

# Somerford Primary Community School and Nursery

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113736
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	338229
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Dickinson HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	0–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	384
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Peirce
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr N Tarchetti
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Draper Road Somerford Christchurch BH23 3AS
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and spoke informally with parents. In addition, the lead inspector held a telephone conversation with an officer from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, including sessions in Little Explorers and the Nursery, and a range of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They looked at teachers' plans, the school's methods for monitoring teaching and checking pupils' progress, key policies, reports from the local authority and the school's plan for its future development. A total of 32 parents' questionnaires were analysed alongside those completed by pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how successfully pupils' standards in English and mathematics have improved since the last inspection
- how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are being supported to achieve well
- how well leaders at all levels are driving forward and sustaining improvement in the school's work
- how well teachers use assessments to make sure all pupils make progress and none slips badly behind.

## Information about the school

The school serves a housing estate on the outskirts of Christchurch and all pupils come from the immediate area. It works in partnership, as a 'soft' federation, with the nearby sports college. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided for in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school also provides day care for babies and children in Little Explorers, which is part of the Children's Centre on the school site also managed by the governing body. The school was given a notice to improve at its last inspection.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. There has been a striking turnaround in the school's work and effectiveness since its last inspection. A lot has been accomplished in a relatively short time and the school now provides a good education. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well and some make rapid progress. Central to this improvement has been the strong, focused and highly effective leadership of the headteacher. He has tackled the weaknesses from the last inspection successfully and taken staff and parents along with him. All staff are pulling in the same direction, clear of their roles and committed to the school's further improvement. Not only is there a strong focus on pupils' academic achievement, the quality of care, guidance and support that pupils receive is outstanding and a clear factor in pupils' enjoyment of school. The senior leaders have an accurate knowledge of where the school is in terms of its effectiveness. The school has good capacity to build upon its strengths, tackle the relatively weaker areas and continue to improve.

There are some key areas that have been instrumental in the school's improvement:

- Teaching is good, with good pace and challenge in many lessons, encouraging pupils to work hard and persevere.
- Good systems have been established to check that each pupil makes enough progress and these are used well by teachers to give pupils an extra push or organise more support, as necessary.
- The school uses a wide range of different methods for supporting pupils who need extra help, whether this is with their learning or their emotional development or if they need special help to manage their behaviour.

Over the last 14 months, the school's focus on English and mathematics has been appropriate and has reaped benefits. Standards have improved, particularly in mathematics; reading is also picking up well but there is further to go to raise standards in writing. Nevertheless, the emphasis on these two subjects means there has been less attention paid to developing the curriculum in other ways, such as enlivening pupils' learning through themes and topics that link subjects, and the creative areas of the curriculum. Pupils also have limited knowledge and experience of people whose lifestyles and cultures differ from their own, both in Britain and elsewhere.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in writing, by:

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- helping pupils, particularly the older ones, to fill the gaps in their spelling, handwriting, punctuation and sentence structure
- making sure all teachers follow the school's policy for marking writing and giving pupils helpful, specific targets
- providing regular opportunities for the English leader to monitor pupils' writing, to lead and guide further improvement
- making sure that pupils have plenty of opportunity to write in other subjects and that teachers' expectations are as high as they are in English lessons.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to explore links between subjects and themes, and increase the emphasis on the creative areas of the curriculum.
- Help pupils to gain a greater understanding of cultural diversity represented in and beyond their own local community.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils try hard in lessons and are proud when they have done a good piece of work. They enjoy talking about their learning and explaining what they have done. Learning in lessons during the inspection was often good. Pupils were eager to answer questions and got down to work quickly. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons, assemblies and at break times. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that they can always ask for help and support if they need it. They enjoy keeping healthy and many join in with clubs and activities that help to keep them fit. Staff work very hard with the pupils who have specific and sometimes quite complex difficulties and barriers to their learning. These pupils, often amongst the most vulnerable within the school, learn successfully and make equally good progress. Pupils' attendance has also improved and the proportion of pupils who have tended to miss a lot of school in the past has reduced significantly.

The school council makes a strong contribution to the life of the school and has also influenced decisions in the local community, such as the renovation of the local play park. Both the chair and the vice chair make a valuable contribution beyond the school, as members of both Christchurch and the county school councils. Pupils in Year 6 last year made rapid progress and caught up very well on the gaps in their past achievement. The school's records show pupils currently in Year 6 are also on target to achieve well. However, some have a lot of ground to make up in their writing, mainly because they have gaps in their knowledge relating to basic skills such as spelling and punctuation. Standards by the end of Year 6 are below average but picking up strongly, particularly in mathematics. Reading is showing improvement, as a result of some well-targeted support that is helping groups of pupils who are behind with their reading to catch up quickly.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching moves at a good pace in many lessons and pupils are clear about what they are learning and know how well they have tackled and achieved tasks. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour sensitively and skilfully and create an encouraging and supportive atmosphere in lessons. They use their teaching assistants effectively and, as a consequence, these adults often have a marked impact upon the learning of the pupils they are supporting. Occasionally, teaching does not cater effectively for the different ability groups for the entirety of the lesson. For example, in two mathematics lessons, some of the examples chosen by the teacher were geared more towards the average and lower attaining pupils and the more able pupils marked time for a while.

The quality of care and guidance across the school is highly effective. Through strong links with other agencies, often in conjunction with the children's centre services, parents and carers receive targeted and helpful support. There are many examples of this having a positive impact on pupils' welfare and achievement, including those who are encountering particularly challenging and anxious times in their lives. Provision in the nurture group is very effective, enabling pupils who need this special help to make enormous strides forward in their personal development and to help them feel positive about learning. There are examples of effective marking that is relevant to what pupils are learning or need to focus on next, but this is not yet fully consistent across the school. Teachers' use of targets has improved considerably since the last inspection but,

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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in writing particularly, these are not always used to full effect. Some are too broad, for example, or are changed too frequently or, in some instances, not used consistently. This means that some pupils are not exactly sure what they really need to concentrate on to improve their writing.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been clear-sighted about what has needed to be a main focus for the school in guiding the school forward. There is close attention to enabling all pupils to achieve, whatever their circumstances or difficulties, and breaking down any barriers that could hinder their learning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is led and managed effectively and, as a result, achievement for these pupils is good. Subject leaders have played a clear role in monitoring and improving standards although there has been relatively less attention to monitoring writing. The system for tracking pupils' academic progress is effective. Any pupils who are not making enough progress are identified quickly and, where their needs are particularly complex, a raft of support is put in place. This means pupils at most risk of underachieving are helped and encouraged to do well.

The headteacher and staff have worked hard to build partnerships and trust with parents. There is a sensitive approach to encouraging any parents who may feel reticent about coming into school and involving them in their child's education. Governors provide strong leadership and good challenge for the headteacher and staff and have also been an important part of the school's improvement. Good attention is paid to making sure pupils are safe and the procedures and policies are robust and well known by all adults working in the school. The headteacher and governors have reviewed how well the school promotes a sense of community cohesion amongst pupils and have identified what needs doing to improve this aspect of the school's work. It has some successful and well-established links with the local community and further afield, such as pupils' support of various charities. It is in the early stages of strengthening the school's links with an area of this country that contrasts sharply with the local area, to broaden pupils' understanding of different communities and cultures.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's needs are well met in Little Explorers. Children and babies have good experiences here. They are greeted by welcoming staff, who are patient, kind and well qualified to care for children and guide their development. Parents commented on how comfortable they were leaving their children in the safe, happy and stimulating environment. Children love being explorers as they play in the outdoor area, work with adults to learn animals' names, listen to stories or explore new flavours at snack times. Parents are well informed about their child's progress and the significant milestones they achieve. Staff use photographs well to cover unique events in children's lives. Leadership is strongly focused on making this an even better place for the children. Leaders and managers have built up an exceptional team of staff who ensure that the procedures and practices are secure and thorough, and who are prepared to go that extra mile for the children and their parents.

Children in Foundation 1 and Foundation 2 make good progress. Consistently good tracking of progress across all areas of learning and careful planning that meets children's needs and interests moves learning on at a good pace. Despite this, many are unlikely to reach the standards expected by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Communication, language and literacy development is the weakest area of learning, and knowledge for writing is particularly poor. The school has introduced good strategies and programmes to accelerate children's learning in this area and encourage children's interest in writing. Staff are keen and enthusiastic about the change this has brought in children's attitudes and desire for writing and mark-making. However, much needs to be done if children are to reach the goals for this area.

Children are given a good start to their school life. The school places a good emphasis



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on working and playing together and developing trusting relationships. Children feel secure and there is a happy atmosphere. The interesting range of learning opportunities supports children in making choices and developing independence. Children have helped staff to draw up rules for the classroom, which they try hard to keep. The accommodation is effectively organised to promote interest, curiosity and excitement. All children are happy to approach staff for assistance or support. They are well settled into classroom routines and know what is expected of them. Parents appreciate the way the school keeps them informed of what and how well their children are learning. They receive good guidance and information so they can continue children's learning in the home. All staff fully embrace the values of keeping children happy, safe and secure and all children are fully included and valued. The partnership with parents and other agencies, such as pre-school providers, contributes to the success of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

The overwhelming majority of parents are happy with the work of the school. Many added written comments in praise of the school's work, the headteacher's leadership and the commitment of staff. Many also stated how pleased they were with the progress their children were making. Several parents pointed to the good quality of support their children had received to help them settle in, for example, or to tackle specific problems with their child's learning or behaviour. A very small number of parents expressed some concerns about behaviour and this was explored during the inspection. Although no inappropriate behaviour was observed, pupils report that a small minority of pupils do not behave well all the time. They were clear, nevertheless, that most teachers handle any misbehaviour very well and that behaviour in the school has improved a lot.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Somerford Primary Community School and Nursery to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 384 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	81	0	6	19	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	78	6	19	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	66	10	31	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	69	9	28	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	75	8	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	75	8	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	72	8	25	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	63	10	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	69	10	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	56	12	38	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	69	9	28	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	59	9	28	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	78	6	19	0	0	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Somerford Primary Community School and Nursery, Christchurch BH23 3AS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school during its recent inspection and for talking to us about your work, your views on the school and all the things that you do. We enjoyed talking to you and would particularly like to thank the two groups of pupils who had a meeting with an inspector.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to improve in some important areas. Since then, your school has come on in leaps and bounds. It is now a good school. You are making good progress because you are taught well and the headteacher and teachers are keeping a careful eye on how well you are all learning. Not only that, the care and support the school gives you has also improved and is now outstanding. If you need extra help to learn or cope with school life, it is there for you. I suspect you won't be surprised to hear that one of the reasons for the school improving so much is your headteacher, who has made sure that the really important things that needed to improve have had careful attention. He has not done this on his own though. He has been well supported by all the teachers and adults in school, and the governors. Everyone has pulled together and the strong teamwork has really made a difference. We were pleased to see so many of you working hard in lessons, trying your best and being proud of your achievements.

We have asked the school to help all of you learn more about people who live in very different communities to yours and who have different cultural traditions and beliefs. We have also asked the headteacher and teachers to plan more exciting opportunities for you to learn by linking subjects together and planning lessons that will develop your creativity and imagination. You are doing much better now in mathematics and reading and we have asked teachers to concentrate more on your writing because this is one area where some of you need to catch up most. We hope that you will try very hard when you are writing, not only in English but in other subjects too, so that you can be good writers by the time you leave the school.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dickinson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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