

Durweston CofE VA Primary School

Durweston, Blandford Forum, Dorset, DT11 0QA

Inspection dates

9–10 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, a period of instability has impeded leaders' efforts to secure improvement quickly enough. Consequently, some inconsistencies and weaknesses in the quality of education persist.
- Leaders and governors are not sufficiently rigorous in checking teaching and learning. Leaders have been too slow to identify weaknesses, especially in key stage 1.
- Leaders do not use or share information well enough to improve teaching. This weakens teaching and slows pupils' progress in some classes and subjects.
- The curriculum is not well planned to develop pupils' practical skills, particularly in science and the humanities.
- The quality of teaching is too variable and requires improvement, including in the early years. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough, which slows pupils' progress and reduces the quality of their work.
- Teachers do not consistently plan lessons that are well matched to what pupils already know, understand and can do. This means that pupils do not make strong progress to reach the standards of which they are capable, including the most able pupils.
- Leaders and teachers do not have sufficiently precise plans and actions in place for identified pupils to make consistently good progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has quickly earned the respect of the school community. She has successfully raised staff morale and established a strong 'sense of community' for pupils, staff, parents and carers.
- A small minority of exemplary teaching in key stage 2 enables pupils to make strong progress through well-planned and targeted activities.
- Pupils' behaviour around school and in lessons is good.
- The pre-school ('Handy Paws') is well led and managed. The manager and other staff ensure that children are well prepared for the Reception Year.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years, by:
 - raising the expectations of teachers to ensure that pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school, including the most able pupils
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information effectively to plan lessons starting from what pupils already know, understand and can do, to enable pupils to make good and better progress
 - ensuring that vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, have precise and purposeful next steps in their learning to help them catch up
 - increasing the challenge for the most able pupils to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that leaders and managers:
 - check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment robustly and at timely intervals to ensure that pupils make strong progress
 - share and use the information that they hold to help teachers plan precise and well-targeted lessons for pupils of all abilities
 - implement a high-quality curriculum, particularly for pupils to use and apply a range of practical skills in different subjects
 - improve the rigour and effectiveness of the governing body in holding school leaders to account.

An external review of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school has gone through a period of instability, particularly around the appointment of a new substantive headteacher. This has impeded leaders' efforts to sustain improvements towards establishing a consistently good quality of education throughout the school.
- Leaders, including governors, are not sufficiently rigorous in checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, their evaluations are overly generous and they do not identify some weaknesses quickly enough, particularly in the Reception Year and key stage 1 classes.
- Leaders' monitoring is not focused well enough on pupils' learning and outcomes. When they do monitor, an overemphasis on teachers' actions and the learning activity limits the quality and accuracy of their evaluations. However, middle leaders and those with additional responsibilities, including the English subject leader, are now working closely together through agreed priorities on the school development plan.
- More recent appointments to key posts, including the headteacher and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), have established appropriate processes and systems to track pupils' progress. These are being used to hold teachers to account, for example through pupil-progress meetings and staff appraisal. However, some important information is not shared with teachers or used quickly enough to impact positively on daily lessons and pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is not well planned or sufficiently evaluated to ensure that pupils consistently get the best experience in the full range of subjects, particularly in key stage 1. In these classes, subjects including science, history and geography are marginalised and pupils are not provided with enough high-quality activities to use and apply practical skills in a range of situations.
- However, leaders ensure that an emphasis on performance, arts, music and sport provides pupils with a strong foundation in these curricular areas. Consequently, pupils show an appreciation and enjoyment of other experiences to complement their core learning. A wide range of clubs and visits, including residential trips in key stage 2, also support pupils through enrichment activities for pupils' well-being, their health, social and personal development.
- Leaders' use of additional funding, including the pupil premium and that for special educational needs (SEN) is having variable impact. Leaders identify pupils appropriately, but learning plans are not sharp or precisely matched to pupils' needs. This means that some vulnerable pupils continue to make erratic or inconsistent progress and do not catch up quickly enough in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The physical education (PE) and sport funding is used well. Pupils enjoy a range of sporting opportunities provided by sports coaching and varied activities, including archery. Breaktimes also have a strong offer for pupils to develop their physical skills, health and well-being.
- The headteacher has quickly earned the respect and confidence of the school community. Since her appointment to the substantive role in the spring of 2018, she

has successfully improved the culture and ethos of the school. Pupils, staff and parents are effusive in their praise for the positive and stabilising effect she has had. Staff told the lead inspector, 'This is a place where people want to be!' Parents strongly endorse her work, saying that the school is 'like a family'.

- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a priority. As a result, pupils are well cared for and learn how to contribute to the life of the school and the world beyond. For example, pupils contribute to weekend events to raise money for the Parent and Teacher Association. Pupils also have a secure understanding of British values, such as democracy, through the school's systems for appointing pupils to leadership roles and the school council.

Governance of the school

- Since the previous inspection, governors have faced a series of challenges which have been a barrier to further improvement at the school. For example, the process of appointing a new headteacher and ongoing financial difficulties have detracted too much time and attention from other essential improvement work.
- Governors' monitoring is not sufficiently probing to raise achievement well enough. They recognise this. As a result, governors' monitoring is now focused on the school's priorities, such as raising achievement in writing.
- Governors are organised with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. For example, they have completed a skills audit to match governors to the school's priorities. This approach is starting to gather momentum but remains in its early stages.
- Governors still lack understanding and clarity of how they should hold leaders to account, for example through school monitoring visits. This weakens the impact of their work and leads to overly positive self-evaluations.
- However, governors are keen and enthusiastic. They are proud of the school and are motivated to make the changes necessary to 'get it right' for the pupils. Governors are engaging with support and take advice, such as that provided by the local authority and through governors' previous work with a national leader of governance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders promote a strong culture of safeguarding. As a result, staff are well trained and know what to do to keep pupils safe. Staff take swift and effective action to intervene for pupils when there is a need to do so.
- Leaders are tenacious on behalf of pupils. They work effectively with a range of external agencies and partners to provide timely support for pupils and families.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They are aware of risks in their everyday lives and know how to manage these. For example, pupils know how to stay safe when working online or how to stay safe in the event of a fire at school.
- The governor-run pre-school, 'Handy Paws', reflects the strong practice seen elsewhere in the school. Separate signing-in and on-site checks of visitors and children maintain

heightened vigilance for the children. Appropriate paediatric training and measures, including staffing ratios, are fully compliant to keep children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable and not good enough across the school and in different subjects. Weaknesses in key stage 1 still slow the pupils' progress and prevent too many from reaching the standards of which they are capable, including the most able pupils.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations for pupils' learning across the full range of their work. For example, poor writing in topic books (for science and humanities) is too readily accepted. Teachers' limited demands of pupils in different subjects and situations mean that some pupils are not routinely challenged to do their best or make strong enough progress over time.
- Teachers do not identify and address basic errors or misconceptions in pupils' work quickly enough, for example misspelling common high-frequency words or misplacing commas and apostrophes. Consequently, pupils continue to repeat mistakes, which adversely affects their achievement.
- Teachers do not consistently plan lessons which start from what the pupils already know, understand and can do. This includes pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, lower-achieving pupils who need to catch up and the most able pupils. Furthermore, work is not consistently well differentiated to take enough account of pupils' different abilities. This limits pupils' progress and prevents too many from reaching the standards of which they are capable.
- On occasions, teachers' use of assessment information is too weak. For example, teachers' record-keeping and assessments of pupils' reading are too vague, including in the Reception Year. These lack precision and, therefore, are not helpful in diagnosing pupils' learning needs and next steps for improvement. As a result, the progress of some pupils, including those with SEND, stalls.
- However, teachers and teaching assistants are enthusiastic and have strong relationships with pupils. This helps to maintain energy and positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers provide some high-quality opportunities for pupils to share and evaluate their learning in lessons. At these times, pupils interact and cooperate well to share ideas and provide effective peer support, for example prompting and challenging each other to solve mathematical problems.
- Additional adults and teaching assistants provide a range of support activities and catch-up work with targeted pupils, including pupils with SEND and the most able. This is a vital source of additional support and intervention for pupils, such as in interventions for identified pupils.
- There are some notable strengths in the school, mostly in key stage 2. Teaching in the Year 4–5 class provides pupils with exemplary daily teaching and provision. This teaching helps pupils to catch up well and supports pupils to be ready for the next stage in their education.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The headteacher is committed to driving the school forward through her heartfelt conviction that 'every pupil counts.' Leaders, teachers and other staff know the pupils well and take a keen interest in what motivates them. As a result, pupils feel valued and enjoy the school day.
- Pupils know how to take care of themselves and each other. They play well together and enjoy sharing responsibilities to make the day run smoothly for all. For example, pupils are proud to be a lunchtime helper, librarian or school councillor.
- Pupils understand the importance of respecting those around them, including taking care of the environment and looking after the school's guinea pigs. They learn valuable lessons in rights, respect and showing commitment through daily practical tasks and activities. As a result, pupils have a well-developed moral compass and know right from wrong.
- Pupils enjoy learning about relationships and spirituality. The use of the local church on a daily basis reinforces pupils' respect for the world around them and provides a clear sense of awe and wonder to inspire and guide them.
- On those occasions when pupils are not being challenged in lessons, their care and attention to the quality of their work deteriorates. At these times, pupils do not show pride in their work and the quality of their work suffers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils know what bullying is due to Anti-Bullying Week and opportunities for them to discuss this with adults. Pupils understand the different forms of bullying. They say that bullying is not a problem in the school and staff respond effectively should it occur. Parents also agree overwhelmingly with this view.
- Pupils show respect, tolerance and courtesy at all times throughout the day. They are proud of the school and enjoy caring for each other. For example, peer help and support are provided in the form of rewards so that 'golden time' is worthwhile and high value.
- Leaders and staff work effectively with the attendance officer, families and pupils to tackle poor attendance. As a result, overall attendance is in line with the national average and the proportion of pupils with persistently high absence has fallen. This is now also in line with the national average.
- However, the absence rates of a few groups, in particular those in receipt of the pupil premium and those with SEND, are incongruent with other groups. There are still some pupils whose attendance is not good enough, which affects their learning. Leaders are taking the right actions to continue tackling this issue.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress remains too weak and variable across different subjects and classes, particularly in key stage 1. As a result, too many pupils' knowledge and mastery of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics is not good enough.
- Similarly, the progress of vulnerable pupils is too inconsistent. Disadvantaged pupils (including those with SEND and lower-achieving pupils who need to catch up) are not reaching the same standards as their peers, including above-average standards at greater depth.
- Pupils with SEND also make variable and inconsistent progress. Some pupils make good progress when individual targets and measures are accurate and checked well. However, the converse is true, and some pupils with weak or poorly constructed targets do not progress well enough.
- In addition, the most able pupils do not make enough progress to reach the highest standards by the time they leave the school. Too few exceed the national standards, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in basic skills for mathematics and English are not secure across all year groups. This is even more evident in key stage 1. For example, pupils' ability to compose and organise writing freely with form is not well developed. This is compounded by persisting weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- In mathematics, pupils are not consistently provided sufficient high-quality opportunities to use and apply their knowledge to solve a variety of different problems. This limits pupils' understanding and mastery of arithmetic for applying in different contexts.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check is in line with the national average. Most pupils acquire the knowledge to break the alphabetic code and start to read with increasing fluency. However, there are some where this remains a challenge, and the quality of targeted provision and assessment information is poor. Pupils enjoy reading in key stage 2, although some still need to extend their range of vocabulary to enable them to read with increased fluency and understanding.
- However, there is a trend of rising attainment in the school from 2016 to 2018. More pupils are now reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics than previously. For example, in reading, writing and mathematics combined (2018) this figure was only 4% below the national average.
- Pupils' progress in 2018 was 'average' in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 (when compared to the national average). Current work in books and other information held by the school show that most pupils continue to make steady rather than accelerated progress.
- Work in other subjects shows differing achievement. For example, scientific skills of questioning, analysis, recording and observation are limited in Years 1 and 2, but are developed more consistently in Years 4, 5 and 6. This is true of other subject-specific skills reflected in history- and geography-related studies, including fieldwork.

- Pupils produce some high-quality work in art and demonstrate at least age-appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding in performing arts, music and sports. Some pupils excel in these areas and enjoy the activities provided through the school's curriculum.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The majority of children leaving the early years foundation stage (EYFS) are prepared and ready for Year 1. However, the quality of teaching and the curriculum require improvement.
- Teachers' and leaders' limiting expectations and use of assessment do not identify children (and their needs) quickly enough. For example, in 2017/18, too few of the children failed to capitalise on the good start they had received in 'Handy Paws'.
- The overwhelming majority of children started and ended in Reception broadly in line with typical stages of development. Therefore, while being maintained, the progress of most children was not sufficiently accelerated.
- The most able children are not stretched or challenged consistently well. Over time, too few children are swiftly identified and targeted to receive more challenging work, particularly in reading, writing and number, with the precision needed for them to successfully exceed the early learning goals.
- Furthermore, school-wide issues with the targeted support for children with SEND mean that targets and objectives for these children are not refined or checked rigorously enough. Provision for those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils is too variable in quality and not good enough.
- 'Handy Paws' is well led and managed by the adults responsible for the pre-school setting. Children get off to a good start. Staff are diligent in checking what the children know, understand and can do. They target resources and provision to meet the needs of the children well.
- Transition arrangements are strong, especially between the pre-school and Reception. Parents are also enthusiastic about the support and dialogue staff have with both settings. Some children from the pre-school also benefit from the afternoon sessions in the Reception class.
- Staff in both the Reception class and pre-school are welcoming and positive. They have good relationships with the children.
- The learning environments and use of space across the EYFS are managed and organised appropriately to provide the children's full entitlement. However, some specific learning areas, such as the role-play area and small-world activities, are not tailored precisely enough to enable the highest-quality independent learning, particularly for the most able children for their reading, writing and mathematical development.

School details

Unique reference number	113798
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10058300

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Bryning
Headteacher	Nicola Brooke
Telephone number	01258 452277
Website	www.durweston.dorset.sch.uk/
Email address	office@durweston.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 September 2016

Information about this school

- The overwhelming majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The school operates a pre-school on site (Handy Paws) for three- and four-year-olds.
- The current headteacher was appointed in the spring of 2018.
- This is the third consecutive overall judgement of 'requires improvement' for Durweston Primary.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils in lessons in all classes across the school and pre-school. These visits were often accompanied by the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, SENCo and other subject leaders.
- Additional discussions were held with a local authority adviser representing Dorset County Council.
- The inspector gained the views of pupils throughout the inspection, including discussions at breaktimes.
- The inspector looked at a range of pupils' books to evaluate the current quality of work and standards in different subjects.
- The inspector listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6. He also scrutinised pupils' daily reading records and assessments.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and parents to seek their views of the school. The 91 surveys from Parent View and corresponding free-texts comments and letters were considered by the inspector. In addition, information from staff and pupil surveys was considered.
- The inspector scrutinised several documents, including notes of governor visits, improvement plans, summary self-evaluation records, internal assessment data, SEN learning journeys, performance management records, pupil-progress meeting records and information relating to behaviour, safety and safeguarding.
- The inspector also met with representatives of the governing body.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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