

# The Lady St Mary Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School, Wareham

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113768
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	338237
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gehane Gordelier

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>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	102
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tracy Drake
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amy Lawrence
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Streche Road Wareham BH20 4PG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Between them, the inspectors observed eight lessons and five teachers. All but one of the lessons observed by the lead inspector were done alongside the headteacher. The inspectors held meetings with teachers, senior leaders, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and one of the partners who works with the school. The lead inspector also spoke informally to some parents. The inspectors observed the school's work, checked the school's safeguarding procedures and evaluated a range of school policies, curriculum documentation, teachers' planning, the school's self-evaluation, action and improvement plans, data and information about pupils and how the school tracks and monitors progress. They also scrutinised 73 questionnaires received from parents and carers, 13 questionnaires completed by staff and 48 responses from pupils.

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

- the rate of progress pupils make in mathematics
- the extent to which teaching meets the learning needs of different groups of pupils
- the extent to which those responsible for leading and managing subjects contribute to raising attainment
- how effectively the governing body holds the school to account, fulfils its statutory responsibilities and helps the school to improve.

## Information about the school

The Lady St Mary Church of England First School is smaller than the average primary school and serves the small market town of Wareham. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils are White British and few speak English as an additional language. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs; however, the overall proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. The school is in receipt of a Bronze Ecological School Award for its work on the environment. The school shares its site with a Sure Start Children's Centre and privately-run childcare provision.

## Inspection judgements

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

**3**

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

**3**

### Main findings

This is a satisfactory school with many strengths. Its Christian ethos permeates through all the work the school does with pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors and the local community. The headteacher provides strong leadership for the good quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils. This helps to ensure that staff work well together in helping to meet pupils' personal, social and emotional needs. As a result, pupils feel confident that staff will provide them with help and support when needed, and they grow and develop into confident, articulate and well-rounded young people.

The school engages successfully with parents and carers and has developed good partnerships with outside agencies. This helps new pupils and their parents and carers to settle quickly, makes a good contribution to promoting pupils' well-being and is supportive of their learning. One parent stated, 'The school is a warm and happy place for a young child to develop and grow. It is also a wonderful place for parents to feel welcome and supported.'

The vast majority of pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school, and feel safe and secure. Pupils make a particularly good contribution to their school and local community. The school council, for example, have been involved in the recent round of interviews to appoint a new headteacher. Pupils from the school have won first prize for their costumes in the local annual carnival on more than one occasion.

Children in the Reception Year make satisfactory progress overall, but increasingly good progress in their personal development and their language and literacy skills. Levels of attainment for older pupils are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils make satisfactory progress; however, it is generally better and sometimes good for older pupils at Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics and in reading. This is largely due to the quality of teaching. Staff do not have sufficient guidance which enables them to plan consistently well for good progression of learning and skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. There are also too many missed opportunities for developing and reinforcing some basic skills, such as the use of letters and sounds to support the skills needed to enable all pupils to learn to read and write new and unfamiliar words confidently. Teachers' use of assessment strategies and subsequent planning is not always rigorous or detailed enough to ensure consistently good levels of academic support for lower attaining pupils or to challenge the most able. Teachers are, nevertheless, particularly adept at promoting pupils' personal development and well-being and providing pastoral support to those pupils who are most vulnerable. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress as well as their peers because they receive well-targeted additional support.

The senior leadership team has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is because the quality of the school's self-evaluation has improved. There is also a more rigorous approach to the way the progress made by individual pupils in English and mathematics is tracked. However, this is not done well for other subjects, and the progress made by pupils of different abilities is not monitored closely enough to ensure different groups always achieve equally well.

The school has made acceptable progress since the time of the previous inspection and its capacity to improve is satisfactory. Nevertheless, the role of subject leaders beyond English and mathematics is underdeveloped and too many are managing rather than leading in their area of responsibility or contributing sufficiently to raising attainment. The governing body includes a number of governors who are new and relatively inexperienced. Although keen to be supportive of the school's work, the governing body has not been rigorous enough in reviewing key documentation, monitoring the impact of its policies and communicating some of these findings to parents and carers. This has reduced its ability to hold the school to account and has led to some aspects of statutory duties not being met as well as they should be.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
  - by June 2011, at least 80% of teaching in the school is consistently good
  - teachers provide sufficient challenge for the more able pupils in their class
  - basic skills are reinforced regularly
  - teachers make consistently good use of assessment strategies in lessons and in their marking to help pupils to progress at a good pace.
- Develop the curriculum so that it provides teachers with clear guidance about progression in skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they have a greater impact on raising standards and are more focused on how their work will be of benefit to pupils.
- Develop the role of the governing body so that they:
  - are more able to challenge and hold the school to account
  - contribute more fully to helping the school to improve
  - ensure that policies are regularly reviewed and monitored to assess their impact on pupils' achievements
  - ensure that all aspects of their statutory requirements are met in full.

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

**3**

Pupils enjoy coming to school and appreciate the range of fun activities their teachers plan for them. They respond well to the school's consistent approach to managing behaviour and this contributes to the positive and nurturing ethos that is evident around the school.

Pupils' progress in lessons is satisfactory but inconsistent. It is best in Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics and reading in response to tailored groupings and good teaching. Attainment in Year 4 in English and mathematics is broadly average. Attainment as seen in lessons in Key Stage 1 was also broadly average. Sometimes, the progress of lower ability pupils, particularly in English, is impeded by limited reinforcement of basic skills in lessons.

Pupils are proud of their school; they enjoy taking responsibility and helping each other, raise money for charity and are currently raising funds to pay for a wind turbine to help make their school more ecologically friendly. The school works hard to encourage pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. A good example is the distribution of certificates when pupils have engaged in an activity beyond school that will contribute to their health and well-being. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet, but the content of some lunchboxes does not always help to reinforce this. The school helps pupils to learn an appropriate range of social skills and positive moral values. Pupils' knowledge of other cultures and faiths is less well developed, but the school is working hard to improve this. A good example is the links with the Diocese that have provided pupils with an insight of what life can be like for a child living in the Sudan. The school has been successful in reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent. However, a small number of pupils still arrive late for school in the morning or have low attendance. This is having a negative impact on their learning and progress.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>

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<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.

<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?

A common feature of all lessons is the good quality of the relationships among and between adults and pupils. These were exemplified in a good mathematics lesson in Year 3/4; a range of audio and visual aids as well as practical activities helped pupils to consolidate their knowledge of times tables. This included use of the computer, physical and problem-solving activities, and good use of questions to check the level of pupils' understanding and progress at regular intervals, which also helped to maintain a good pace of learning. Teaching assistants and volunteers make a valuable contribution to learning as well as the good quality of care, guidance and support pupils receive. However, they are not always provided with clear instructions from teachers about the purpose and focus of lessons and the best way to support pupils.

Common weaknesses in lessons include limited challenge for the most able pupils, insufficient use of assessment strategies to help pupils know what to do to improve their work, and too great a focus on activities at the expense of learning. Although the school is developing the use of targets, too many pupils still do not know what their targets are. Pupils were often unable to explain the reason or purpose of lessons or what they were meant to be learning. There were also too many missed opportunities for pupils to talk about their work together or use and develop basic skills which help them to improve their reading and writing. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but their comments, although positive and encouraging, are not sufficiently diagnostic to help pupils know how to improve.

Pupils benefit from a broad and varied curriculum enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Opportunities for them to grow, cook and sometimes eat their own vegetables have provided pupils with a valuable insight about life processes and living things. The school is currently in a period of transition with its curriculum documentation. The previously used schemes of work were not sufficiently detailed to support the needs of staff or pupils. Some subjects are taught as part of a topic approach, but the school has yet to formalise the links between subjects so that learning opportunities can be used as effectively as possible. The school's sensory area has proved particularly valuable to supporting the needs of pupils with emotional needs or who are feeling vulnerable.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

<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>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's monitoring of teaching shows that she had already identified many of the areas for development within teaching found during the course of this inspection. However, not all teachers have responded promptly enough to recommendations made about what they need to do to improve their practice. Subject leaders are keen to develop their roles. They produce action plans, but few explain how actions for improvement will be of benefit to pupils or how success will be measured.

Good links with external agencies in areas such as speech therapy and behaviour support have enabled the school to respond quickly to the needs of parents and carers, and pupils. The school promotes equality and diversity well, but does not evaluate the impact of its work regularly enough. The school has developed a plan of how it will continue to develop and support community cohesion. Its work so far has helped to promote good cohesion within the local community and is helping to increase pupils' awareness of the global community.

Governors contribute to helping the school identify what it needs to improve and how this will be done. However, their monitoring and evaluation role is underdeveloped, particularly in terms of the effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity. The governing body and school leaders have ensured that the school systems for helping to keep pupils safe are robust and compliant. They have worked hard to ensure the health and safety of staff and pupils, and that effective financial management systems are in place.

The school has relied too much on the senior leadership team and the Chair of the Governing Body to drive improvement; this has limited its ability to embed ambition and drive improvement.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</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>3</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>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children begin in the Reception Year with levels that are broadly average, although generally weak in reading and writing and in their emotional development. However, their attainment on entry fell in 2009 because some of the links that had previously been established with feeder pre-schools were discontinued, and the school has yet to redevelop these links to help ensure children are fully prepared for when they join. Nonetheless, children settle quickly and happily into Reception because good partnerships with parents and carers help them and their children to feel welcome and well supported. As a result of satisfactory teaching, children make satisfactory progress. However, there are missed opportunities to provide some of the more able children with additional challenge including the development of reading and writing skills. Although there are adequate assessment systems in place, the progress made by pupils of different abilities is not tracked rigorously enough. Those responsible for leading and managing the Early Years Foundation Stage have successfully developed this part of the school into a bright, colourful and stimulating learning environment which invites pupils to learn, explore and participate enthusiastically and happily.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

There was a high response to the questionnaires. These showed that most parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at school. They say that the school keeps their children safe and that their children enjoys school. A small minority do not believe that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team looked into this but found that the school is effective in dealing with behaviour and this was evident by the good behaviour displayed by the vast majority of pupils, in lessons and around the school. When some minor low-level disruptive behaviour was observed, this was dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Most parents and carers

say they think the school keeps them well informed about how well their children are progressing; a very large majority believe their children are making enough progress but a few do not. The inspection found that pupils generally make satisfactory progress, but that there is room for improvement in terms of the amount of challenge provided to those pupils who are more able.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Lady St Mary Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 102 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	52	30	41	5	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	53	27	37	6	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	44	35	48	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	47	28	38	8	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	51	31	42	5	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	55	27	37	2	3	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	42	36	49	2	3	2	3
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)	24	33	37	51	3	4	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	42	29	40	7	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	26	29	40	21	29	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	32	37	51	7	10	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	31	42	30	41	6	8	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	52	25	34	5	7	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.**



28 May 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of The Lady St Mary Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School,  
Wareham BH20 4PG

Thank you very much for being so friendly and welcoming when inspectors visited your school recently. We enjoyed speaking to you and looking at your work, and were interested to hear your views and those of your parents and carers. We agree with you that there are lots of good things about your school. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education, but these are the things that we found were particularly good:

- The school is good at keeping you safe, and you know how to keep yourselves safe.
- The behaviour in the school is good and you help each other.
- You make a good contribution to your school and local community, such as when you take part in the local carnival.
- The school is particularly good at looking after you and providing you with help and support.
- The school works well with parents and carers and other adults, and this helps you in lots of different ways.

We have asked the school to do the following to help it to become even better:

- Make sure that more of your lessons are good so that you can do even better.
- Improve some of the information teachers need to help them teach all the different subjects.
- Make sure that all the adults who have a responsibility in the school do their job as well as they can to help you to make even better progress in different subjects.
- Make sure that the governors, who I know are keen to help the school as much as they can, know and do all that they are supposed to do, so they can all do their best for you.

You can also help your school by making sure you all arrive on time and come when you are supposed to. I wish you every success and happiness for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier

Her Majesty's Inspector

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