

# Okeford Fitzpaine Church of England Voluntary Aided School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113810
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	338245
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Laver

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>	78
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Berry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Acreman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 April 2007
<b>School address</b>	The Cross Blandford Forum DT11 0RF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. During the inspection, nine lessons were observed and five teachers were seen. Inspectors observed the school's work, and held meetings with pupils, staff, parents and carers, and governors.

Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documentation, including assessment data on pupils' current progress, the school improvement plan, minutes of the governing body and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors attended an assembly. They analysed 32 questionnaires from parents and carers, nine from staff and 40 from pupils.

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

- the effectiveness with which the school is raising standards and addressing underachievement in mathematics and underachievement generally by girls
- the effectiveness with which the school is improving the overall quality of teaching and learning
- how well the school's curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils
- how effectively leaders and managers at all levels are implementing strategies designed to address areas recognised as in need of improvement.

## Information about the school

All pupils in this much smaller than average village school are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which include learning, behavioural and emotional needs, is below average. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in a separate Reception class, while pupils higher up the school are in mixed-age classes. The school has experienced a rise in pupil numbers in the recent past. A relatively high proportion of pupils join the school partway through their primary education. There is an independently run pre-school on the school site.

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

## Inspection judgements

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

**3**

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

**3**

## Main findings

Okeford Fitzpaine Church of England Voluntary Aided School provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is an improving school. In recent months, the school leaders, in close partnership with the local authority, have worked hard to address the significant areas of underperformance in pupils' attainment and achievement that were reflected in the 2009 national test results. The headteacher, all staff and governors work as a team and are committed to moving the school forwards. The school is now on track to meet appropriately challenging targets. There are still inconsistencies, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning, and some of the improvement strategies are not yet fully embedded. However, the school's evaluation of its own strengths and weaknesses is broadly accurate. Monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress is satisfactory. The growing effectiveness of the school in addressing previous weaknesses shows that it has a satisfactory and developing capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils join the school with standards that are broadly at the levels expected for their age. Until recently, many have made unsatisfactory progress. As a result of improvements in teaching and other factors, including improved behaviour, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, now make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. The previous underachievement of girls has been eradicated. A small minority of more able pupils still do not achieve as well as they should because they are not consistently given appropriately challenging work, particularly when working independently. There are some examples of very good teaching, but the quality varies too much. Pace in lessons is not always sufficiently high. Pupils have targets but teachers do not use them as part of their regular teaching, and do not always give pupils a clear enough indication of how they can improve their work, either in lessons or in marking.

Pupils enjoy school and demonstrate many good personal skills. They feel safe. They contribute well to the school and local communities but have a limited understanding of national and global issues, for example what exactly happens to the money they collect to support charities operating overseas. Attendance is above average, and pupils enjoy the wide range of activities such as the many after-school clubs. They now find the curriculum more exciting, as the school has gradually introduced a series of class projects which encourage pupils to explore different topics. Behaviour is good, both within lessons and around the school. Pupils are well cared for: for example, the school gives good support to pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The small number of gifted and talented pupils also benefit from extra opportunities to succeed: for example some young, able mathematicians are able to work regularly with older pupils.

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

- Improve the overall standard of teaching so that it more consistently matches the best quality in the school, by ensuring that:
  - work is always challenging, especially for the more able pupils
  - the pace remains brisk throughout every lesson.
- Give pupils a better understanding of how they can further improve their work, by:
  - making more use of targets in classroom teaching
  - improving marking
  - involving pupils more in the assessment of their own work.
- Improve pupils' awareness of communities elsewhere in the United Kingdom and the wider world.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>3</b>
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Improved progress in mathematics and writing means that standards in Year 6 are now much closer to national averages than recent national test results. Standards of speaking and listening have also risen. Improvements in progress and pupils' achievement have been partly the result of a range of initiatives involving extra support for underachieving pupils both within and outside lessons. These pupils performed well in small group work led by teaching assistants during the inspection; they reinforced and extended their literacy skills effectively.

Pupils are now better prepared for the next stage of education, because of improved standards combined with well-managed transition procedures to give pupils more confidence when moving on. They develop good enterprise skills by learning how to make and market various products. Behaviour is now good and the majority of pupils have a positive attitude towards learning. In good lessons, pupils show great enthusiasm and an eagerness to do well; for example, in a science lesson for younger pupils in which they investigated and recorded different materials in the school grounds, having been carefully prepared beforehand by the teacher. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility, both in the active school council and in other activities such as peer mediation and raising money for charities. They have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, for example talking about the benefits of healthy eating. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that they can turn to adults for help when necessary. Spiritual development is strong, as observed in assemblies where pupils contribute very well to a calm and reflective atmosphere, celebrating the ethos of the school. They also show their support for each other, celebrating others' personal and academic achievements. Social development is very effective, with pupils cooperating well in lessons, and positive relationships are a strength of the school. Though cultural development has some limitations, pupils enjoy good opportunities in school to appreciate activities such as music.

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

*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>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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

While there are some good lessons, much of the teaching is still satisfactory, and the impact on pupils' learning, especially for a minority of more able pupils, is not effective enough to really accelerate their progress. In the best lessons, teachers use the lesson objectives well and engage the pupils in activities and learning opportunities which cater for the full range of ages and abilities within the classroom. Teaching assistants generally provide good support for pupils with particular learning difficulties, so that these pupils make good progress in some lessons. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace sometimes slows when too long is spent on one activity. Although teachers do encourage pupils to learn independently, sometimes they do not monitor all pupils effectively, so that a minority do not work productively enough. The actual tasks given are not open-ended enough to challenge more able pupils. Opportunities are not always taken to involve pupils in assessing their own work in order to consolidate their understanding of how to improve it.

The teaching of basic skills has improved, and other aspects of the curriculum have been reviewed. The resulting emphasis on topic work such as the 'water' project is

<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.

enjoyed by pupils. Pupils also enjoy a rich variety of sporting and other activities for such a small school, and there is a high take-up of them. Pupils are enthusiastic about activities such as the residential trip to Weymouth. All pupils in Year 3 learn to play the violin. Pupils with particular needs, for example the most vulnerable and some of those with behavioural or emotional needs, are identified quickly and are helped effectively to overcome significant barriers. All pupils benefit from good systems to promote their care and guidance. For example, there are good procedures in place to encourage regular attendance, and well-managed procedures ease the transition of older pupils to secondary school. There are good links at the other end of the school between Reception and Year 1. Pupils who join the school partway through the school year or in different year groups are quickly integrated into what is a caring community.

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

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The amount and quality of monitoring have improved since the previous inspection. Subject leaders are increasingly involved in the process, and they carry out this role enthusiastically. The results are evident in the improvements in teaching, although some initiatives, for example to improve the use of assessment in the classroom, are not yet embedded. The systems for tracking and recording pupils' progress are good, so underachievers are identified at an early stage. Okeford Fitzpaine is an inclusive school, with no discrimination. Equality of opportunity is evident in the way all pupils are encouraged to play a full part in school life and engage in lots of activities, and also in their strong social development.

The governing body is influential and governors offer strong challenge and support. They contribute systematically to the regular monitoring. The school has many strategies to engage parents and carers in their children's learning, for example by publishing regular newsletters and offering information meetings. Links with other schools such as the local secondary school lead to some shared activities and the use of resources, although as yet these have a limited impact on pupils' learning and progress. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Pupils are taught about personal safety, for example in the use of computers, and staff and pupils are well aware of appropriate safety procedures. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. It understands its context and evaluates what it does to promote this area. Plans to develop wider links within the United Kingdom and overseas are at an early stage.

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

*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>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>3</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>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

In recent years, children have joined the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skill and knowledge in line with or above those expected for their age. Children currently in Reception are making good progress in all areas of learning, although progress in creative development is slower than in other areas such as reading, writing and numeracy skills. Many children leave Reception as articulate and confident individuals. Teaching is good, with an appropriate balance between child-initiated and teacher-led activities, and planning ensures appropriate levels of challenge for the different abilities. This was seen, for example, when children were enthusiastically engaged in different activities to increase their understanding of 'easy' and 'difficult' words. The quality of some learning is restricted by the lack of a good outdoor resource area. The Reception class is well managed. Leaders and managers track individual children's progress efficiently. However, currently, there is limited evaluation of the progress of the class as a whole, so analysis of which areas of learning produce the best or least progress is not so rigorous. There are good links to ensure a smooth transition to and from Reception: for example children from the on-site pre-school attend a school assembly once a week, and children from Reception sometimes work with Year 1 pupils. Children feel safe and well cared for, and parents and carers praise the school's efforts to involve them in their children's school experience through regular contact and the warm welcome they receive from staff.



*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**

Most parents and carers are positive in their support for the school, and are particularly appreciative of the way in which the school cares for and supports their children, and stimulates their enjoyment through activities both inside and beyond lessons. A typical comment was: 'We are very lucky for our children to be educated in such beautiful surroundings. All the staff work hard to make sure any child's education is rounded and well balanced.'

A small minority of questionnaires indicated concerns in a number of different areas. Inspectors recognise that not all pupils have made as much progress as they should, although the rate of progress for the great majority of pupils has increased considerably during the past year. There are some instances of misbehaviour, but behaviour has improved in recent months, partly because the school now has a more concerted and consistent behaviour strategy in place. The school works hard to keep parents and carers informed about their children's progress, both by means of reports and meetings, and by regular newsletters and other communications.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Okeford Fitzpaine Church of England Voluntary Aided 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 78 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	41	18	56	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	38	17	53	2	6	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	22	18	56	6	19	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	25	13	41	8	25	2	6
The teaching is good at this school	9	28	17	53	2	6	2	6
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	19	18	56	5	16	2	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	31	19	59	2	6	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)	9	28	18	56	2	6	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	19	19	59	6	19	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	9	20	63	5	16	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	13	20	63	6	19	2	6
The school is led and managed effectively	7	22	18	56	4	13	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	28	18	56	2	6	2	6

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.

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## 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.**



25 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Okeford Fitzpaine Church of England Voluntary Aided School, Blandford DT11 0RF

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school this week. We enjoyed seeing you in lessons and around the school, and talking to you about your school. You told us about what you liked in the school, for example the activities organised after school and the trips. Some older pupils told us they did not think behaviour was good, but we judged that it is now. You get on well with each other and are well looked after, and we know that most of you feel safe in school. You are good at coming to school regularly  well done!

Okeford Fitzpaine gives you a satisfactory standard of education. Until recently, many of you did not do as well in your work as you should have done, and this was shown in your results as compared with many other schools. Many of you are now doing better and making more progress, as your teachers work hard to help you in your lessons. Often, your teachers give you interesting things to do, and then you work enthusiastically. Everyone wants the school to improve so we have given it three things to do.

- Make sure your work is always hard enough, especially for those of you who are capable of reaching the highest standards, and that all of you work quickly throughout lessons. You can help by always trying hard.
- Give you more information about your work and how you can do better, including using your targets and helping you to learn how to judge for yourselves how well you are doing.
- Tell you more about how people live elsewhere in Britain and in the wider world.

Best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

John Laver

Lead inspector

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