

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Kings Way, Lyme Regis, Dorset, DT7 3DY

Inspection dates 20–21 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- There is very good teamwork within the school. In particular, well-focused leadership from the headteacher, senior staff and governors has brought about good improvement.
- Improving teaching has had a high priority. Skilful lesson observation and detailed feedback to teachers have resulted in more good and better lessons taking place.
- Regular pupil progress meetings result in quick and appropriate support being given to any pupil falling behind. This has also raised accountability among adults and focused teachers on the rate of progress of their pupils. Consequently, the progress of pupils is good and, at times better.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Inconsistencies exist in teaching, and when this happens pupils' progress slows. Not all teachers use consolidation periods well enough to identify where any gaps exist in pupils' learning.
- Inconsistencies exist in teachers' marking, and in their guidance to teaching assistants regarding the degree of challenge presented to pupils.
- Pupils enjoy being challenged and are motivated by the exciting new curriculum. This gives them the chance to determine the direction of their learning. They now need more opportunities to learn about what makes a good learner and how best they and others learn.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector, together with the headteacher, observed teaching in seven lessons, including visits to the Early Years Foundation Stage and the pre-school. A further two sessions involving linking sounds to letters (phonics) were visited.
- He listened to a sample of readers from Years 2 and 3.
- The inspector took account of the 15 responses to the online Parent View survey and the school parent survey. Questionnaires from 11 members of staff were also read.
- Discussions were held with senior and other leaders, teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, teaching assistants, pupils, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at progress and attainment data, the school's development plan, curriculum plans, governing body documentation, and policies and procedures. Those relating to health and safety and safeguarding of pupils were carefully scrutinised.

Inspection team

Michael Pye, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding, which provides additional funding for looked after children, children from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. There is an above average proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The main needs of these pupils relate to specific or moderate learning difficulties.
- The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The next largest minority ethnic group are from Any Other White background.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, the schools' governing body has become responsible for the management of the pre-school, which is sited within the on-site children's centre.
- A daily breakfast club, managed by the governing body, takes place in the school hall.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use consolidation periods during and at the end of lessons to accurately establish any gaps in pupils' learning and take action to meet their needs
 - when marking, make clear reference to the level of pupils' work and how they can improve, and give pupils time to respond to teachers' comments
 - give appropriate time to discuss the pupils' learning with teaching assistants and ensure that pupils are well challenged through their questioning.
- Build pupils' understanding and knowledge of what makes a good learner and how best they and others learn.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Entry levels into Reception are changing; they are now below expectations with low levels of communication, literacy and number recognition skills. The children make good progress, especially in their social and personal development. They relate well to each other and talk easily to adults, for example, about their understanding of sounding out and blending to read words.
- The good progress continues and by the end of Year 6, standards met the national average in 2012. There is evidence in the assessment data and in work seen that current pupils are on track to attain similar standards in 2013.
- Given their starting point, pupils make good progress, including pre-school children and those few from minority ethnic groups. As a consequence of the whole-school focus on pupils' progress and good teaching, there is evidence of some outstanding progress, for example in reading for younger, and in mathematics for older, pupils.
- Most parents and carers who completed the online survey agree that pupils make good progress. The great majority judge that good teaching contributes to this.
- Based on their average points scores, those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals attain at average levels. These pupils made well above the expected progress in English but not in mathematics. In current work, the picture is of these pupils doing better than the national average at Key Stage 1 with pupils in Key Stage 2 closing the gap in mathematics.
- In work seen, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs progress in line with their peers.
- Reading standards at the end of Year 2 have traditionally met the national average. In 2012, attainment dipped to well below, reflecting the cohort's low entry levels; a third of pupils had special educational needs. Pupils this year are on track to attain at average levels. The results of the phonics screening check for pupils in Year 1 in 2012 were below the expected level. The school has introduced a new approach to the teaching of phonics and pupils are consistently showing improved levels of understanding.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Monitoring by senior leaders has resulted in more good and better teaching. Teachers have high expectations and develop some excellent relationships with the pupils. Consequently, they engage well with their learning. Pupils are unafraid to raise issues and challenge, with one older girl posing the question, 'Isn't descriptive language different from vivid language?'
- Lessons have a good mix of activities and good pace, and time targets are well used to motivate and focus the pupils' attention. For example, in phonics lessons for younger pupils the mix of tasks included pupils searching for hidden words while others worked with sound cards and at one point shaped the letters using their bodies.
- Reception and pre-school children benefit from similar challenging activities: using the interactive whiteboard to identify colours, digging in ice blocks for dinosaur remains and measuring the bones found around the brightly decorated classroom.
- On occasions, opportunities are missed by some teachers to use consolidation periods during and at the end of the lesson to clearly identify which pupils do not understand the work and take action to fill the gaps. Similarly, there are missed opportunities for teachers' marking to identify the pupils' levels of work and precisely how they can improve.
- Good intervention work, also conducted by teaching assistants, aids pupils' progress. However, time is limited for teachers to discuss with assistants about pupils' learning and how best to challenge the pupils during lessons, for example, through questioning.
- Pupils respond very well to opportunities for them to discuss the work with their peers. In an English lesson for older pupils, they discussed the 'success criteria' for what makes a good biography. Good progress and developing knowledge were apparent when they offered ideas

such as 'writing in the past tense' and using 'the third person'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that their lessons are 'good' and that 'learning is fun'.
- All parents and carers completing the online survey believe their children are happy, safe, well looked after and well behaved. This is backed up by the school survey.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying. 'Silly behaviour' takes place when 'a pupil goes too far every now and again'. They are adamant that when told of an incident the school acts quickly and effectively. The school thoroughly records incidents and these show prompt actions to meet the needs of pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and talk about cyber-bullying, peer pressure and the long-term nature of such behaviour.
- They respond well to challenge and responsibility. 'Find Out Friday' activities give them very good opportunities to carry out research. They discuss what they want to learn at the start of projects. Older pupils help younger children to read and school councillors 'interview' adults applying for jobs at the school.
- Older pupils react well to teachers' comments in marking. However, these are not consistently delivered across the school, and consequently, there are missed opportunities to involve the pupils in exploring self-evaluation and how best they and others learn.
- Good social and cultural opportunities are provided for, and benefit pupils. For example, in collective worship, reception children responded well to the communal experience. All pupils benefit well from the growing links with a Ugandan school. In lessons and in the breakfast club, pupils mix well together and share resources.
- Pupils are taught about and understand risk. For example, Years 3 and 4 pupils develop their own risk assessments.

The leadership and management are good

- Good, rigorous leadership has established a very clear vision for improving teaching and pupils' progress. It is also about establishing an ethos based on the rights and responsibility approach.
- The message has been effectively shared with teachers, other staff, pupils and parents and carers. The very positive staff questionnaires – there was not one negative comment – show this.
- Regular and rigorous checks on the work of the school take place. Pupil progress meetings reflect a clear focus on maximising the potential of pupils and ensure that teachers consistently track their achievement. These actions have resulted in the improvements to teaching, learning and pupils' progress.
- A further success has been in improving attendance to above average levels. Senior leaders are effective in improving links with parents and carers, ensuring there is no discrimination and that all pupils are treated equally.
- The headteacher has successfully distributed responsibility to staff. Teaching assistants feel more involved and challenged in their work. Subject coordinators use a good range of strategies, including pupil interviews, to check the quality of work in their areas of responsibility. In mathematics, this has led to interventions to support older girls with their calculation strategies. In English, the coordinator successfully modelled guided reading sessions for staff.
- The checking of the school's work led to the identification of the need to further develop the curriculum. A good balance between the needs of literacy and numeracy and other subjects is being established. The pupils enjoy topics, for example 'Treasure' which gives them good opportunities to reflect on different themes. The school recognises that the move towards a

more creative curriculum requires further development.

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed. The children benefit well from an exciting curriculum which sees them, for example, conducting 'weekly wellie walks' as a basis of their learning. The school has plans to further develop the small outside area.
- Performance management is well used to encourage all staff to reflect on their practice and to focus on the improvement targets identified for them. The school is good at ensuring that continuing professional development supports staff during this process.
- Such training is provided either in-school or through a range of external sources. The local pyramid of schools provides moderation for teachers' assessment judgements and good opportunities to share good practice. The local authority has provided good guidance regarding lesson observations and in aspects of leadership and management.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body uses a good range of methods to check the school's work. Governors attached to each class, visit on a regular basis, and detailed reports are received. They speak to pupils and report their views back to the full governing body. Regular checks regarding health and safety, safeguarding and child protection take place. Statutory requirements are met and the budget regularly reviewed. Such good practice, together with appropriate training, is enabling them to act as the necessary critical friend. This enables them to raise questions, for example, about progress in mathematics and in the pre-school. They have a clear idea about where the best progress and teaching are to be found. Performance management is used well to challenge and improve the school. There is a clear link made between promotion and the need for the individual to have a record of high-quality teaching. Governors have a clear understanding of the pupils who qualify for the pupil premium; not all have sufficient understanding of its impact on these pupils' progress.

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	113851
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	405485

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Brock
Headteacher	Annabelle Grose
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 March 2011
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