

The Abbey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113850
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	395744
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2012
Lead inspector	Juliet Jaggs

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Preston
Headteacher	Peter Meacham
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 May 2009
School address	St James's Street Shaftesbury SP7 8HQ
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Juliet Jaggs

Additional inspector

Kevin Wright

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 part lessons taught by nine teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection and observed the school's work as well as looking at self-evaluation documentation, development planning, assessment information and safeguarding procedures. The inspectors analysed 85 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

The Abbey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is smaller than most primary schools and a relatively high number of its pupils leave and join the school during the academic year. The largest groups of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who are from other minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is well below average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. These pupils receive support for specific, moderate and severe learning difficulties and needs associated with autistic spectrum disorder. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- The Abbey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a good school where pupils make good progress to achieve above average levels of attainment by the time they leave. It is not yet outstanding because planning procedures have yet to be developed to make teaching, the curriculum and the school's response to its own evaluation of the highest quality.
- Effective routines for promoting progress in reading mean that pupils' achievement is above average. The school responded well to the recommendations from the previous inspection and standards in writing have improved.
- The leadership of teaching has been effective because routine monitoring is used to ensure that teachers maintain a sharp focus on the school development priorities. Teachers consistently ask thoughtful questions and provide valuable feedback. They usually prepare different materials to meet the needs of all groups of pupils but these are not always designed or used effectively to promote even better progress.
- Leaders and managers have very organised systems for managing the performance of most aspects of the school. They are aware of variations in the overall attainment of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but planning is not always specific enough to address them really effectively.
- The school makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the quality of music in the school is particularly high. There are numerous opportunities for pupils of all ages to learn and play together and high staff expectations about standards of behaviour mean they do so sociably. The curriculum has recently been improved and provides pupils with a number of exciting learning opportunities through a range of topics. Planning is not yet rigorous enough to ensure that standards in literacy and numeracy are always high enough during this work.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that there are more examples of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers modify materials appropriately for all groups of learners so that they provide relevant support
 - introducing these different materials and other activities earlier in lessons so that all groups of pupils are challenged to make better progress sooner.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including that of the Early Years Foundation Stage, by ensuring that the school consistently uses the information gleaned from its monitoring systems to respond effectively once the need for improvement has been identified.
- Enhance the new curriculum so that by December 2012, planning procedures accurately define expected outcomes for literacy and numeracy tasks during topic work to further accelerate progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils are becoming independent learners, capable of drawing on secure skills as they devise original responses to new tasks. For example, pupils in Year 5 composed memorable poems about Italian food using a range of literary techniques. Most pupils readily included metaphor and alliteration to enhance their descriptions and explored new vocabulary to make their poems more vivid. Pupils collaborate well in groups or with a partner to assemble research findings. For example, those in Year 4 were keen to share what they had discovered about the features of tessellating shapes before creating their own repeating patterns. By the end of lessons, pupils are often able to summarise their new learning and to appraise one another's efforts knowledgeably.

Children typically start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and competencies that are as expected for their age. They enjoy challenges, and encourage one another to investigate games and resources. Their attainment is broadly average by the time they move into Key Stage 1. The school has responded well to the recommendations from the previous inspection and all groups of pupils now make better progress in Key Stage 1. The progress of all groups of pupils continues to improve through Key Stage 2 so that their attainment in English and mathematics is above average by the time they leave. The school takes advantage of professional development opportunities to ensure the most suitable provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. In addition, effective monitoring systems are used to ensure that teaching assistants provide relevant guidance in lessons and that these pupils make good progress as a result. Almost all parents and carers agree that their children are making good progress with a few

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adding comments about the positive impact of individual support.

Pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils use the sounds made by letters to decode new words independently and some correctly identify the purpose of punctuation. Books in the library have been carefully catalogued so pupils easily recognise books of increasing difficulty. They make wise choices and read often which sustains their good progress, so that attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2.

Quality of teaching

Teachers are well organised so pupils have become accustomed to routines that enable them to settle quickly to work. Planned activities often support pupils' spiritual development by encouraging them to make links in their learning and think logically when finding answers to problems. Individual pupils are well known by teachers who respond thoughtfully to their ideas, and provide them with helpful guidance and challenges to promote individual progress. For example, in one good lesson in the Early Years Foundation Stage in which the children were learning to recognise blended sounds, the teacher anticipated that one child would want to try to write the word 'surprise' as soon as it had been suggested by one of her peers. Teachers frequently plan specific roles for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs so that they can contribute to whole-class activities with confidence.

Teachers use a variety of questioning techniques skilfully during whole-class discussions so that individual pupils are often called upon to think more deeply about an original answer. Marking is of a consistent quality with teachers routinely highlighting where pupils have applied new ideas successfully, as well as identifying aspects that could be improved. Most pupils have adopted a similar approach so they are able to review their own and each other's work accurately and to suggest how to make more progress. Teachers have collaborated to improve their systems for assessing reading and a greater emphasis on questioning pupils' comprehension has had a positive impact on their attainment. Most pupils undertake similar activities at the start of lessons which teachers then modify for different learners in response to their progress. This means there can be a delay in some pupils moving on to work that provides the right level of challenge. Teachers usually prepare a variety of materials to meet the needs of different learners. Too often it is the quantity of work that is adapted rather than the nature of the task so the resources are not specific enough to support better progress. Many parents and carers commented that they felt fortunate in the quality of teaching.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are aware of their obligations to maintain high standards of behaviour. They are sensitive to different situations and behave appropriately so that their behaviour is consistently good. Pupils' attendance is above average. Most pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and they take responsibility for sourcing the information

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necessary to begin tasks independently. The school supports their social development well by providing a number of opportunities for leadership. Pupils interact maturely and they are able to give and receive direction graciously. They cooperate well when they create music so that they are able to perform to a high standard. Some pupils acknowledge that they behave more calmly during lessons than they do at playtimes which are quite energetic. Nevertheless, pupils of different ages mix well and look after one another. Parents and carers commented very favourably upon the standard of behaviour, particularly the use of praise in encouraging good conduct. Pupils also feel that behaviour is typically good and that school is a safe environment.

Pupils have a good awareness of the various types of bullying and they are keen to play their part in preventing one another from being bullied. They report that instances are rare and that if they do occur, they are confident that staff will act swiftly and effectively. Parents and carers are in total agreement about the safe environment in which their children learn and develop. Regular opportunities for pupils to organise activities for the rest of the school during 'Golden Time' and after school mean that pupils feel settled and safe in one another's company. Pupils are well able to identify risk. Their strong sense of responsibility to one another means that they are being influential in deterring car drivers from creating potential hazards at the road junction outside the school.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for the school and they have demonstrated that they have a good capacity for making it even more effective. They responded well to the issues raised at the time of the previous inspection so there have been improvements in the achievement of pupils at Key Stage 1, who now make better progress. Middle leaders have taken advantage of a variety of professional development activities undertaken with other local providers. Sharing these experiences with their colleagues has raised standards in literacy and particularly the quality of pupils' writing throughout the school. There has been a concerted effort to implement a consistent marking policy and pupils now receive more effective feedback.

Leaders and managers have established a well-organised system for managing the performance of the school. Effective monitoring activities are routine so leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Members of the governing body have introduced their own review procedures so that they are able to provide an independent view. These conclusions are analysed together to identify specific priorities for further development but the timescales for addressing these whole-school issues are occasionally too long so that there is a delay in the school's response. Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage identify trends in children's attainment over time but satisfactory management activities to coordinate planning and redress the imbalance have not yet resulted in children making consistently good progress. The school is determined to ensure there is no discrimination and that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn well, so information about individual pupil

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progress is routinely checked for early signs of underachievement. Individual support has been effective in raising the attainment of particular pupils.

The curriculum has been extended to provide pupils with a wealth of enrichment activities that support their personal development well. There are many opportunities for pupils to be involved in sporting competitions, and cultural events in the local area give pupils a keen sense of their Dorset heritage. School leaders are developing the curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities for applying their basic skills in a variety of contexts. Planning arrangements are not yet specific enough to ensure that pupils' good progress in reading, writing and mathematics is sustained while they are working on these topics.

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare are well organised to meet statutory requirements but they also include a personalised element that reflects the school's care for individual pupils and their families. Most parents and carers highlighted the quality of their child's learning experiences and the efficient way in which the school is run. They value the opportunities they have had to find out how to support their child in mathematics and reading.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



9 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Abbey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Shaftesbury SP7 8HQ

I should like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed hearing you read and talking to you about your learning, especially your topic work on the countries represented at the Olympics. Your views have been taken into account and we have found that yours is a good school. Here are some of the key findings from the report.

- Your behaviour is good and we were particularly impressed that you want to organise activities for one another after school and during 'Golden Time'. Your parents and carers think that you behave well in school and they are pleased that you keep one another safe.
- You are able to talk about your learning with your friends and to suggest how they can improve. You make good progress so that your attainment is above average by the time you leave.
- The teaching is good because you are given so many opportunities to think about your learning in different ways. Your teachers and teaching assistants plan well for disabled pupils and those of you who have special educational needs so that you are able to join in.

I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to continue to improve the school by:

- making sure that the materials they plan for different groups in lessons give you the right amount of help or challenge
- introducing these different activities earlier in the lesson so that you are able to make better progress more quickly
- making sure that you know how to produce high quality work in reading, writing and mathematics while you are studying different topics
- changing the way leaders check how the school is doing so that they can make changes more quickly.

You can help by continuing to do your best and adapting quickly to new arrangements.

Yours sincerely
Juliet Jaggs
Lead inspector

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