

Shaftesbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Wincombe Lane, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 8PZ

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Over time, especially in Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has not been good enough.
- At times, particularly in mathematics, teachers do not challenge pupils enough to promote better progress, especially by those with most ability.
- Too often pupils' recorded work involves completing the same worksheets. This restricts pupils' thinking and limits new learning.
- Teachers do not always give pupils enough guidance about how to improve when they mark their work. This constrains progress.
- In recent years, instability in staffing, including at a senior level, and in governance, weakened leadership and impeded efforts to fully rectify weaknesses.
- Steps taken to improve teaching and leadership this year, particularly by the new headteacher, have not been operating long enough to restore pupils' good achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- A more sharply focused and fresher leadership approach from the new headteacher has lifted the confidence of staff and the school community and is quickening the pace of improvement.
- Warm, encouraging relationships between adults and pupils across the school are continuing strengths.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and attend well.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Learning mentors are supporting pupils with emotional and behavioural needs very effectively. As a result, lessons are not disrupted and pupils contribute well to their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 21 lessons. They were accompanied by the headteacher and deputy headteacher for some of these sessions.
- Inspectors observed morning and lunch breaks, attended breakfast and after-school care clubs and also observed an assembly.
- Three meetings were held with representative groups of pupils, and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes.
- Inspectors met with governors, and the lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of 40 parents' responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection. The inspectors also spoke informally with a number of parents as they brought and collected their children from school. They also considered two letters from parents.
- Meetings were held with school staff, including senior leaders, and 49 staff questionnaires were received and considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own information on pupils' progress and planning, and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors also examined records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding policy, procedures and practice. They also considered the school's sport premium action plan.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Mower

Additional Inspector

Janet Maul

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs supported by school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average.
- A broadly average proportion of pupils is supported by the pupil premium. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has experienced significant fluctuation in teaching staff, including at a senior level, since the previous inspection. A newly appointed headteacher commenced his duties at the school at the beginning of this summer term 2014.
- A children's centre operates on the school site. This is subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistently good teaching and pupils' learning across the school, especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - making sure that teachers' marking is more consistent in providing pupils with clear information about what they have to do to improve
 - reducing the emphasis placed on using worksheets, and providing more opportunities for pupils to reflect and apply their skills more imaginatively.
- Raise pupils' attainment, especially that of the most able pupils, and particularly in mathematics, by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - checking pupils' understanding, and challenging pupils more when they find tasks too easy.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by enabling subject and other middle leaders to play a greater role across the school in improving the quality of teaching and learning in their particular areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' below average levels of attainment, as shown in their end of Year 2 teachers' assessments, reflect inconsistency in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress over time.
- Despite improvement in progress at various stages through Key Stage 2, especially in Year 6, some pupils, especially those with most ability, have not always achieved well enough. The average levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 show that achievement requires improvement.
- School checks of pupils' progress and a scrutiny of pupils' work in Key Stage 1 show that, at the end of Year 2, standards have been raised, and are now average. This reflects improved teaching this year, especially in lifting pupils' writing skills.
- Although improvement continues, observations of teaching and pupils' learning show some inconsistency in Key Stage 1 and in other parts of the school. In mathematics, insufficient challenge from teachers occasionally impedes the achievement of pupils with most ability.
- Children's skills on entry to Reception classes are generally below those typical for their age, some are even lower.
- Children make a good start in Reception. Observations of children's work and their contributions to learning show that many are achieving better this year than previously. This is because teachers have improved the way they check and address children's differing needs. Children develop their phonics (sounds that letters make) and their early writing skills well.
- In Key Stage 1, checks of pupils' progress and work show that pupils are improving well this year, especially in writing. However, pupils' learning in mathematics, particularly that of the most able, shows some inconsistency in progress.
- Differences in the rates of pupils' progress over time through Key Stage 2 reflect fluctuations in teaching staff retention.
- Observations of pupils' work show that most are now making more consistent progress in Key Stage 2, especially in extending their reading and writing skills. However, some of the most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in mathematics and do not achieve well enough.
- Pupils are making better progress this year in reading. Scores in the Year 1 phonic screening check are lower this year, but still reflect pupils' good progress from much lower than usual starting points. Pupils' increased performance in the Year 2 phonics check also reflects good progress.
- Staff provide effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, enabling them to progress as well as other pupils.
- Measures to narrow the gaps in attainment between pupils supported by additional funding and other pupils are proving successful, helping them to make similar progress to other pupils. Across the school, pupils aided by additional funding are about half a term's progress behind their peers in numeracy, and one term behind in English.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, over time, it has not been effective enough, especially in Key Stage 1, to secure pupils' good achievement. Teachers are now focusing on pupils' basic numeracy and literacy skills more purposefully, but this better teaching has not been in place long enough yet to rectify all the gaps in pupils' previous learning.
- School records show that, except in Year 6, teaching has generally not been as effective in promoting the progress of pupils with most ability. Pupils' learning in class and the work seen in their books show faster improvement this year, but with more inconsistency still in mathematics than in English.
- Learning typically takes place in an atmosphere of supportive relationships, with teachers managing pupils' behaviour effectively and basing their work on stimulating topics. For example, pupils in Year 4 reflected well about the place of the church in the local community and how

people would react if it was threatened with sudden closure. This led to lively discussion with pupils producing some well-considered ideas and well-constructed writing.

- At times, pupils are required to complete worksheets that fail to challenge them sufficiently, and even though pupils typically continue to behave well, their learning weakens.
- Learning is consistently good in Year 6 classes. Following significant improvement over the past year, children also achieve well in Reception classes. This is because teachers challenge pupils effectively and enthuse their learning by setting thought-provoking activities. For example, lower-attaining pupils in Year 6 were captivated by the teacher's use of a bar of chocolate to help them extend their understanding of fractions in a real-life context. Similarly, in Reception classes, children were rapidly extending their speaking and phonics skills by exploring mini-beasts.
- Teaching assistants provide helpful additional support, for example enabling disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to join in with group discussions.
- Learning mentors play a very supportive role in enabling pupils with emotional and behavioural needs to improve their ability to learn alongside other pupils. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils were seen working well together and having fun making bread.
- Pupils value the way teachers mark their work regularly, and this promotes positive attitudes to learning. However, not all teachers give pupils enough information about how to improve, and this impedes their ability to progress more quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils and their parents talk about behaviour having improved considerably in recent years. School records also show that pupils receiving support have positively improved their behaviour.
- When questioned, pupils express pride in their school and say, 'It's always happy like this and if we have any problems there's always someone to help.'
- Staff in the breakfast and after-school care clubs promote the school's typically calm and welcoming atmosphere.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and good contributions during lessons are accelerating progress. This is supported by learning mentors ensuring that pupils with behavioural and emotional needs are ready to learn and do not disrupt lessons.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe, know how to stay safe and feel confident in approaching an adult should the need arise.
- Adults are diligent in caring for pupils. At break times, pupils are secure in enjoying the spacious facilities, either quietly in the sensory garden or competing sportingly on the school's pitches.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, for example cyber bullying, and know how to use computers safely.
- Pupils say that there is little bullying and that if it occurs staff are very quick to deal with it.
- Most parents who spoke to the inspectors or responded to the questionnaire indicate that staff keep children safe and happily engaged in learning. A few parents expressed concerns about communication with staff, which the school's new leaders are addressing.
- Staff work well with parents and, by setting high expectations, have brought attendance to an above average level.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not focused strongly enough on rectifying weaknesses in teaching in Key Stage 1. Although the pace of improvement has been quickened this year, there is still some teaching that is not yet good.
- Improvements since the previous inspection have been made in spite of challenges resulting

from a rising roll, and the inclusion of pupils with emotional needs. The work of learning mentors has improved behaviour and helped to increase attendance. Temporary leadership earlier this year, and more recently the appointment of a new headteacher, have strengthened the drive for improvement. Staff say that they are proud to work in the school.

- Senior staff are well supported by governors and ensure that decisions about salary progression and staff training are focused on raising pupils' achievement. The headteacher is developing a team approach to leadership, but acknowledges that their influence across the school is not yet fully developed.
- Even so, pupils' needs are being supported earlier to quicken progress. Pupils' improved writing and reading skills and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage demonstrate the capacity to sustain improvement.
- Leaders and managers ensure that all aspects of safeguarding are fully met. Staff care for pupils equally and do not tolerate discrimination. They ensure that disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and others supported by additional funding achieve as well as other pupils.
- The school provides an interesting range of activities that contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A focus on the World Cup football competition promotes pupils' cultural awareness, and assembly themes, such as 'Being the best we can be', encourage self-reflection.
- The school uses the new primary school sport funding effectively to provide extra sporting activities and to improve teaching and pupils' skills in sports such as dance and gymnastics. Staff check the impact of this provision and note that younger pupils are more skilfully handling and moving equipment.
- The local authority has supported the school, for example by providing temporary school leadership.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has undergone considerable change since the previous inspection, but has sufficient experienced governors to ensure that statutory obligations are met effectively. New governors are inducted carefully and encouraged to take up training opportunities, including safeguarding. Governors have not always monitored staff change as effectively or checked with sufficient rigour to sustain equally good teaching and learning in all parts of the school. However over the past year, governors have improved their understanding of how pupils' performance compares with other schools nationally. They have encouraged temporary leaders to tackle underperformance, and they fully support the new headteacher in accelerating the pace of improvement. Governors have provided a good level of support in bringing in learning mentors. Governors visit the school regularly and are now more carefully questioning the impact of teaching on learning. They check that decisions about teachers' performance are linked with improving pupils' learning, and that additional funds are used effectively to improve achievement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113778
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	444299

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	395
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Howard Parfitt
Headteacher	Paul Lavis
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 March 2011
Telephone number	01747 852901
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