keen to participate in lessons, listen to the teacher, concentrate and behave well. Teachers plan very thoroughly from accurate daily assessments that enable them to know the needs of each individual pupil. Tasks are appropriately challenging and the size of the school enables teachers to work very closely as a team, meeting children's needs across classes when this is appropriate. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good. On most occasions, teachers build on pupils' previous learning and teach enthusiastically. They ensure that tasks are purposeful and interesting and require pupils to co-operate with one another. Pupils are very clear about what they are to learn in lessons and are fully engaged, encouraged by the good use of interactive whiteboards. Marking is excellent and helps them to know how to improve. Pupils are fully involved in assessing their work to gauge how well they have learned at the end of the lesson. Teaching assistants are skilled and highly valued by teachers and pupils. They work as part of an efficient team with the teachers, providing very good support for less-able pupils. Consistently good teaching has only recently been established across the school and has not had full effect most notably in Years 3 and 4.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum gives appropriate priority to developing pupils' key skills in literacy and numeracy. The school has recently designed a new four-year innovative rolling programme that incorporates interesting and practical activities through which pupils are beginning to use their independent learning skills. However, this is at an early stage and has not had a substantial impact on pupils' development. Good links are being established across subject areas. Although there are positive signs, it is too early to judge the success of this programme. Information and communication technology (ICT) is exceptionally well resourced and used throughout the curriculum and pupils demonstrate skills that are above those expected for their age. This is a strength of the school. The recent focus on reading has led to significant improvement in this area. The curriculum is greatly enriched by a number of clubs in which a good number of pupils participate enthusiastically. There are a large number of visits and visitors to the school and educational trips, including a much enjoyed Year 4 residential experience that makes a considerable contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are safe, secure and happy because the school's procedures for safeguarding and health and safety are excellent. The quality of pastoral care is outstanding and all adults are wholly committed to the welfare of every child. A very high level of trust and communication exists between staff, parents and pupils. All pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or

disabilities, are very well supported. The school works very effectively with outside agencies and particularly well with parents. One parent commented, 'We have been particularly impressed by the school's awareness of our daughter's individual needs, and the way they have tailored her learning to optimise outcomes.' All pupils have a good awareness of their individual targets and understand how to improve their work. Academic guidance and support is a strength of the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The inspirational leadership and well organised management of the headteacher and the hard-working staff and governors mean that the school has made very good progress since the last inspection. An innovative and exciting approach to leadership includes a parent and the pre-school leader in the senior leadership team for the school, thereby embracing the community in future development. This is a relatively new initiative and largely untried. Accurate and ongoing self-evaluation, rigorous monitoring procedures and a development plan with the correct priorities supported by clear action plans are all very good tools that are helping the school to measure its success and improve even further. The school has successfully addressed boys' underachievement ensuring that equality of opportunity is good. Governors make a significant contribution to the work of the school, as they challenge it to do its best and offer continuous support on a regular basis. Parental involvement and support for the school is outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 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?	1
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	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

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	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 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?	1

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

5 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Corfe Castle Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School, Corfe Castle, BH20 5EE

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and talking with you. You are involved in many exciting activities and your school provides you with a good education.

These are some of the good things we found.

- You work hard at school and make good progress.
- You enjoy school and appreciate all the extra activities the school provides for you.
- You know how to keep healthy and safe.
- You care for one another, get on very well together and your behaviour is good. Well done!
- You and your parents told us how well the school takes care of you and we could see for ourselves that the way they look after you is excellent.
- Your headteacher, teachers and all other adults lead your school well. They make sure that the teaching and curriculum are good.

We have suggested two things to make your learning even better.

- We have asked your teachers to make sure that you are all taught to the same high standard so that you make the best possible progress and reach the high standards of which you are capable.
- We have asked your teachers to make sure that your new curriculum provides lots of opportunities for you to use your independent learning skills across all subjects.

Keep working hard!

Yours faithfully

Anna Sketchley

Lead inspector