

Lulworth and Winfrith CofE VC First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135323
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	329078
Inspection date	11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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)	59
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	Joanne Selfe
Headteacher	Sharon Buckland
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	West Lulworth Wareham BH20 5SA
Telephone number	01929 400330
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Lulworth and Winfrith is a small first school formed from the amalgamation of the two village schools in September 2007. This is its first inspection. Pupils are taught on two sites about four miles apart. The school provides a breakfast club on the Winfrith site. About 30% of pupils come from army families, so the numbers joining or leaving the school other than in Reception and Year 4 are above average. The majority of Reception children previously attended the pre-school which shares the Winfrith site. It is managed by a private provider and did not form part of this inspection. All pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school holds the Healthy School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lulworth and Winfrith is a good school. The headteacher, effectively supported by the assistant headteacher and governors, has done well in the short time available to establish in this new school effective systems and procedures which deliver a good quality education for pupils. As a result, pupils achieve well in both their academic and personal development and, by the time they leave, standards are above average. The amalgamation of the two schools has been handled very effectively, with the school making excellent arrangements to ensure pupils' safety as they travel between the two sites. Staff and governors have forged an outstanding partnership with parents, working hard to involve them in their children's learning. As one parent commented, 'We feel included and part of the school and are impressed by many of the school's initiatives'. This is evident, for example, in parents being invited to observe mathematics lessons in order to help support their children's learning at home. The vast majority of parents are extremely pleased with the quality of education and level of care that the school provides, with one typically writing, 'This is a lovely friendly school, with approachable staff and high standards, everything a village school should be'.

The curriculum has been well designed to ensure pupils build on and extend their skills and knowledge as they progress through the school. The effective activities and level of support provided helps pupils with learning or behavioural needs to catch up, ensuring they achieve as well as their classmates. As a result, virtually all reach at least average levels. During the last academic year, the school experienced a very high turnover and long-term sickness of staff. This led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, resulting in the progress of some higher attaining pupils slowing, most markedly in mathematics. This situation also caused concern to a number of parents. Leaders and managers have addressed these weaknesses well. In particular, judicious new appointments have helped to improve the quality of teaching. This has ensured that the higher attainers are making good progress this year, including in mathematics, and are rapidly catching up on what they have missed. However, the school recognises that more still needs to be done in this area.

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, with the basic skills of literacy and numeracy being taught especially well so that the school is well on the way to being awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Small classes mean that staff are able to provide individualised learning and support, including through the experienced and competent classroom assistants. Pupils receive effective guidance on how to improve their work and marking is of a good quality. The good progress pupils make in developing their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, their ability to work well with others and their capacity to reflect on how well they are doing ensures pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

The school has forged excellent relationships with other schools and agencies which benefit pupils' education and welfare especially well. This is evident in the many opportunities for sport provided by the army and in pupils' involvement with local conservation and heritage groups. As a result, pupils have an excellent awareness of how to keep healthy and fit and they make an outstanding contribution to the local community and surrounding area. The school's membership of the Bindon Abbey Cluster of schools provides excellent support for school development, most notably in improving academic support and guidance procedures and introducing a creative approach to learning.

The school provides excellent pastoral support, with one parent writing, 'I am extremely pleased with the school. My daughter feels safe, secure and happy there'. Parents are very appreciative of the breakfast club set up in response to their requests. Behaviour is good and pupils enjoy the many practical activities in lessons and the excellent range of activities provided through clubs, visits and visitors.

Leadership and management at all levels are good, with very effective teamwork being established. A very careful check is kept on how well the school is doing, with development planning effectively targeting weaker areas, such as mathematics, and putting in place strategies which successfully address them. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement and governors are very proactive in planning to meet new challenges and initiatives. The school's success in achieving good quality provision in the last 18 months and in effectively addressing weaker elements of its work gives confidence that it is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

In this safe and secure environment, children settle quickly, soon make friends, work confidently and behave well. Strong links with the pre-school on site enhance induction and provide the school with useful information on the level at which children are working. Effective leadership and good teaching, together with a range of interesting activities, ensure children make good progress in all areas of learning. In this, the classroom assistants provide good support, working with different groups and recording how well children are progressing. By the end of Reception, standards are above average, with children making especially good progress in their communication, language and literacy, partly because of the very good programme for teaching letters and sounds. The excellent partnership forged with parents helps them support their children well at home, for example, in developing early reading skills. There is a good balance between activities planned by the teacher and those children choose for themselves, for example, in preparing a party, writing out invitations and making cakes and sandwiches. Children enjoy the many walks and visits they make, for example, to the village shop, but insufficient use is made of the outdoor environment in the school to help children investigate new things and play and learn independently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on and extend the strategies to promote the progress of the higher attaining pupils in mathematics.
- Make better use of the outdoor environment to support learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

On entry to the school, children's skills are broadly as expected for their age, but are below in some key literacy skills. Good provision, well adapted to Reception children's needs, ensures they achieve well in all areas of learning. Standards on entry to Year 1 are above average, although slightly lower than this in some aspects of communication, language and literacy.

As the school has only been established for 18 months, for pupils in Years 1 to 4 it is not possible to make comparisons between the start and end of each stage. However, tracking records indicate that pupils have made good progress since September 2007. The slight dip in standards

last year, caused by the slower progress made by some higher attaining pupils in mathematics, is being successfully addressed. By Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average and, by Year 4, standards in English, mathematics and science are above those expected for pupils of this age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. Pupils feel happy, safe and secure in school and develop an excellent awareness of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Pupils' spiritual development is very good as the result of very well planned assemblies and effective links with the local church. The small minority of pupils who find good behaviour difficult are well supported, so behaviour is good, with incidents of poor behaviour being rare. Pupils get on well together and are friendly and helpful, readily discussing their work with a partner. As a result of the school's good arrangements for community cohesion pupils are involved especially well in school life, as school councillors or play leaders. They make an outstanding contribution to the community, for example, through supporting the National Tree Foundation Project and in suggesting how the environment can be improved through contributing to the local village plan. Pupils learn about other cultures, for example, through African drumming lessons, although their knowledge of the multicultural nature of British society is more limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A consistent approach to planning and teachers' high expectations ensure pupils now make good progress in their learning. Higher attaining pupils are better challenged, although on a small number of occasions they complete work quickly and become easily bored. Lesson activities are practical and fun, with pupils continually being asked to reflect on how well they are doing and what they can do to improve. Activities for pupils who find learning difficult help them to do well and they receive good support both from the teacher and classroom assistants. Where a creative approach is used, learning is exciting and highly challenging, encouraging pupils to make especially good progress. However, this practice is not yet fully embedded in all activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Programmes for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are particularly good and an investigative approach underpins effective learning in science. Topic-based programmes of work enhance links between subjects, giving pupils many opportunities to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The school is working hard to establish a creative curriculum, which inspires pupils to learn and discover things for themselves, although this is not yet fully established in all classes. Extra-curricular activities, including the many off-site visits and a wide range of clubs, greatly enhance pupils' enjoyment of school. The effective programme for pupils' personal, social and health education supports their development well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Work on a project with the Bindon Cluster has helped the school to put in place very effective systems for tracking and assessing pupils' progress. Information from these allows the school to set pupils challenging improvement targets and keep a careful check on how well they are progressing towards them. In the older classes, pupils regularly refer to these, clearly recognising what they need to do to improve. However, in other classes, less use is made of targets to encourage progress. The level of care is outstanding and arrangements for safeguarding pupils fully comply with government guidelines. The breakfast club and school minibus provide an extra level of care, much appreciated by parents. Pupils with specific learning or language needs are supported very well by the local authority specialist teacher.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A particular strength of the headteacher's and assistant headteacher's work has been the creation of a strong staff team who work very well together. This has been instrumental in the successful amalgamation of the two schools. They have worked hard to create a cohesive community and forge productive links in local area. Staff and governors have a shared vision for the school which is being realised in the individualised learning the small classes can offer. With the recent amalgamation and high staff turnover, some subject leaders and governors are still developing their monitoring roles. However, the very good teamwork seen at all levels means that their work is supported well by more experienced colleagues. As a result, self-evaluation is accurate and development planning effective. Financial planning is good and staff and governors are proactive in seeking grants to enhance the accommodation, for example, to help provide a new hall for the Lulworth site.

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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	NA
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?	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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?	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**

12 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lulworth and Winfrith Church of England First School, West Lulworth, Wareham BH20 5SA

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly, polite and helpful. We think your school is good and are delighted that you and your parents agree.

- Here are some of the things we found out were good about the school:
- You enjoy school, get on well together and make good progress. Standards are above those expected for your age.
- You know a great many important things about how to keep healthy and safe and enjoy the many sports activities.
- You are very good at doing things for your school and the local area, such as putting forward your ideas for how the village can be improved.
- Teaching is good and staff plan interesting activities which help you to do well.
- Adults look after you very well and give you good advice on how to improve your work.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors have helped to give your school a good start and are working hard to make it even better.

- Here are some of the things we would like to see improved:
- Last year, some of you who find mathematics easy did not do as well as they should have. Although they are now doing better, we have asked staff to ensure they do the very best they can. You can help by always working hard.
- We have asked staff to make better use of the outdoor areas to help Reception children learn and develop new skills.

Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson Lead Inspector