

Horningsham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126199
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	328465
Inspection date	11 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Deborah Zachary

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	5–11
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	Jason O' Connell
Headteacher	Carole Andrews
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Street Horningsham Warminster BA12 7LW
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Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average. It has three classes, with more than one year group in every class. For example, pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are in a class with pupils from Year 1. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but they are not evenly distributed so the level can be high in some year groups. The school draws its pupils from the village and surrounding area. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds.

The school shares its site with First Steps Nursery at School House, which is not managed by the school governors and is subject to a separate inspection.

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. Parents are extremely positive about the way it educates and looks after their children. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection, and the school is set to continue to improve rapidly because the headteacher has established very effective monitoring systems and a committed team of staff who share her vision. Good teaching and strong support and guidance ensure that pupils achieve well in academic subjects, and their personal development is outstanding.

Many of the parents' questionnaires returned greatly praised the school's ethos, one describing it as an 'exceptionally friendly school'. The pupils do have a great care and concern for each other, and behaviour is excellent. They have an extremely strong voice in the way the school is developing. They have written their own 'SEF' – a self-evaluation form which assesses how well the school performs – and a 'children's development plan' to show the direction they think it should take. These include success indicators, what resources will be needed, and how the pupils intend to check that actions take place as planned. Unsurprisingly, this process reflects the very good planning of the adult leaders of the school. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well, and have demonstrated in the significant improvements made to teaching and to pupils' writing skills that the school has a good capacity to improve even more.

The very small size of the school means that different year groups come in with very different skills and experiences. However, pupils of all abilities make good progress from their varied starting points. Progress is best in Key Stage 2, and the current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach high standards by the time they leave. Teaching for this age group is particularly good, and pupils much enjoy their lessons. The school makes sure that pupils of all abilities benefit from a very interesting curriculum too. They are very well cared for by all adults. One parent summed it up by writing, 'The care, commitment and imagination the staff show in engaging the children to learn are amazing.'

Another of the school's particular strengths is the way pupils are helped to understand what they are aiming to achieve in a lesson or over a few weeks. This especially applies in Key Stage 2, although younger pupils also have personal targets and they too understand them well. Longer-term targets are also set for pupils so that the school's managers can track whether or not pupils are doing as well as they should. The targets for Key Stage 2 pupils are very challenging, but those for pupils in Key Stage 1 do not always take sufficient account of how well the pupils did when they were in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, pupils in Key Stage 1 tend to exceed the targets fairly easily.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are nurtured and cared for and relationships with parents are good. Although they are taught alongside Year 1 pupils, they get plenty of opportunities to learn at their own level. Teaching is good, and the children are making good progress. Activities are well chosen within a context that interests the children. For example, during the inspection, the theme of 'Humpty Dumpty' led to some challenging work outside with an adult, working out how to build a wall that was secure. There is a good balance of activities led by adults and independent learning indoors, for example role play in

the 'castle'. The outside area is secure but thin and narrow, with no shelter, and accessed by steps. At the moment it is not particularly inviting and children cannot use it freely as an extension of the classroom. This puts a restriction on the curriculum, although teachers work hard to make sure all areas of learning are covered. The school is well aware of areas that it wants to improve in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including outdoor learning. It is rightly looking to extend links with a wider range of nurseries. It has also identified that progress could be accelerated in personal, social and emotional development. Whilst standards are high in this area of learning at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, personal, social and emotional skills are often already high when children enter the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen the longer-term target-setting process for pupils in Key Stage 1, so that full account is taken of the attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the outside area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Last year's Year 6 group included a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Because of this, standards were broadly average at the end of the year, but pupils still achieved well. Progress in writing was identified by the school as slower than in other areas. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach high standards, and they have made very good progress in writing, in response to improvements the school has made. Progress is good throughout the school, and a little faster in Key Stage 2 than elsewhere. In Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress in one subject or area sometimes slows, but progress remains good overall and the pupils tend to catch up the next year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress as rapidly as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' experience of evaluation and development planning and their understanding of their own learning are preparing the pupils extremely well for the future. Pupils also have the opportunity to learn about enterprise through a club at which they make goods to sell and raise money, and have a good understanding of recycling. Their moral and social development is excellent, and they willingly take up their many roles and responsibilities. Younger pupils and older pupils play happily together. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. Many year groups described what was healthy about their school meals and snacks in their 'SEF'. Older pupils demonstrate very good ability to reflect on their work, for example in poems based on Martin Luther King's famous I have a dream speech. In assembly pupils showed that they are developing a mature understanding of people's similarities and differences, and how to help to be one big community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan well and explain the ideas of each lesson very clearly. They make sure that the main part of the lesson has challenge for pupils of different abilities. In mathematics in Years

2 and 3, for example, all the pupils were adding using a particular method, but the most able had three-digit numbers and word problems to sort out whilst the youngest or less able worked on smaller numbers. Support is often provided by teaching assistants, who are also skilled at explaining and questioning. Teachers often use resources particularly well. In an outstanding lesson for pupils in Years 4 to 6, they studied a picture and listened to sounds that might be associated with it in order to stimulate their ideas for story openers. The use of 'talk partners' to rehearse sentences or ideas is particularly effective. Very occasionally, whole-class introductions to lessons do not challenge the most able pupils sufficiently well and their progress slows as a result.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is organised on the basis of two-year and three-year rolling programmes to make sure that pupils learn new things as they stay in a class for more than a year. Year 1 pupils, in addition, benefit from resources such as the role-play area which are available for younger pupils. Conversely, however, the limited outside area restricts possibilities for them as well as the Early Years Foundation Stage. The day-to-day curriculum is greatly enhanced by activities such as whole-school focus weeks in which work in real depth is undertaken. A very wide range of visits and visitors also make a strong contribution, and the school is quick to draw in people from the village or visitors who can explain what life is like elsewhere in this country or abroad. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes towards different faiths and cultures. Tailored activities are provided for pupils who are gifted and talented as well as for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These have included learning Finnish or Chinese and working remotely with a poet based in the Antarctic.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's leaders are well aware of the context in which it works, and adults know all about the pupils and their backgrounds. Appropriate steps are taken to give support where needed, for example to ensure that no-one misses out on school trips for financial reasons. A range of useful measures promote good attendance, although current attendance is average; in a small school, bouts of illness can have a disproportionate impact on the figures. Marking is very effective in giving guidance on how to improve work, especially for the oldest children. Safeguarding requirements are met, in spite of the fact that the school premises and particularly the grounds, which are on various different levels, present challenges. The school is doing what it can to implement a range of measures to reduce problems.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very good leadership and management, and is supported well by other responsibility holders. She has secured a highly inclusive ethos and has led the school to significant improvements. Teaching is monitored very regularly, not only by the headteacher but also by other staff who observe each other with an agreed focus. This illustrates the way the drive for improvement is shared by all. The tracking of pupils' standards and progress is also very detailed, although targets set for Key Stage 1 are based on performance at the start of Year 1 rather than earlier achievements. Governors challenge and support the school well.

With several governors new to their posts, including the chair, they are rightly going through a process of identifying policies and updating plans for reviewing them.

- Pupils were highly positive in their 'SEF' about the school's leadership. They couldn't think of areas of leadership to improve and one group summed it up by saying: '...the leaders and managers in the school are super as:
 - they listen to you
 - team captains listen
 - [the headteacher] explains things
 - there is always someone to help'.

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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	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	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	1

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	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	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

12 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Horningsham Primary School, Warminster BA12 7AW

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school yesterday. You gave us a very clear idea of what the school is like, both through your 'SEF' and through what you told us when we talked to you. Your school is good. We agree with you that you are 'getting really good' in your work – in fact you are making good progress and standards are rising. We found some things that are outstanding, for example the way you yourselves contribute to the school through your development plan for improving writing. You also have an excellent understanding of social and moral matters, and your behaviour is outstanding.

We agree with you that teaching is good, and you told us how much you enjoy being in school. You have a good understanding of how to improve your work because teachers are good at explaining it. The youngest children get a good start in the Robins class. However, we have asked the school to look at how the outdoor area where they play could be improved, so that children can learn as much outside as they do inside. I'm sure you will have lots of ideas about how this could be done and will be able to help with the planning.

We think your school is led very well. The headteacher and staff check what you do closely so that they can spot areas of your work where they can help you improve. We have asked them to look again at the way they check the progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2. This is just to be absolutely sure they take into account everything you have done in the Early Years Foundation Stage (which is the official name for your first year at school – often called Reception).

With best wishes. Yours faithfully

Deborah Zachary

Lead inspector