

Spetisbury CofE VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113826
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	325897
Inspection date	10 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Anthony Shield

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)	131
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	Maureen Davey
Headteacher	Jane Minett
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Street Spetisbury Blandford Forum DT11 9DF

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	10 June 2009
Inspection number	325897

Telephone number

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Age group 4–11

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors

Description of the school

Spetisbury Church of England Primary School serves both Spetisbury and neighbouring villages. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Scamps Pre school, a privately run nursery, operates from a room in the school, and most of its children go on to attend the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception class) at the age of four years.

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 and improving school. Above all, pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to do well. They relish getting involved in everything the school offers and do so with energy and pride. These positive attitudes are a strong feature in their success. The school has made tremendous strides in the last two years. Issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been tackled rigorously and the school is set fair to continue its improvement.

Pupils are valued as unique individuals and good relationships throughout the school community create a culture of care and respect. Pupils are friendly and polite, and behaviour around the school is thoughtful and courteous. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and older pupils contribute to the running of the school in a number of different ways. Their good personal development is encouraged by the school's good care, guidance and support. The school's watchwords of 'creativity, respect, independence and challenge' provide an effective framework for its work, and are at the heart of its philosophy. Pupils are known well to all staff, relationships are secure and pupils feel safe and confident. While pupils' personal care is given a high priority, their academic support is also thorough and ensures that all pupils make good progress.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class, and good progress continues through the school. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and pupils' achievements are good. However, writing is a relatively weaker area and opportunities for developing this skill across different subjects are insufficiently developed. Teaching is good, and characterised by energy and good pace. Classrooms are stimulating environments, where pupils enjoy lessons. They speak excitedly about the range of trips and enrichment activities which add so much to the good curriculum. Some teaching is over-directed and pupils are not given opportunities to work things out for themselves. At times, not enough demands are placed on the more able pupils.

The headteacher has done very well in steering the school through a period of change. Her vision is clear and she has created a new management team committed to further improvement and poised to move forward even more strongly. This sense of teamwork is an important feature of the good leadership and management. Accurate self-evaluation, based on a detailed analysis of performance data, has provided the springboard for a carefully considered plan for improvement. Parents are extremely supportive, valuing the small school ethos and community spirit of the school. 'My child has been really happy and is thriving at school – all the teachers are so approachable and I have every confidence in them' was typical of many comments made by parents to inspectors. Given what has already been achieved, the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision in the Reception class enables children to get a good start. Children join the school with skills broadly in line with typically expected levels, although they vary from year to year and some children are above average in terms of their skills on entry. Communication and language skills tend to be lower than other aspects on entry. Children quickly get absorbed in their work and talk enthusiastically about it. They make good progress and are encouraged and supported well to make choices and work alongside others. They are happy and confident learners. Planning is thorough and careful organisation ensures that activities are easily accessible

and manageable. These activities are well designed to develop the full range of skills. Children's progress is assessed carefully and tasks adapted to individual needs. Children's welfare is paramount and they are encouraged to understand the importance of cleanliness and healthy food. The outside area is well used, although there are sensible plans to develop it further. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. Children are well prepared for entry to Year 1, although their language and literacy development remains weaker than other aspects of their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' skills and confidence in writing and provide more opportunities for structured writing across all subjects.
- Offer higher levels of challenge to the more able pupils and ensure that they have opportunities to solve problems independently of the teacher.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, and performance has been significantly above average for several years. Pupils in the current Year 2 are in line to achieve the school's best results ever. Above average standards continue through Years 3 to 6. Previously uneven progress in Years 3 and 4 has been eliminated and pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are now making consistently good progress. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to meet some challenging targets, although falling short in the number of more able pupils reaching the higher Level 5. Writing remains a relatively weaker area, and although the school has taken some effective steps to tackle this, more needs to be done before all pupils fulfil their potential, particularly when applying skills learnt in literacy lessons across other subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are growing up into charming and friendly young people. Encouraged by the school's commitment to value individual children and the small school ethos in which friendly relationships permeate, pupils' personal development is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and pupils are thoughtful during assemblies. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and quickly learn to feel part of a community. The many visits and visitors to the school give them a broader understanding of life beyond their immediate horizons, although their appreciation of a culturally diverse Britain is underdeveloped. In lessons, they work hard and are keen to please and to talk about their work. Behaviour is good both in and out of classrooms. Pupils report that bullying is rare and is dealt with swiftly. There have been no exclusions. The high level of enthusiasm for school is evident in the way in which they join in everything and talk about their participation in school trips and activities. Their understanding of healthy lifestyles is good and they are very aware of the importance of fitness and regular exercise. They enjoy school dinners and many participate in sporting activities, including the all-conquering football team. They are well prepared for their future beyond school and the pupils' good personal and social skills are a key feature of the school's happy atmosphere.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is confident and well planned, and learning is made both exciting and interesting. As a result, pupils make good progress and, importantly, really enjoy their learning. They 'like doing hard stuff' in mathematics, as one pupil remarked, but feel that they are pushed to do their best in all subjects. Key to the improving the quality of teaching, has been the increasingly good use of performance data to provide work which is tailored to individual needs and set challenging targets. Teachers use resources well, including information and communication technology (ICT) to support and inspire learning. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Effective use of paired and group work encourages pupils to discuss and share ideas. This they do with a mature ability to listen and respond to another point of view. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is effective, and teaching assistants provide well-targeted help. While much teaching is challenging, teachers offer pupils too few opportunities to seek solutions for themselves. Outcomes for the more able pupils are limited by modelling answers too carefully and failing to get pupils to think for themselves. Feedback, both through marking and discussion, is good, but pupils are not always encouraged to think how they might improve their own work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A strong emphasis on providing basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT is matched by a determination to provide a more creative curriculum during the afternoons. The school is rightly considering how it can integrate subjects more closely to provide more relevance and coherence across the curriculum through well chosen topics. Writing is, for example, being planned across other subjects, but this remains under-developed. There is a very good range of visits, visitors and well supported extra-curricular activities, which offer stimulus and excitement to the everyday curriculum. Pupils particularly enjoy this aspect of the school's provision. All pupils learn French and opportunities for all pupils in Years 3 and 4 to learn the cello or double bass are valued. Well planned support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and additional opportunities for gifted and talented pupils help to provide for the range of abilities and aptitudes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' care and well-being are central to the school's purpose. Staff know pupils and their families well and work effectively together to support all pupils. Health and safety procedures are in place and safeguarding and child protection procedures fully meet requirements. Procedures for supporting pupils' academic progress have improved markedly since the last inspection, when they were identified as a key weakness. Performance data are now collected and analysed carefully and individual pupils' progress carefully monitored. These provide a good benchmark for measuring progress and identifying potential underachievement. Intervention programmes for those pupils are well planned and enable pupils to catch up lost ground.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads with a sure touch. She has secured the support of all stakeholders in moving the school forward, and is well supported by her newly appointed assistant headteacher and all staff. Much has already been achieved, particularly in ensuring greater consistency and in challenging underperformance. Staff have welcomed the changes generated by this fresh approach and energy, although the capacity of some staff to lead and monitor within their areas of responsibility is underdeveloped. Better use of assessment to track pupils' progress, alongside regular monitoring, provide a reliable basis for self-evaluation and has been central to the school's improvement. As a result, self-evaluation is honest even if the school is sometimes too modest in its judgements. Governors have grown in confidence as they have become better informed and are making an increasingly effective contribution both to strategic school planning and monitoring. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion.

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	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	1
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

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?	2
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**

11 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Spetisbury C of E Primary School, Spetisbury, Dorset DT11 9DF

- We very much enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming, and for helping us during the inspection. We agree with a lot of what you told us and are not surprised that you enjoy coming to school so much. Your school is providing you with a good education and it is getting better all the time. Some of the good things about it are:
- You especially enjoy coming to school and try hard to do your best in lessons.
- You behave very well, and are thoughtful and kind to one another.
- Everyone at school gets on well together.
- You make good progress in most subjects, but for some of you, progress in writing lags behind.
- Teachers make learning fun and your classrooms are lively and interesting places to be.
- The school takes considerable care of you, and makes sure you feel safe and well looked after.
- The headteacher and all the teachers are working successfully to make your school even better.

We have asked the teachers to do the following in order to make things even better:

- Make sure that you make better progress in writing, and give you more opportunities to write in a range of different subjects.
- Ensure that those of you capable of the highest standards are given work to really make you think, and more opportunities to sort things out on your own.

You can certainly help the teachers with these things. Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and good luck with your work in the future!

Yours sincerely

Tony Shield

Lead Inspector