

Beechcroft St Pauls CE VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134077
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	328821
Inspection dates	10–11 June 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	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	205
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	Julia Moore
Headteacher	Sarah Sprague
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Corporation Road Weymouth DT4 0LQ
Telephone number	01305 783500
Fax number	01305 785286

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is a little smaller than average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Children start school in Reception as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is a privately run pre-school setting on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Beechcroft St Pauls is an outstanding school. Since the last inspection, there has been rapid improvement. The inspirational and enthusiastic headteacher, senior leaders, governors and staff have a clear vision of excellence for the school built upon a 'can do' culture. Over the last three years, the headteacher has built the whole-school community into a team wholly focused upon school improvement and determined to ensure that pupils achieve the highest possible standards of which they are capable. Underpinning this aim is a firm belief in, and commitment to, pupils' personal development and well-being. The school's 'Rights and Responsibilities' charter, together with its Christian ethos, ensures that pupils grow into confident, caring young people with an excellent attitude to school, who are rightly proud of their achievements. All adults in the school present an exemplary role model and, as a result, relationships are excellent and pupils' behaviour is outstanding. In recognition of its work to develop thoughtful young citizens, it has been awarded the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Level 1 and the International Schools Award.

Children join the school with skills well below those expected for their age in all areas of learning. Because of outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make excellent progress. By the time they leave Reception, almost all reach the goals expected nationally and, in some cases, exceed them. This progress is now maintained in the infant years where there has been a huge improvement over the last year. Standards in Year 2 are average and boys have achieved particularly well this year due to successful strategies to improve their attainment. However, as the school is aware, there is still room for improvement in boys' comprehension skills when they read. Standards in Year 6 are above average and pupils exceed the challenging targets set for them. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is first class so that they make the same excellent progress as all other pupils. The work of the school is consistently monitored and, where this raises the need for action, plans for improvement are implemented speedily and successfully. Outstanding teaching, a vibrant curriculum and a detailed and rigorous tracking system are at the heart of the rapidly rising standards across the school. This demonstrates an outstanding capacity for even further improvement.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, have a very good knowledge of how to keep healthy and safe, and are exceptionally keen to learn. Therefore, it is surprising that, although attendance is rising due to the rigorous procedures the school has in place, it is currently only average. However, too many parents choose to take their children on holiday during term time. The school is doing all it can to address this situation. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community and have a very real voice in school affairs. They know they are valued and respected. This, together with the warm, friendly Christian ethos and outstanding care, guidance and support they receive, creates an extremely positive climate for learning. Many parents strongly support the school and wrote comments such as, 'My children are given positive encouragement and helped to achieve their full potential.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Due to outstanding leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children get off to a flying start in their Reception Year and make outstanding progress. Very good induction procedures, and the good links that are developing with the pre-school on site, mean that children are well known to adults before they start school. A very positive partnership with parents continues

to develop through a wide variety of regular opportunities for them to be involved in the learning of their child, forming a strong link between home and school. Relationships are warm, with a calm, well organised atmosphere in the classroom in which children rightly feel secure and very well cared for. As a result, they settle in quickly, helped by sensible routines that build their confidence and independence. They learn and achieve so well because teaching and the curriculum are imaginative, exceptionally well planned and entirely appropriate to the needs of the Early Years child. All aspects of literacy and mathematics are particularly well taught. Involving children in the planning of activities ensures that they respond with great enjoyment to the 'Let's Explore' times. During work on 'our senses' they were keen to taste different foods while blindfolded and loved putting their hands into buckets to feel warm and cold water and ice. There is exactly the right balance between activities that are led by adults and those chosen by children, and adults are very skilled at joining in play and asking questions that encourage further learning. Very good assessment procedures lead to children's needs being well met because the next steps in their learning are clearly identified and planned for, especially through the daily individual 'challenges'. The outside area is allowing children to develop really well in all six areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sustain the recent improvement in boys' reading in Years 1 and 2 and ensure that they receive more guidance when practising their reading skills in order to develop a deeper understanding of the texts they read.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding and standards are above average. Children join the school with skills well below those expected in all areas of learning. They make outstanding progress in Reception and almost all reach the early learning goals, and some exceed them by the end of the Reception Year. Progress has been rapid this year, especially in Year 2 where standards are now average overall among pupils who did not make such fast progress previously. The school has been most successful in addressing the underachievement of boys in Key Stage 1. Boys' reading has improved significantly due to the successful strategies the school has introduced, particularly the new books to kindle boys' interest. School leaders have recognised that, although boys now read well, they do not always fully understand the text. Plans are already in place to address this. Pupils make excellent progress and standards are above average in Year 6. The high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve very well. More able pupils are achieving especially well in literacy. This is a distinct improvement since the last inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and well-being are outstanding. It is clear that pupils like and respect their teachers and that these feelings are reciprocated. As a result, pupils know that teachers have their best interests at heart. Pupils work amicably together, respect the feelings of others and have a well developed sense of fair play. They are very safety conscious and show considerable care for the welfare of others. At playtimes and for lessons, they appreciate the opportunities to visit the tranquil 'Secret Garden' to reflect on the wonder of the world. Pupils have a clear sense of self worth because they know their

opinions are valued. They respond very well when given responsibility, for example as members of the school council or as mentors for those who need a friend at lunchtimes. Through their response to the very good range of physical activities and the healthy school tuck shop pupils run, they show they have a well developed sense of the importance of being healthy. Growing plants, making compost, fundraising for charities and visiting local homes for the elderly on a regular basis are just a few examples of all the ways in which pupils demonstrate their very strong social and community awareness. Their excellent academic progress, together with their ability to work constructively with others, is preparing them very well indeed for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers plan lessons thoroughly so that pupils are clear about what they are to learn. Their subject knowledge is very good and they consistently build on pupils' previous learning and teach enthusiastically. Their expert questioning skills engage pupils who then listen carefully, concentrate, and behave very well and are keen to participate in lessons. Accurate assessment enables teachers to correctly gauge the needs of each individual pupil. Therefore, tasks are purposeful, interesting and appropriately challenging. By regularly reminding them of their targets in lessons, teachers ensure that pupils are fully involved in improving and assessing their work. Very occasionally, teachers talk for too long and pupils begin to lose concentration. Highly skilled teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the outstanding progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These staff are highly valued by both teachers and pupils and work as part of an efficient team with the teachers, providing excellent support for the pupils in their charge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a rich curriculum that meets pupils' needs very effectively and it holds a number of awards in recognition of this outstanding provision; namely the Silver Artsmark and Activemark and the Bronze Eco-Schools Award and Healthy Schools Award. The development of pupils' key skills in literacy and numeracy is given a strong emphasis and this helps pupils achieve exceptionally well. Increased opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics have notably increased standards in this subject. In addition, pupils' progress has accelerated in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 because tasks are now more precisely matched to pupils' learning needs. Provision in science is strong and pupils have ample opportunity to develop their investigative skills. They have ready access to information and communication technology and this benefits their learning. High quality opportunities abound in visual art through the school's 'artist in residence' and many of the pupils play a musical instrument. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of educational visits, visitors and clubs. These are exceptionally well supported and enjoyed by pupils, and bring significant benefits to their learning. After reflecting on a recent visit when pupils took on the role of Victorian children, one commented, 'It must have been quite hard to be in a Victorian school. It wouldn't have been as interesting and fun as at our school!'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an exceptionally high quality of care for its pupils. Child protection procedures are robust and regular health and safety checks are carried out. The supportive family atmosphere results in pupils gaining in confidence and developing into well-rounded young citizens. Pupils feel very safe and know they can talk to adults if they have any worries at school. It is not surprising that parents are confident that their children are well looked after. The school has developed strong links with many external agencies to provide support for pupils when required. In addition, well qualified and highly committed staff work closely with parents to benefit pupils' development. Support and guidance for pupils' academic development is just as strong. Teachers' marking gives pupils clear guidance about how they can improve their work and pupils know their targets well in English and mathematics. In addition, regular discussions with teachers help individual pupils to have a clear understanding of their achievements and to identify the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher's unstinting energy, excellent organisational skills and her ability to enable the abilities of others to grow ensure that leadership at all levels is outstanding. She, and other senior leaders, have been the driving force behind the very good progress the school has made over the last three years. At the heart of the school's rapid improvement are rigorous monitoring procedures, accurate self-evaluation and a focused development plan with the correct priorities supported by clear action. These effective systems, alongside a detailed and rigorous tracking system that efficiently informs teachers on a regular basis of how well pupils are progressing towards their challenging targets, are enabling the school to measure its success and improve even further. Governors make a significant contribution to the work of the school. They challenge it to do its best and offer continuous support. The school is popular with parents, and their involvement and support for the school is good. 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 links with other communities nationally in order to broaden pupils' awareness of differences in culture that they would otherwise not experience. However, although these initiatives are as yet unproven, community cohesion is good.

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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?	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

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	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	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	1
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 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Beechcroft St Pauls Church of England Primary School, Weymouth DT4 0LQ.

Thank you very much for the very friendly welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and talking with you. We have judged your school to be outstanding.

These are some of the things we found.

- You work very hard at school and make outstanding progress.
- You really enjoy school and appreciate all the extra activities the school provides for you. Your attendance is satisfactory.
- All through the school, you are being helped to grow up as sensible, caring young people. You are exceptionally respectful and polite towards adults and each other and get on very well together. Your behaviour is excellent.
- You are very good at knowing how to keep healthy and safe.
- You and your parents told us that the school takes exceptionally good care of you and we agree.
- Your headteacher, teachers and all other adults have ensured that your school is very successful but they are committed to making it even better.

We have suggested one thing to improve your learning even further.

- We have asked your teachers to help boys in Years 1 and 2 by giving you more guidance when you practise your reading skills so that you will improve your understanding of what you read.

Keep working hard!

Yours faithfully

Anna Sketchley

Lead inspector