

Piddle Valley Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113811
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	378755
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	Anna Sketchley

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Monds
Headteacher	Tracy Jones
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2008
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Age group	3–9
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Introduction

Inspection team

Anna Sketchley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited 10 lessons and observed four teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including pupils' work, systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress, plans for improvement and reports written by the local authority. Questionnaires from 45 parents and carers were analysed and the inspector spoke with a few parents and carers informally. Questionnaires completed by 19 pupils and nine staff were also evaluated.

Information about the school

Piddle Valley is smaller than the average-sized first school. Pupils come from the village and the surrounding area. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the school's Reception Year class and Pre-school Unit. There are four classes in the school including a mixed-age class for pupils in Years 3 and 4. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and very few are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has achieved several national awards, the most recent of which being UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Level 1 and the Silver Eco Schools Award. There are breakfast and after-school clubs run by the school. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation 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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- Piddle Valley is an outstanding school. Achievement is consistently high for all pupils because of very strong leadership, outstanding teaching, an exciting creative curriculum and rigorous tracking of pupils' progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with an excellent start to their education.
- Pupils' attainment is consistently high and their progress is outstanding. However, gifted and talented pupils have few opportunities to develop their particular abilities through extra-curricular activities.
- Exceptionally well-planned lessons thoroughly engage pupils, motivating them extremely well. Attendance is high and pupils really enjoy learning. They work enthusiastically and exhibit excellent attitudes and behaviour. Teachers ensure pupils are clear about the next steps they should take in their learning to improve their work. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils feel very safe in school, are very well known to all adults and exceptionally well looked after. Rigorous safeguarding procedures are in place. Pupils respond particularly well to the school's Rights Respecting Schools Charter, showing significant respect to all adults and to each other. This underpins all the school's outstanding work in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, creating an excellent climate for learning in which all pupils thrive.
- The school is exceptionally well led and managed by a very strong leadership team, knowledgeable subject leaders and a skilled governing body. Rigorous and effective self-evaluation leads to rapid implementation of plans for improvement. Meticulous use of performance management objectives when monitoring the school's provision is helping to maintain high quality teaching in all year groups. Determination and drive to consistently sustain excellence in all areas of its work ensure that the school is extremely well placed for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance extra-curricular provision for gifted and talented pupils, providing more

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opportunities to challenge and extend their learning by:

- organising themed days and workshops supported by experts and enthusiasts based around the areas of learning for which these pupils display a talent.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the school's Early Years Foundation Stage with skills similar to those expected for their age, although aspects of their literacy and numeracy skills are often less well developed. They make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because provision is excellent. This level of progress is maintained and built upon in Key Stage 1 so that, in Year 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is high for all groups of pupils. Outstanding progress and high attainment, especially in reading, continues throughout Year 3 and Year 4 when pupils leave the school. Since the last inspection initiatives to improve achievement in mathematics have been very successful in raising attainment which is now as high as attainment in reading and writing. Parents and carers believe that their children are making outstanding progress and inspection evidence supports this. One parent commented: 'The school provides my child with an excellent learning experience.'

The school is particularly successful in improving the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those pupils whose circumstances could make them vulnerable. All these groups of pupils and the small number of pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English as an additional language make outstanding progress because of very effective and carefully monitored intervention and support. One parent summed up the views of many when writing: 'The school responded well to my son's additional educational requirements.'

Excellent planning and assessment across the Early Years Foundation Stage setting provide a seamless transition for children moving from the Pre-school to the Reception Year class. The excellent balance of teacher-led and child-chosen activities in the Reception class means that the correct amount of attention is given to learning letters and sounds and completing simple number work. As a result, children develop early reading, writing and number skills very quickly. A typical example of this was observed when, during a game to learn the sound 'ur', children rapidly learned to write simple words such as 'fur' and 'curl'. Likewise, during a number game they excitedly demonstrated their ability to partition 5, 6 and 7 to make simple number sentences. The more-able children were suitably challenged, partitioning 10 and 12.

Systematic teaching of letters and sounds throughout the school ensures that, by Year 2, all pupils use a range of strategies to build unfamiliar words as they seek to improve their reading. The more-able pupils read fluently and with great expression. By the time they reach Year 4 pupils write at length very well, using correct

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punctuation and spelling. They fully understand how to make their writing interesting, especially by the use of adventurous language. Pupils in both Years 3 and 4 are able to solve written problems in mathematics that included two different number operations. Throughout the school pupils identified as having special gifts and talents in a wide range of subjects are challenged well in lessons but there are few opportunities for them to develop their talents through extra-curricular activities such as themed days and workshops.

Quality of teaching

At the heart of the outstanding teaching is an exceptionally well-planned curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils extremely well. This not only enthuses and totally engages pupils but ensures that their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developed in a wide range of subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose circumstances could make them potentially vulnerable are very well supported by highly skilled teaching assistants. This enables them to make the same rapid progress as all other groups of pupils.

Typically, at the beginning of every lesson, teachers share the learning intention and success criteria with pupils so that they know what they are learning about and how to succeed. Pupils often work in pairs for short, sharp amounts of talking time. This method ensures a rapid pace to learning, contributing very well to pupils' social development as they share ideas and learn from one another as well as from the teacher. Questions and tasks are challenging and interesting. Very good preparation and organisation allow teachers and teaching assistants to work with groups of pupils while other pupils work independently. Marking is of a very high standard and teachers' comments show pupils exactly how to improve their work. Since the last inspection individual learning targets for pupils have been introduced so that they have a very clear idea of the next steps in their learning. Even the youngest pupils are fully involved in this process, correcting, improving and assessing their work on a regular basis alongside their teacher. Teachers ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively in lessons. An example of this was observed during the inspection when a teacher used a lesson aimed at building up pupils' skills in persuasive writing to introduce pupils to a number of cultural and moral dilemmas.

Teaching in the Reception Year is outstanding. Exciting and imaginative planning, innovative teaching strategies and accurate assessment of what children are capable of in both Reception and Pre-school ensure that children make rapid progress. Knowledge of the teaching of early literacy and number skills is excellent. Children are very enthusiastic about learning because their interests are taken into account when teachers and Pre-school staff plan lessons. The outside area is especially well used to develop children's skills across all areas of learning.

All parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children are extremely well taught, a view supported by the findings of the inspection.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

There have been no exclusions at the school since before the last inspection. Recorded incidents of misbehaviour or bullying are very rare, indicating outstanding behaviour over time, including in the breakfast and after-school clubs. Pupils get on exceptionally well together and are extremely polite to adults and to each other. This excellent attitude helps them to make outstanding progress. Pupils have a very good understanding of what constitutes safe behaviour and why certain rules are important. Pupils' welfare and safety are paramount at all times. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and that behaviour is typically of a high standard. They have a very clear idea about different types of bullying, for example physical, emotional or cyber bullying, and can discuss these sensitively, saying that incidents of any type are very rare. They know that teachers would deal with such incidents very quickly if they ever happened. Almost all parents and carers agree that pupils' behaviour and safety at school are outstanding.

Leadership and management

Since the last inspection very strong leadership and governance has determinedly brought about very good sustained improvement in the school's overall effectiveness. Strategies to improve the key issues previously identified have been very successful. As a result, the school's overall performance has improved and this is reflected in improvements in pupils' achievement. The whole school community is a dedicated and very effective team totally focused upon delivering high quality teaching and learning. The governing body monitors the school closely asking searching questions and is fully involved in the school's work at both a strategic and day-to-day level.

The school's self-evaluation processes have been improved since the last inspection. Action plans are comprehensive and regularly reviewed by staff and governors. Teachers use the school's robust tracking systems to monitor pupils' progress assiduously when planning lessons to ensure that the needs of all pupils are fully met. Performance management objectives are used as a precise focus for observations of the quality of teaching. High quality continuing professional development ensures that all staff are fully supported in the drive towards sustaining excellence. Results of school questionnaires, along with the results of the inspection questionnaire, demonstrate a very strong school/parent and carer partnership. All of these features give the school an outstanding capacity for sustaining improvement in the future.

The curriculum is outstanding because it motivates pupils to learn and provides them with memorable experiences, including visits to interesting places and visitors to school. Pupils are keen environmentalists and make a valuable contribution to their local community as demonstrated by their Silver Eco School Award. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well supported, for example through art, music and drama and as a Rights Respecting School with very strong links to the local church. Partnerships are particularly strong and parents and carers really appreciate the flexible extended arrangements provided for their children in the

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breakfast and after-school clubs. Pupils also state that they thoroughly enjoy participation in these clubs.

The promoting of equal opportunities for different groups of pupils is outstanding and the school leaders and staff do not tolerate any kind of discrimination. The governing body, leaders and staff ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously, and regular training and monitoring ensure that a very high quality is maintained.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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.
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.



23 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Piddle Valley Church of England Voluntary Aided First School, Piddletrenthide DT2 7QL

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently and for spending time talking to me. I really enjoyed meeting you. I found Piddle Valley to be an outstanding school. These are some of the best things I found.

- You are all making outstanding progress and achievement.
- You receive outstanding teaching, really enjoy lessons and have a very good attitude to your work.
- You enjoy coming to school and are very polite. Your behaviour is outstanding and your attendance is high.
- You have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and feel very safe in school.
- Your school is exceptionally well led and managed.

All the adults in your school want you to do your very best. Although they know what needs to be done next, I have asked them to do one thing to make your learning even better.

- I would like them to help those of you who have particular gifts and talents to enjoy more extra-curricular activities that challenge and extend your learning. I would like your school to do this by organising themed days and workshops with special visitors who are experts and enthusiasts in their own field of interest.

Please keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

Anna Sketchley
Lead inspector

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