

# Durweston CE VA Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113798
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	338242
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Diane Wilkinson

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	null null
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz Weasley-Barker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 April 2010
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, observed six teachers and also observed the breakfast club and pre-school. They held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. A small number of parents bringing their children to school were also spoken to. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' progress, development planning and monitoring, local authority reports, a range of policies and procedures including those associated with safeguarding, curriculum-planning documents and a sample of pupils' work. They also scrutinised questionnaires returned by 71 parents and carers, 61 pupils and 13 staff.

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

- the success of the school's strategies for improving progress in writing, especially for boys and higher-attaining pupils
- the quality of support for younger pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of the school's work in improving behaviour.

## Information about the school

This is a small school of five mixed-age classes which serves the villages of Durweston, Stourpaine and Bryanston. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few are at the early stages of learning English. The school holds the Healthy School, Activemark and Sportsmark awards. Governors run the Handy Paws pre-school which takes place every morning during term time and have recently established a breakfast club for pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. In particular, a considerable number of these pupils have specific behavioural and emotional needs.

**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

Durweston is a good school where pupils thrive because of the excellent attention given to their welfare. Pupils and their parents or carers agree that this is a very safe and caring school where pupils do exceptionally well in their personal development. They become very mature and thoughtful young people who are very keen to play a full role in the life of the school and community and have an excellent awareness of how to keep healthy and safe. Outstanding links with the local community and a range of agencies benefit pupils' learning and welfare exceptionally well. Pupils' outstanding spiritual development is evident in the excellent spiritual ethos seen in assemblies and pupils' ability to reflect on how Christian teaching should guide the way they act towards others. Pupils have a genuine empathy for those who have special learning or behavioural needs and help them try to overcome their difficulties both in class and at playtimes. This, and the excellent support provided by staff, has ensured that the vast majority of pupils behave well, despite a small minority finding this very difficult.

Academic progress has been effectively improved since the last inspection. Attainment at the end of Year 2 declined in the last two years, partly due to a significant minority of children entering school with skills below those expected. Nevertheless, the school has worked hard to rectify this through improving the quality of teaching, especially for the younger pupils. As a result, teaching is good overall. There is exemplary teaching in some year groups where the excellent level of challenge and pace helps some pupils to progress really well. However, in a minority of lessons there are occasions when the pace and challenge of learning are still aspects to be developed. By the end of Year 6 attainment is very much better than most schools, including in art and music. Improving pupils' writing has been a major focus over the past two years. Standards have been raised, but there is still more to be done, particularly to improve spelling. Excellent support for those pupils who have significant learning, language or behavioural needs helps them to do especially well. Over the last year good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the younger classes, ensures they achieve as well as their classmates.

Parents and carers are full of praise for the excellent start their children have in the Handy Paws Playgroup which provides a warm, rich and stimulating environment. This is built on well in Reception where, when working with an adult, children make excellent progress in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. Learning is not so marked in terms of children's independent activities and this is an area which staff are already aware of.

The headteacher provides a strong drive for improvement, with all staff effectively implementing a variety of innovations over the past two years. Governors provide

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excellent support, especially through their role in helping the school to move forward. The school has a very clear picture of how well it is doing and development planning is effectively addressing weaker aspects of its work. This, together with its success in improving progress, gives confidence that it is well placed to improve further.

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

- Accelerate progress in writing through devising individual programmes to help pupils improve their spelling.
- Improve the quality of teaching, using the excellent examples already in the school, to ensure that all sta
  - consistently set highly challenging tasks
  - maintain a high level of rigour and pace throughout lessons.
- Increase the rate of progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that a higher level of challenge is introduced into Reception children’s independent activities.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

Pupils’ outstanding personal development is a significant strength. The school’s work towards Rights Respecting Schools Status has helped pupils gain an excellent awareness of citizenship and their responsibility towards others. They thoroughly enjoy the many opportunities they have to support their peers and to raise funds for different charities. Excellent links with the three local villages and their churches help pupils play a significant role in the life of the community. For example, pupils spoke proudly of the ‘Shroving’ visits where they took gifts to villagers. These links also play a major part in ensuring that pupils’ spiritual development is of exceptionally high quality. In particular, several parents spoke of the wonderful spiritual ethos in the Easter communion service which pupils helped to plan. A wealth of opportunities for taking part in art and music activities, such as arts week, the recorder orchestra and school choir help pupils develop a very good cultural awareness. Pupils thoroughly enjoy growing and cooking their own vegetables and taking part in numerous sports activities to help lead a healthy lifestyle. They are well aware of the importance of keeping safe in activities such as the ‘Wellie Walks’. Pupils are well prepared for the future despite attendance levels being broadly average rather than good. This is mainly due to term-time holidays.

Pupils’ excellent attitudes to school and capacity for hard work help them to do especially well academically. Children make excellent progress in the playgroup which gives a very good foundation for their learning in school. Because some children do not attend the playgroup, attainment on entry to Reception is broadly within the levels expected, although there is some variation. This means that, while attainment by the end of Reception is generally above average, it was lower for pupils currently in Years 1 and 2. In previous years weaker teaching in these year groups led to slow progress. However, this has now been rectified with pupils making good progress, although attainment is average because it was lower on entry. Year 2 pupils’ writing has improved

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especially well, including for the boys, as is evident in the quality of vocabulary and expressions used in their written work together with neat handwriting.

Pupils make especially good progress in Years 5 and 6 because of high-quality teaching. By the end of Year 6 they write very effectively in different styles across a range of subjects. They are skilled mathematicians, using this knowledge very well, for example in quickly converting millilitres to litres when investigating displacement. Pupils take great pride in their work, which is evident in the excellent artwork displayed around the school and the skill with which they play musical instruments and sing in two parts in assemblies.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

Good procedures have been put in place to secure effective teaching across the school. For example, lesson activities are interesting, motivate pupils to do well and are effectively targeted to help those of different abilities make good progress. In outstanding lessons teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can do, continually encouraging and challenging them to achieve high standards. This

<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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encourages the higher-attainers to do really well and is a major reason why attainment in the school is high. Staff are skilled at helping pupils to identify success criteria so pupils are very clear what is expected of them. Written work is carefully marked and advice provided on how to improve, although sometimes this is rather broad and not helpful to pupils. Both teachers and classroom assistants are very skilled at explaining new things and intervening when pupils need help. However, not all staff maintain a rigorous pace throughout lessons, which limits the rate of progress in tasks where pupils work individually. The considerable curriculum innovation which has taken place over the past two years has had a positive effect on pupils’ progress. In particular the outstanding range and quality of visits, visitors and after-school clubs underpin pupils’ excellent commitment to learning. Developments to the accommodation and grounds have enhanced the learning environment considerably. New strategies such as the ‘Story Making Project’ help to improve attainment in writing, although the full effect of some innovations are not yet apparent and greater improvement is needed in aspects such as spelling.

This is an exceptionally caring school where staff and governors make strenuous efforts to secure pupils’ welfare and to help all pupils, whatever their needs or talents, to do their best. Several parents whose children have specific needs praised the quality of support for their children and families. This ethos has had an effect on the pupils themselves, who are well aware of how they can support others, for example as peer mediators. The new breakfast club provides a safe and happy environment for those pupils who use it. Arrangements for helping new pupils settle in to school and preparing Year 6 pupils for the move to secondary school are exemplary.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has established a strong focus on improvement in all areas of the school’s work, the success of which is evident in pupils’ excellent outcomes. She is effectively supported by all staff, with subject leaders playing an increasingly successful role in supporting monitoring and development work. Self-evaluation is good and allows the school to produce an improvement plan very effectively targeted on areas which need further development, for example in some minor aspects of community cohesion. There is a clear emphasis on providing for the needs of individual pupils and this ensures no pupil is discriminated against and that pupils’ equality of opportunity is good.

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Governors play an outstanding role in helping the school to move forward and provide exceptional support in many important aspects of school life. For example, they make a major contribution to maintaining the excellent safeguarding procedures which ensure that pupils are safe and free from harm at all times. Governors and staff have been exceptionally good at helping forge a range of productive partnerships with other groups. For example, close liaison with the Education Social Work and Attendance Service has done much to decrease the number of persistent absentees. Parents are also very supportive of the school, willingly giving of their time in a variety of activities including fund-raising to help the school obtain more resources.

The school takes its responsibility for encouraging community cohesion seriously and has been very successful in achieving this both in school and the local community. This is now being extended to include links with other areas and is successfully promoting awareness of national and global differences.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<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>1</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>1</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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</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 welfare is given high priority in both the playgroup and Reception classes. This helps children to settle very quickly and to work and play happily together. Those who attend the playgroup benefit from the excellent provision which helps them develop an important range of skills and to enjoy learning. The playgroup accommodation is used to very good effect to provide an exciting environment which stimulates children’s learning exceptionally well. For example, two children had great fun mixing sand with water to discover how the amount of water changes the texture. Adults who work in the playgroup are highly skilled educators and know exactly when to intervene with a quiet



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suggestion to move children on in their learning. For example, this helped children to gain a really good understanding of how tadpoles were growing and changing. High-quality assessment and recording of children’s progress in the pre-school provides Reception staff with excellent information to help plan the next steps when children move on to school. They use this information wisely to set very challenging activities in literacy and numeracy so that children make good progress, and attainment is usually above average by the time they move into Year 1. In particular, children become very skilled in building words from the sounds different letters make, enabling them to easily recognise new words like ‘float’. Number skills are equally good, with children confidently separating 38 beans into two equal piles of 19. Despite these strengths, staff sometimes miss opportunities to encourage even greater progress by setting a higher level of challenge in children’s independent activities. Both the playgroup and Reception class benefit from well-organised, secure outdoor areas which support learning well, although the lack of permanent cover limits their use during inclement weather.

*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**

A significant proportion of parents returned the questionnaire, with a very large majority appreciating what the school offers their children. In particular, they are totally confident that their children are kept safe and free from harm at all times. The vast majority of parents agree their children enjoy school, are well taught and make good progress. Inspection evidence agrees with these views.

A very small minority of parents expressed concerns about the behaviour of disruptive pupils. However, pupils themselves felt the school dealt very well with this and inspection evidence supports their view. A few parents also raised concerns regarding communication with the school. In particular, they would like to know more about the work their children are doing each term, which the school agrees would be helpful. In addition, they were concerned that sometimes children did not know which class they would be moving up to until late in the summer term. Inspection evidence indicates that it is difficult for staff to organise the composition of the mixed-age classes until they receive information about the actual numbers of pupils being admitted to the school.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Durweston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary 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 inspectors received 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 112 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	52	31	44	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	66	24	34	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	35	39	55	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	42	36	51	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	63	23	31	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	46	28	39	9	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	56	24	34	5	7	1	1
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)	26	37	35	49	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	42	32	45	7	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	41	33	46	3	4	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	37	35	49	3	4	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	26	37	31	44	6	8	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	48	33	46	2	3	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.**



29 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Durweston Church of England Primary School, Blandford Forum, DT11 0QA

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our time talking to you and seeing all the things you do. We were very impressed by how mature and thoughtful you are and how involved you are in church and village events. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their lunchtime to talk to us. We think your school is good and are delighted that you and your parents agree.

Here are some of the things we found out that are especially good about the school.

- Staff and governors take excellent care of you. They work really well with other groups to help you stay safe and secure and to learn well.
- The Handy Paws playgroup is excellent and children do really well there.
- You are well taught and make good progress – and especially good progress in Years 5 and 6 – so attainment is very much better than in most schools.
- Your personal development is excellent, you have an exceptional understanding of how to keep healthy and safe and you are very kind and helpful to other children and adults.
- There are lots of interesting visits, visitors and activities which help you do well in many subjects, especially so in art and music.
- Your headteacher and staff are working hard to make your school even better and governors give them excellent support to help them do so.

Here are some of the things we have asked the school to improve.

- Your written work has improved, but your spelling needs to improve further.
- In some classes teachers are especially successful at helping you to do your best. We have asked them to get the best teachers to share their ideas so that this happens more.
- Reception children do really well when working with their teachers and we think they could learn more through their independent activities.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson

Lead Inspector

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