

Puriton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123694
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340400
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen McShane HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Reseigh
Headteacher	Gina Harris
Date of previous school inspection	6 September 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, parents and representatives of the local authority and a national leader for education (NLE). They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books, and scrutinised the data the school has collected on pupils' progress and the records of the school's work since the last inspection. Fifty-three parental questionnaires were returned and examined by the inspection team along with staff and pupil questionnaires.

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

- The effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection.
- The rates of progress made by pupils.
- The impact of leadership and management at all levels since the last inspection.
- Whether the school's systems are embedded sufficiently to enable the school to continue to improve.

Information about the school

Puriton is a smaller than average primary school. Its roll has recently fallen but it has maintained one class for each year group. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average although the numbers vary between different year groups. The school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in its Reception class.

At the last inspection the school was given a notice to improve. Significant improvement was required in relation to the standards attained and the achievement of pupils in writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Since that date there has been support from the local authority and from an NLE who is a local headteacher. The school was visited in May 2009 by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors who was of the opinion that the school was making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

As the headteacher is currently on sick leave, the school is being led by an acting headteacher seconded from another school in the local authority. There is a new chair and vice chair of the governing body.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

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.

Puriton is a satisfactory school. Over the last year staff have worked hard to remedy many of the previous weaknesses. The attainment of pupils is now broadly average and the learning and progress of pupils are now satisfactory.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. While in many lessons teaching is good and at times has outstanding features some inconsistencies still remain. This means that the level of challenge to pupils is still uneven and pupils do not always have the opportunity to build effectively on their previous achievements. Whole-school systems have been introduced, particularly related to planning, assessment and marking and these have resulted in some good practice in a number of classes but, again, inconsistencies remain.

Pupils feel safe at Puriton. They are confident that adults will sort out any problems. The youngest pupils feel that the school's 'worry box' works well so that teachers know if they need help. Pupils behave well. They talk knowledgeably about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and show this in their active participation in their 'wake and shake' activity and physical education sessions and by eating their fruit cups and their healthy lunches from home or from the local village pub. Pupils have strongly developed feelings of right and wrong and deal kindly with each other. They have less developed spiritual or cultural knowledge. Similarly their contribution to their own community or to improving their own learning and the environment, although satisfactory, is limited.

Adults know pupils well. Individual pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have detailed programmes that are carefully monitored and evaluated. There are also a number of interventions for pupils who may be at risk of underachievement. There is some variation in the quality of these and also some duplication. The school has rightly recognised the need for a whole-school approach to accelerating the progress of vulnerable groups.

It is clear that the school has been through some difficult times over the last 12 months. There have been changes in teaching personnel and now the school is in a period of acting headship. The school has worked effectively with the local authority consultants and the NLE who have offered very effective support. Enthusiastic middle managers have been very successful in challenging historic practice and bringing about change. In particular, they have made effective improvements in the monitoring of pupils' progress and the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Governors have worked hard to ensure the school functions satisfactorily. They recognise that at times they have not worked strategically enough nor held the school sufficiently to account. However, they have now

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reorganised and embarked on an ambitious training programme.

The acting headteacher has been welcomed by all sections of the school community. Although it is too early to measure the impact, her infectious 'can do/will do' attitude is already evident in the clear articulation of a new vision statement, the improvements to the environment and teaching resources and the enthusiasm of all staff for the school's continuing improvement. Governors, senior and middle leaders and other staff are all clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They know what they now need to do and have satisfactory capacity to build upon the trend of improvement that has been established in the last year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all pupils are making consistently good progress in English, mathematics and science by:
 - developing further the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress and using this information consistently to inform planning for personalised learning
 - tackling inconsistencies in teaching and learning so that by September 2010 all teaching is good or better
 - building on the existing good practice to ensure that all marking and feedback enables pupils to know how to improve their work
 - ensuring all intervention programmes accelerate progress; they should be timely and of good quality and systematically reviewed and monitored as part of a whole-school approach to raising achievement.
- Systematically develop aspects of pupils' personal development by giving them more opportunities to:
 - take responsibility and contribute to the life of the school and the wider community
 - work with their teachers to plan and make decisions about their learning
 - engage with and prepare for life in a multicultural society.
- Improve the governance of the school so that governors can:
 - develop further their ambitions and aspirations for the school
 - rigorously and tenaciously hold the school to account for the learning, progress and well-being of all the pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Attainment is broadly average. In 2009, results in English and science at the end of Year 6 improved although it is clear that the pupils sitting these tests felt the impact of previous weak teaching and this affected their overall results. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at the levels expected for this age group and make good progress that is maintained through Key Stage 1. Historically, progress has been uneven

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in Key Stage 2 and this led to the inadequacy identified by the previous inspection. Now it is clear that pupils are making at least satisfactory and often good progress. Data suggest that pupils in Year 6 have still some ground to make up but pupils in other groups are making progress in line with that expected nationally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall. Some pupils receiving targeted work have made good and better progress in aspects of their reading and language development.

During the inspection inspectors met courteous, polite and friendly pupils whose attitude to learning was good. There was no evidence of disruptive behaviour. Some pupils and parents were concerned about behaviour at the school but when inspectors spoke to the pupils it appears that concerns were related to incidents involving only one or two pupils. Pupils were confident that these were isolated incidents which have not been repeated.

Older pupils have opportunities to become 'buddies' or young leaders. They care for younger pupils well and are a significant factor in these pupils feeling safe and well cared for. Pupils engage in fund-raising for charities and the school council has recently been revived. Pupils have strong moral values; this is evident in the effective way they engage with each other and the reflective nature of their discussions. Their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities are less well developed, as is their spiritual development and the way in which they talk and reflect upon beliefs or religion. Pupils are confident in their use of information and communication technology (ICT). They work well together and are happy to engage in teamwork and problem-solving activities. Attendance and punctuality are good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

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

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	
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3 2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

All teaching takes place in a positive atmosphere that is respectful and industrious. Behaviour is managed well and any minor distractions are quickly and effectively dealt with. Some of the teaching at Puriton is interesting, enthusiastic and lively. It is planned with a secure knowledge of pupils' needs and the work is matched accordingly. This good teaching is focused at all times on clear learning objectives that are regularly revisited to ensure that pupils are making the best progress they can. There is a good balance of teacher and pupil talk, with pupils reflecting on their work and teachers extending learning through careful questioning. In a minority of lessons the focus of the teaching is too wide, giving insufficient challenge to some groups of pupils, and the pace is too slow. There are missed opportunities to ensure that pupils are consistently engaged and learning. Teaching assistant support, although it is sensitive and encouraging, is not deployed to best effect.

There is now a clear marking and assessment policy in place. However, it is not yet consistently applied. Excellent practice was evident where teachers discussed their learning with pupils with clear reference to targets and what individuals needed to do next or to revisit. This feedback led to improvements in the pupils' work. Less effective practice was evident when marking, although regular and encouraging, did not show pupils how to improve.

As well as providing appropriate coverage of literacy, numeracy and science, the school's creative curriculum enables pupils to use their basic skills, including ICT, in a variety of contexts. Through themed weeks pupils are able to develop wider skills as they engage in a number of interesting and varied activities. The curriculum is enhanced for pupils who are gifted and talented by additional experiences offered by partners and, for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties, through the use of signs and symbols.

Pastoral support is effective and there is a high take-up of a good range of enjoyable after-school clubs. Suitable support for vulnerable pupils is in place and procedures to ensure attendance are robust.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3 3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support

3

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the last inspection, managers, supported by the local authority, have implemented a range of effective initiatives including a consistent approach to planning, the establishment of clear tracking data and regular pupil progress meetings. Regular and detailed monitoring has also been put in place. These initiatives have led to a palpable sense of ambition, a clear sense of shared purpose in the school, the raising of expectations and a demonstrable improvement in teaching.

The governors are supportive of the school. They know it very well and have in the past been frustrated by the results and pupils' poor progress. They are business-like, well organised and very involved in the day-to-day running of the school; they have taken some important decisions. However, governors have not always had the necessary information and training to take a full strategic role and challenge the school effectively. Recently, one parent has taken on the role of parent champion to represent parent views and improve communication. Meetings have taken place and information sharing has become more effective. Parents feel that this useful process has been enhanced by the acting headteacher and that their views are now listened to and acted upon. Helpful and parent-friendly advice has been distributed including information about writing and special educational needs.

Satisfactory partnerships exist with agencies to support pupils who may be vulnerable. An effective partnership with the local secondary school enhances the curriculum with additional activities for pupils while those partnerships with the local authority and the NLE have meant that the school's leadership has been considerably strengthened. The school has strong links with the local village community and provides through the curriculum some opportunities for pupils to consider the wider national and global community of which they are part. However, the school recognises the need to give pupils more opportunities to engage with people from different religions and cultures. The school takes adequate steps to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to participate and learn and any racist incidents between pupils are quickly and effectively dealt with. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. The acting headteacher has strengthened the child protection policy and ensured that all adult members of the school community are appropriately trained. Historically the school's process of risk assessments of the environment has not been robust enough but ongoing improvements to the site and to the supervision of the pupils have remedied inadequacies.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement

3

Taking into account:

The leadership and management of teaching and learning

3

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they play and learn purposefully. Children are able to follow instructions, take responsibility and discuss the links that they are making in their learning. They are well behaved and able to take turns and work cooperatively. The environment is interesting and exciting and teachers provide a good range of child-initiated and adult-led activities. The provision is planned so that all children have access to the indoor and outside learning environments and activities allow children to learn independently, in different ways and at their own pace. Sensitive and appropriate support is given to pupils who need it.

Children are cared for well. There are good relationships with parents with ongoing invitations to talk together and share the achievements of their children through 'wow' certificates. The transition of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effectively supported by other agencies with the preparation of a school entry plan that tackles any potential difficulties and then is reviewed as the child settles into Reception. There are good procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the progress of the children. There is a clear direction for the improvement of the Early Years Foundation Stage and good quality continuing professional development for staff.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

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Views of parents and carers

Most parents are happy with their child's experience at Puriton school. Individual, additional comments were both positive and negative about different aspects of the school. Inspectors explored concerns about behaviour, safety, pupils' progress and the extent to which the school listens to parents, and these are dealt with in the inspection findings. Many parents warmly welcomed the arrival of the acting headteacher, writing about the positive impact she has had in a short period of time.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Puriton 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 inspection team received 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 157 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	55	21	40	2	4	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	26	49	18	34	6	11	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	43	21	40	4	7	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	28	26	49	6	11	4	7
The teaching is good at this school	25	47	19	36	5	9	3	6
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	51	19	36	5	9	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	66	17	32	0	0	1	2
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)	27	51	19	36	0	0	3	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	41	23	43	4	7	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	28	30	57	7	13	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	28	27	51	6	11	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	19	36	23	43	5	9	3	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	57	18	34	0	0	4	7

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



19 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Puriton Primary School, Bridgwater, TA7 8BT

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and spending time in your lessons. We found that your school has improved over the last year and is now satisfactory. These are our main findings.

- You behave well and you are polite and courteous. You have a good understanding of how to keep safe and how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- You are kind to each other and look after each other well but do not have enough opportunities to reflect on or engage with people from other cultures.
- Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes better. When it is good you make good progress. This is because the teaching is carefully planned, lively and interesting and you are all working hard at activities that are just right for you.
- The adults have worked hard to improve your school. They have made a lot of changes that will help you make better progress.

We are asking the school to:

- make sure you are all making good progress in English, mathematics and science
- make sure all the teaching and marking is at least good
- make sure any additional help you receive helps you to make good progress
- give you more opportunities to take responsibilities and work with teachers to improve
- help you develop a greater understanding of different cultures and faiths
- improve the work of the governors so that they can lead the school well and assure themselves that you are all making good progress.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Stephen McShane

Her Majesty's Inspector

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