

# St Gregory's Church of England Primary School, Marnhull

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113805
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	325889
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Laurie Lewin

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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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	148
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nick Chapman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Hicks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 July 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	New Street Marnhull Sturminster Newton DT10 1PZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01258 820206

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 June 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	325889

**Fax number**

01258 821018

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 June 2009
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## Introduction

- The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.
- The progress of the boys in writing.
- The progress made by higher-attaining and middle-attaining pupils.
- The quality of the school's curriculum.

The inspectors gathered evidence from discussions with staff and pupils, lesson observations, samples of pupils' work and areas of the school's documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a small village school. Approximately half of the pupils come from the village, and the other half from outside the immediate catchment zone. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. These pupils have a variety of learning needs and a few have moderate or specific learning needs. Nearly all pupils are White British. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in a Reception class.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It provides especially strong care, support and guidance for all pupils so that they become highly mature and confident individuals by the time they leave. Parents are very appreciative of the work of the staff and are particularly pleased that their children are keen and happy to come to school. Excellent leadership and management have enabled all areas of provision to be strengthened since the last inspection.

Children start school with skills and understanding that are broadly at the levels expected for their age, and get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress as they move up through the school so that by the end of Year 6 standards are above average, and results in recent years have often been significantly above average. Pupils of all ability groups do well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Information from the school's very clear systems to track pupils' progress along with the quality of work seen in pupils' books and in lessons confirms this. In some cases very good progress is made, reflecting some outstanding teaching practice.

Staff have excellent relationships with pupils so that all individuals feel supported and encouraged. Teachers make good use of all assessment information to plan their lessons so that activities generally provide the right level of challenge to ensure that pupils of all ability groups do well. Pupils spoken to appreciate the way in which their teachers work hard to make lessons interesting. The school has a good curriculum that is enriched by a wide range of extra activities, visits and visitors coming into the school. Pupils especially enjoy the sports activities and making use of the school's on-site swimming pool. However, the school has rightly identified that some areas of the curriculum have been too heavily reliant on using national guidelines. Planning in some areas is therefore not always closely enough tailored to the needs and interests of the pupils, and this has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Work is already underway to change this in order to make teaching and pupils' achievement consistently outstanding. For example staff have recently increased the emphasis on providing pupils with opportunities to extend their writing skills, not just in literacy lessons, but also in other subjects. Through this approach and a range of other initiatives the school has done much to improve pupils' writing in recent times. Particular success has been achieved in inspiring the boys to become more motivated in this area of their work.

The excellent care, guidance and support provided for pupils results in their outstanding personal development. Staff know all of the pupils really well and cater sensitively for their needs. A supportive family atmosphere is promoted in which all individuals feel secure. The school is vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being, and all necessary safeguarding procedures are fully in place. Pupils feel safe and have no qualms about approaching an adult if they have a concern. The school invests much energy in initiatives such as work on 'rights respecting', the involvement of the school council in aiding school improvement, and the training for older pupils to work as peer mediators at break times to sort out any difficulties in the playground. These initiatives, along with charity fund raising and active involvement in local village events, help ensure pupils have an excellent understanding about how they can contribute to improving things in the immediate and wider community. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness is excellent and is continually boosted through lessons and extra activities. Whilst their overall cultural awareness is good, pupils' awareness of how people from other ethnic backgrounds in British society live is not as well developed as aspects of local and wider culture. The school has already begun to address this, by exploring and making links with people from other cultures

and inviting guests into the school from other ethnic backgrounds, but realises that there remains scope for strengthening this area. Pupils have an excellent understanding about how to stay fit and healthy. This is brought about by their heavy involvement in sports activities, and the emphasis on health within the curriculum and activities such as growing fruit and vegetables in the school garden. The good range of basic skills pupils acquire in their day-to-day work mean they are well prepared to move on successfully in the future. Pupils' attendance is good.

Throughout the school pupils show exemplary behaviour and are friendly and respectful to one another and to adults. They express themselves confidently and develop a responsible and caring approach.

The school's leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy headteacher, does an excellent job. She inspires her staff team to work very well together to maintain good quality provision and outcomes. The rigorous evaluation by the school of its own performance is excellent. Staff and governors participate fully in the evaluation process and have a clear understanding of what the school is doing well and where it could improve further. This translates into very clear action plans to sustain the school's continuing development. Governors give high-quality support for the staff and have a strong involvement in all strategic planning. The school is at the hub of village life and reaps many benefits for promoting pupils' learning through its excellent links with the parents and local organisations. For example, working closely with the church, pupils have had much involvement in promoting 'Fair Trade' food products. The strong links established locally and further afield with external partner organisations reflect the school's good efforts towards promoting community cohesion. As part of their strategy, they have rightly identified the provision for promoting pupils' multicultural awareness as an area they want to improve.

Very effective teamwork at all levels and the wide range of improvements the headteacher has driven forwards since being in post show that the school has outstanding capacity to move from strength to strength in the future.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is well organised with plentiful resources, both indoors and outdoors, to ensure that children have a wide range of interesting activities. There is a good balance maintained between the kind of activities that enable children to explore and investigate independently and activities where they are guided and supported closely by an adult. Good planning and good teaching ensure that the children progress and achieve well. Teaching assistants do a good job of supporting classroom activities. Good systems are in place to track children's progress and good use is made of this information to inform planning so that tasks match children's needs precisely. Additionally the children's own ideas are skilfully fed into future planning of activities. Children usually progress well in lessons, although occasionally the pace of work drops when they are asked to sit and listen for too long. The way children are cared for, guided and supported is excellent, and results in their outstanding personal development. Their behaviour is excellent. They feel safe and develop confidently in a secure environment. They work enthusiastically, get on very well with each other and develop a strong sense of enjoyment in learning. The provision is boosted by the excellent partnership established with parents. This enables parents to become fully involved in their children's learning. Leadership and management are good, and staff have a clear understanding of the areas that are working well and those that need further development. For example, they have

rightly identified the need to provide a covered area outdoors to enable the children to maintain a programme of practical and physical activities in inclement weather.

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

- Accelerate pupils' learning by ensuring that the pace of teaching is consistently high and the curriculum matches the needs and interests of all pupils as precisely as possible.
- Fully promote pupils' understanding about how people from other ethnic backgrounds live within British society.

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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**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
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	1

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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?	1
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**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
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	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

18 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of St Gregory's Church of England Primary School, Sturminster Newton D10 1PZ

- It was really good coming to visit you. Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us during the school's inspection. We have judged the school to be outstanding. Here are some of the most important bits of the report that I thought you might like to know about.
- All of you progress well with your work and work hard in your lessons.
- Your personal development is excellent and you are polite and friendly and show a lot of confidence and maturity by the time you reach Year 6.
- You have a good curriculum and we noticed that you particularly enjoy and benefit from all of the extra sports activities and school trips.
- You feel that your teachers and teaching assistants ensure you are well taught and we agree with you.
- The school is excellent at looking after you and we noticed that you have really good relationships with all staff so that you are confident to ask for help when you need it.
- Your headteacher does an excellent job of making sure that everybody works very well together to keep the school improving.

To improve further, we have asked staff to:

- carry on the good work they have started to widen and develop the curriculum for all subjects so that it gives you the best possible, challenging and interesting activities
- help you to get a full understanding about how people from other ethnic backgrounds live in Britain.

We are sure you will all want to keep working very hard in the areas mentioned here to keep your school improving. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours faithfully Laurie Lewin

Lead inspector