

St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 113771 |
| Local Authority | Dorset |
| Inspection number | 325879 |
| Inspection dates | 9 July 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Michael Barron |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | 146 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Kim Todd |
| Headteacher | Elizabeth West |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7–8 June 2006 |
| School address | St John's Hill Wimborne Dorset BH21 1BX |
| Telephone number | 01202 883675 |
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|---------------------------|-------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the quality of provision and the achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the quality of pupils' personal development, especially pupils' awareness and understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society in relation to the school's contribution to community cohesion
- possible differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils, especially boys and girls and also pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The inspectors gathered evidence from discussions with pupils, staff and representatives from the governing body, observations of teaching and of pupils at work and at play, scrutiny of school documentation and self-evaluation, samples of pupils' work and an analysis of parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the school's Reception class. The school has been identified as a Leading Learning School for Dorset and has also gained several awards, including the Healthy Schools Award. The current headteacher took up her appointment in 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It has a very inclusive and caring ethos and prepares pupils excellently for the next stage of their education. Parents are overwhelmingly in support for what they correctly believe is an excellent school. 'Excellent school, excellent staff' and 'the prize jewel in the crown' are typical comments in parents' questionnaires.

This is a school that is dedicated to achieving the very best for pupils. At the heart of the school's success are outstanding leadership and management at all levels, especially that of the dedicated and well respected headteacher. Working very effectively with her enthusiastic teaching staff, teaching assistants and excellent governing body, she has ensured that the school has thoroughly evaluated its effectiveness on a very regular basis. As a result, the school has actually improved its high quality practice since the last inspection, when it was also judged as outstanding. This is evident, for example, in the way the school has successfully improved provision and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage and is a clear indication of the school's excellent capacity for further improvement in the future.

Children enter their Reception Year with below average standards, especially regarding their language and emotional development. They then proceed to make outstanding achievement in all year groups because outstanding teaching caters very effectively for the needs of all pupils, regardless of their abilities or gender. Lessons are very well structured and teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together to ensure all pupils are included in learning. Pupils requiring extra help, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress because of the very effective level of support they receive. As a result, by Year 4, standards are well above average and pupils successfully meet, and often exceed, the very challenging targets set for them by the school.

Pupils say they really enjoy all aspects of school and this is reflected in their well above average attendance rates. They comment that teachers make learning 'fun' and that school 'cheers you up'. Their personal development and well-being is outstanding and this is reflected in pupils' exemplary attitudes to learning and their excellent behaviour. Pupils are confident that any rare instances of anti-social actions by others will be dealt with quickly and fairly. They have a very clear understanding of the importance of keeping safe and of the need to always make sensible and healthy choices. Their contribution to the community is excellent and pupils play a very active role in both school and local life. They talk enthusiastically about how the school council gives them an important voice in school affairs, for example helping the headteacher and governors to plan the recent improvements to the school playground. Pupils also understand the importance of their efforts to raise money for a wide range of local and international charities to help people less well off than themselves. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding with aspects such as spiritual and social development especially strong, and this is reflected in pupils' outstanding regard for the welfare of others. Although pupils have a very good understanding of the different cultures of people living in other countries, their appreciation of the multicultural nature of modern British society is not as well developed.

The curriculum is outstanding and matches the needs of all pupils very effectively. Subjects such as history, geography and art are used very well to develop pupils' skills in numeracy and literacy while ensuring that learning is relevant, purposeful and enjoyable for pupils. It comes as no surprise when pupils say that they look forward to lessons, especially when they involve practical work in subjects such as science and information and communication technology. They say they enjoy taking part in the wide range of enrichment activities provided for them by the school, including popular after-school clubs. A wide variety of visits to places of interest and interesting visitors to the school provide pupils with unforgettable experiences while enhancing their personal development. Pupils say that they even remember when a Roman legionnaire, complete with armour, javelin and sword, recently visited the school. Pupils also benefit from the opportunity to learn French while their involvement in, for example, writing and helping to edit their own school magazine, plays an important part in their learning.

The level of care, guidance and support for pupils is excellent and ensures pupils become confident and independent learners. Parents are overwhelming in their praise for the way the school looks after their children and comment very positively about the school's 'safe, nurturing environment'. Pupils' health and well-being are securely safeguarded and child protection procedures are robust. The school's close links with the on-site playgroup are used very effectively to help children settle quickly into new routines when they first enter the Reception class. From that moment on, the quality of care for individual pupils is excellent. This is because of the outstanding way in which the school uses its very effective systems for monitoring well-being and progress in order to provide all pupils with the help and support they need to be very successful learners. Additionally, teachers' marking is very good and gives pupils a consistent understanding of how to improve their work.

The headteacher works very well with both staff and parents, who appreciate their views are regularly sought and acted upon, to ensure the school quickly addresses possible inconsistencies in provision. She receives very good support from governors, who offer the school an excellent level of challenge and support. Resources are very good and used effectively to enhance pupils' achievement. Links with external agencies and with other schools are used very effectively to support pupils' learning.

The school makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion and this is evident in the way pupils work and play very well together while accepting each other's differences. It is also displayed in the way the school has successfully involved hard-to-reach families in their children's education. Although pupils' appreciation and involvement with the local community is very good, the school has yet to fully develop pupils' appreciation of the value of the cultural diversity in modern British society.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage Grade: 1

The words of one parent aptly summed up the outstanding provision for children in the school's Reception class, 'My daughter has had the best introduction to education that I could possibly ask for.'

Children get off to an excellent start during their first year at school and make outstanding progress and achievement because teaching caters exceptionally well for children's needs, regardless of their abilities. As a result, children exceed the expected standards in nearly all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

Leadership and management are outstanding and this has been a key factor in improving provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection. The Reception class teacher and her very effective teaching assistants work very well together to make sure children thoroughly enjoy their first experiences of school and that lessons always effectively blend opportunities for children to learn both independently and with adult direction. The classroom and the secure outdoor area are colourful and exciting places successfully designed to provide children with stimulating learning environments. Recording of children's progress is ongoing and is used consistently well to plan future work. Staff work very effectively to ensure there is always a very strong emphasis on meeting children's individual learning needs and this ensures that children, regardless of their abilities, make rapid progress from below average starting points during their first year in the school.

Progress in children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding and parents appreciate the very high level of the care and support their children receive. Children are happy to share and take turns while joining in lesson activities with enthusiasm. Regular visits to interesting places within the local community are used effectively to build up children's growing understanding of the wider world in which they live.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' appreciation of the value of cultural diversity in modern British society.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| 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? | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 1 |
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 1 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 1 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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

¹ 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

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

The quality of provision

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| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 1 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| 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



10 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 1BX

Thank you for making both myself and the other inspector feel so very welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you about what you like the most about your school and we were impressed by the way you all worked so well in lessons. Your parents believe that St John's is what adults call an 'outstanding' school and we totally agree with them. This means that it is really good at making sure you all do your very best. There are many things we like about your school but we have not got the space to write them all down, but here are some of the most important ones:

- Your school gives you an excellent start to your education and makes sure you make outstanding progress in learning.
- You all get on very well with each other. Your behaviour is excellent and you are all very polite.
- You are lucky to have such nice teachers who always try to make lessons very interesting.
- All the adults who work in the school make sure you are always extremely safe and very well looked after.
- Your teachers make sure you always know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve your work.

Your headteacher, teachers and school governors are working very well together to try and make your school even better and we have asked them to:

- Help you to find out more about the customs and traditions of people living in this country who are from different cultural backgrounds to your own.

You can help too by continuing to work as hard as you are now. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Michael Barron
Lead inspector