

# Crowcombe Church of England VA Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123830
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	342347
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Daniel Towl HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 on roll</b>	
School (total)	49
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robin Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lindsay Gabriel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 February 2002
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Crowcombe Taunton TA4 4AA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01984 618273
<b>Fax number</b>	01984 618346

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector.

## Description of the school

Crowcombe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a small school situated in the centre of the village of Crowcombe at the foot of the Quantock Hills. It is federated with the local Stogumber School. There is one headteacher and governing body for both schools. At the time of the inspection there was an acting headteacher for 50% of the week because the newly appointed substantive headteacher had not yet taken up post. Some teaching is shared between schools. Pupils also regularly travel between schools for lessons. All pupils are of White British origin and the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards are above average, but pupils' progress varies from satisfactory to very good. There are several good features to the school, and some aspects of pupils' personal development are outstanding. The school can be proud of this aspect of its work, a view strongly supported by parents. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They have exemplary attitudes to their work and each other.

The federation with the nearby Stogumber School is very successful and well managed by staff and governors. Much thought has been given to making this operate as smoothly and efficiently as possible and overall pupils benefit from the shared teaching and resources and the chance to meet a wider group of peers, especially those in the year groups with very small numbers. This enhances local community cohesion.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in Years 5 and 6, but in other year groups they are of variable quality. This leads to inconsistent progress, as confirmed by the school's regular monitoring of pupils' progress, which shows that it is variable across different year groups, especially in the early part of Key Stage 2. The school's first group of Year 6 pupils are on track to reach standards that are above average overall this year. These pupils have made good progress and their achievements reflect the good teaching of the older pupils. In Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress is satisfactory. Consistently good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they are fully involved and generally make good progress in their learning. Pupils' personal development and overall achievements by Year 6 effectively support their future economic well-being. They have considered issues such as recycling, taken part in the local Pupil Parliament and run small enterprises to raise money for charity.

There is a rich curriculum which pupils find interesting. This helps to keep them enthusiastic and interested in their work. Most pupils engage fully with their tasks. Good use is made of the local area to enhance the curriculum. Staff have fully considered the differing needs of pupils in classes with mixed age groups, and have established appropriate programmes of study to ensure clear progression in their learning when they are in the same class for more than one year.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good progress has been made in developing pupils' writing and the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have increased opportunities to work independently, both areas identified as issues in the last inspection. The governors have managed to achieve some stability through a time of significant staff changes. The school is improving its monitoring of pupils' achievements, but the use of assessments and targets is not yet good enough to ensure that pupils' progress is consistently good across the school. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that the school plays an important role within the local community.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Children settle well into school and make satisfactory progress overall. Above average standards ensure that they are adequately prepared to start Key Stage 1. Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children are enthusiastic about their work

and enjoy the activities provided for them. They are well supervised and supported in a caring environment. They gain confidence and play and learn effectively together. Children have regular opportunities to work and play outdoors. Parents rightly commented favourably on the caring environment provided and the range of activities that children take part in. The balance of child-initiated and teacher-led activities has improved since the last inspection.

Staff make ongoing assessments as children undertake their tasks. These are compiled into an informative portfolio, providing useful information about children's progress. Although staff know the children well, the link between observations, assessment and planning is not rigorous enough to ensure that children's next steps in learning are consistently well planned for. The school is currently improving the way it records children's assessments in order to link more closely with the school's overall monitoring procedures.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The relatively large number of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 class poses significant challenges. The way the children and the tasks are organised does not always make the most of learning opportunities that activities present. Nonetheless, the younger children do benefit and gain confidence by working with the older pupils.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Reduce variation in pupils' progress across the school by making sure that analysis of achievements is leading to well-targeted teaching in all year groups.
- Improve the links between assessment and planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and make better use of assessment information throughout the school to ensure that pupils are consistently working towards challenging targets.
- Manage more carefully the whole-class and group sessions in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage to make learning more effective for all pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are above average in most year groups. Progress varies, however, from satisfactory to very good. Pupils enter the school with skills and understanding that are usually at or above the levels expected for their age, though in some of the older year groups, with smaller numbers, the ability levels on entry were more variable. This is the first year that the school has had Year 6 pupils. They have made good progress and achieved well in English, mathematics and science. The Year 6 group is very small and pupils benefit from links with peers in the federated school. Standards reached in 2008 at the end of Key Stage 1 were slightly above average overall, representing satisfactory progress. There has been a slight decline in reading standards over the last three years, but pupils achieved better in reading and mathematics than writing. Achievements in writing have improved recently because this has been a focus for development. The school is very responsive to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils mostly make good progress and are included well in all activities and tasks. Most pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The vast majority of pupils enjoy school and their lessons. This is clear from their enthusiasm for their tasks and their excellent behaviour, reflecting the high expectations of the staff and values of the school. Attendance is good. Moral and social development is outstanding. Pupils' social skills are evident in lessons in the way that they get on well and work together productively. Break times too are good social occasions. Pupils are extremely active in their play. Equipment in the school grounds provides good opportunities for more adventurous play. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that staff deal with any issues of concern quickly and fairly. Pupils do not have any concerns about bullying. The personal, social and health education programme has due prominence and is taught well. These lessons allow pupils to successfully explore a range of matters, including their feelings.

Pupils are fully aware of what constitutes healthy eating and have sufficient timetabled opportunities for physical activities, including swimming, which they enjoy. Links with a school in the Gambia have a very high profile and enable pupils and staff to learn effectively about communities further afield. They learn about other faiths, although their experiences of other communities that reflect diversity in the United Kingdom are more limited. Every opportunity is taken to involve the pupils in local activities, for example the Halsway Manor open day, dancing festivals and charity events. Pupils enjoy the chance to meet with their peers in the federated Stogumber School.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Excellent relationships and high levels of respect create a positive classroom ethos. This helps pupils to engage well with their tasks. Teachers are generally clear about what they want pupils to learn and due consideration is given to the needs of different groups, including those who may need additional help. The quality of teaching is variable across the different year groups, but strongest in the upper part of Key Stage 2. The governors have had some difficulties in maintaining continuity of staffing for some year groups and this has had a negative impact on achievement. Some parents expressed concerns about the number of teachers that some pupils in lower Key Stage 2 have in one week. A full complement of permanent staff is expected to be in place for the next school year.

Lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to talk with each other and share views and ideas. This approach has had a good impact on pupils' ability to develop more imaginative thinking, especially as an aid to writing, which has been an effective whole-school development. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work well together in small groups on practical tasks, for example learning about time in mathematics using different devices to time events. Whole-class discussions in the Key Stage 1 and Early Years Foundation Stage class are sometimes too long, especially for the youngest children who find it hard to concentrate, and some adult-led small-group tasks for the younger children are over managed, limiting their responses.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is carefully managed to ensure progression, continuity and entitlement in the mixed age classes. There is due emphasis on literacy and numeracy and teachers successfully use cross-curricular links to promote literacy skills. The school has made every effort to ensure that the curriculum is similar in both the federated schools since pupils and teachers work in both. Good use is made of the local environment to enhance learning. Local history and the rural Quantock environment successfully enrich pupils' learning. The school has gained a gold International School Award because of its links with a Gambian school. The pupils talk enthusiastically about the good range of visits they undertake, and their experiences are further enhanced by attendance at a 'forest school'. Visits and camps not only add to academic learning but also help promote self-esteem and enjoyment of school. The curriculum is further enriched by the regular French lessons. The youngest pupils have ready access to an outside area that successfully broadens their experiences and opportunities for independent activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has satisfactory arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of pupils and appropriate risk assessments have been undertaken. Day-to-day supervision of pupils is good. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe and well cared for. Pastoral support for pupils is good and they appreciate this. One pupil said, 'Teachers are always there for you.'

Teachers regularly assess pupils' work and conferences between teachers and pupils provide good opportunities to discuss progress and set targets. Older pupils are aware of their learning targets, for example to know certain 'times-tables', but younger pupils are less sure about their targets. The ethos of the school ensures that all pupils are fully involved in activities, including those who have significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Consequently, most of these pupils make good progress both in academic terms and in their personal development. The quality of marking is inconsistent across the school and not sufficiently well linked to targets or objectives.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership of the school and federation is in a process of change while awaiting the new substantive headteacher to take up appointment. The governors have acted effectively to provide good interim leadership through the appointment of an acting headteacher who works at the school for about half of the week. The governors and senior staff have successfully maintained the smooth running of the federation with Stogumber School. The school has responded well to the last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Resources are used efficiently, including those for information and communication technology. Pupils enjoy using the readily available class sets of laptop computers.

While there is careful monitoring of pupils' progress, target setting against national expectations is not yet providing sufficiently aspirational targets for all year groups. There is a common purpose amongst the staff and good liaison between the two schools. Most parents are very

supportive of, and positive about, the school and federation. Many commented on the friendly atmosphere that pervades.

The school promotes strong cohesiveness with its own local community and has a clear agenda for promoting equality in what it provides for its pupils. Despite the good links with the Gambia, the school is aware that links with other cultural groups within the United Kingdom are not sufficiently developed.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B**

**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

12 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crowcombe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Taunton, TA4 4AA

Thank you very much for helping us with the inspection of your school. We especially enjoyed our discussions with you and seeing you at work in your lessons. We decided that the school was providing you with a satisfactory education. The school is successful in helping you to develop into sensible and caring young people.

You told us that most of you thoroughly enjoy coming to school and find your lessons interesting. We could see that. We thought your behaviour was excellent. Your attitudes to each other and to your work were outstanding.

We are also very pleased that the links you have with your partner school at Stogumber are working well and providing you with extra opportunities. You told us that you have interesting visits and we were very impressed with the links that have been made with the school in Gambia.

Most of you are making satisfactory progress, although some of you are doing really well. We would like more of you to be making good progress, so we have asked the teachers to look carefully at the way they set your targets and plan your work. We have also asked the teachers to make sure that the lessons for the younger pupils are organised differently so that you can learn even better. You can help by continuing to work hard and enjoy your lessons.

We hope the links with Stogumber continue to be successful.

Thank you again.

Yours faithfully

Daniel Towl

Her Majesty's Inspector