

# Sherborne Abbey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Lenthay Road, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 6AQ

**Inspection dates** 4–5 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Leadership and management are good. Leaders have taken effective action to steer the school through a period of staff change.
- The headteacher and governors have appointed skilled teachers and strengthened staff and governors' leadership roles. These developments have restored better teaching through the school, which is quickening pupils' progress.
- By working efficiently as a team, the school's leaders show a secure capacity to improve further.
- Staff work diligently to sustain a supportive sense of community, which strongly promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils enjoy school and share very supportive relationships with each other and with staff.
- Pupils behave well and their attendance is consistently above average.
- The school's work in keeping pupils safe and secure is good. Discussions with pupils and parents and responses in questionnaires support this view.
- Teaching is good. This ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress. A small, but increasing, proportion of teaching is outstanding and is rapidly raising standards.
- Pupils' increasing skills across the school reflect good progress in response to improved teaching. Pupils currently in Year 6 are working at levels higher than might be expected for their age, which show good achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Early years provision for children in the Reception classes is outstanding. As a result, children make excellent progress and are very well prepared for future learning in Year 1.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Whilst good, the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) in Years 1 to 3 does not match the very good practice seen elsewhere throughout the school. As a result, some pupils in these classes do not make the rapid progress they are capable of.
- At times, teachers do not move pupils on to harder work quickly enough when it is clear they have the ability to do so.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils fully act on the guidance given when they mark their work and this restricts the amount of progress pupils make.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors attended two assemblies, looked at learning in 19 lessons, and saw the work of 12 teachers. The inspectors also observed the breakfast and after-school clubs. They were accompanied by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher during most of these observations.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including systems for checking progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and analysis by the school of how well it is doing and how it plans to improve. Inspectors examined records of checks on the quality of teaching along with records of visits to the school made by the local authority.
- The inspectors talked to pupils about their work, and listened to individual pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read. They also looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes, especially writing.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, school staff and groups of pupils, including members of the school council. Inspectors spoke to individual pupils in lessons and around the school. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with an adviser of the local education authority.
- The inspectors took account of the views expressed in the 59 online responses from Parent View and informal meetings with parents at the school during the inspection. Questionnaires from 26 members of staff were also analysed.
- The inspectors considered the school's use of primary sport funding.
- Inspectors examined the school's work in updating procedures for checking pupils' progress within the new National Curriculum.

## Inspection team

Alexander Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Howley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background and the proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language are close to the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is above the national average and is consistently above average in all classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly average. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or 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 reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in receipt of early years provision attend the school's Reception class on a full-time basis.
- The school provides both breakfast and 'Stay and Play' after-school clubs and these were part of this inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically outstanding and enables all pupils to make as much progress as possible by:
  - sharing the best practice evident in the school to strengthen the teaching of phonics
  - teachers more frequently checking pupils' learning so that they can extend the challenge they provide more swiftly
  - ensuring that pupils respond more effectively to teachers' marking and can show how it has helped develop their understanding.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides the determined leadership which, through a period of staff change, has secured an effective team approach to leadership and management. As a result, leaders have restored good teaching, and senior leaders, including governors, continue to strive for further improvement.
- A high level of staff morale, seen in their willingness to work together, reflects the shared commitment to sustaining a culture where good teaching and behaviour can thrive.
- As a team, senior and middle leaders, as well as governors, check the work of the school effectively to make sure that the right areas for improvement are identified and tackled. This includes reviewing teachers' performance regularly. This ensures that salary progression reflects the quality of their teaching, leadership responsibilities and the impact on pupils' progress well.
- The school is making good progress in updating procedures for checking pupils' achievements to match the expectations of the new National Curriculum. Effective staff training has brought improved assessment of pupils' skills and their different learning needs. As a result, staff identify pupils' needs at a very early stage and, by providing effective support, are quickening the rate of pupils' progress through the school.
- Effective use of additional funding through strengthened support for disadvantaged pupils has successfully raised their achievement. Decisive action by leaders in raising expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving in recent terms has also increasingly enhanced the learning of the most able pupils.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because some actions have not been implemented long enough to lift attainment across all year groups. For example, the development of pupils' phonic understanding as the pupils move through Years 1 to 3 is not yet as strong as in other classes.
- All staff foster very supportive relationships with the pupils and ensure that they have equal opportunity. Pupils are kept free from discrimination and this is aided by the staff's diligence in sustaining supportive links with parents and their well-established knowledge of each pupil's needs. As a result, sustained good quality provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs enables them to achieve as well as other pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and pays purposeful attention to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Regular reviews of creatively planned learning opportunities across a range of subjects ensure they stimulate pupils' engagement in learning. During the inspection, for example, teachers stimulated pupils' imaginative writing through retelling favourite fairy tales. Practical investigations equally well promoted pupils' interest and confidence in mathematics.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Religious and cultural tolerance is constantly promoted through the curriculum and assemblies. Pupils reflect deeply and extend their understanding of moral and social issues, for example when studying Fair Trade.
- Pupils have many responsibilities in the school, including membership of the school council and play leaders, whereby older pupils regularly assist younger children at lunch times. The school promotes democracy and British values effectively. For example, pupils elect school counsellors and study themes such as the Magna Carta. Pupils also extend their awareness of the diversity of cultures in modern Britain by discussing rights and responsibilities and visits to contrasting communities such as London.
- The school's promotion of sport is a strength. Staff are using additional funding for physical education well to increase the pupils' participation in sport and to enrich their health, fitness and well-being. The school employs specialist coaches to provide extra sports, such as hockey and Zumba dancing, and to train staff in gymnastics. Sports coaches also provide additional sports to train pupils as sports ambassadors to develop break and lunch time activities. The school checks the impact of this expenditure carefully and has noted that the percentage of pupils attending at least one sports club has increased from 2013 to 2014 and continues to rise.
- The local authority provides effective support in helping to identify and tackle the right priorities for improvement in this good, improving school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors recognise that they are now better organised and effective than they have been in the past. They have strengthened the way they share their skills and work as teams within committees to gather information about the work of the school. This has enabled them to support the headteacher effectively in restoring good teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors attend training regularly so that they are continuing to develop their skills further. For example, they have attended training in safeguarding and in health and safety to ensure that they fully meet their statutory obligations. Governors receive and examine reviews from the headteacher and senior staff. They question the headteacher about pupils'

achievement and make frequent visits to the school to talk to staff and parents and to see the work of the school for themselves. Each governor takes a particular responsibility in gathering information about an aspect of the school's work. This involves talking to pupils and joining teachers in looking at their work. As a result, governors know the school well and are able to hold the headteacher to account for how teaching impacts on pupils' achievements. Through their discussions, governors check to ensure that any underperformance is swiftly tackled and that successful teachers are rewarded by progression through the pay scales.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy very supportive relationships with each other and with adults, and are polite and very welcoming to visitors. Pupils show caring attitudes. Older pupils, in particular, undertake their roles as playground leaders diligently and show genuine concern for the younger children they support.
- Pupils move sensibly around the school and respect its facilities and use resources such as computers carefully. Pupils love sharing ideas and work well together, and most listen respectfully to adults.
- Most pupils, especially the oldest pupils in Years 5 and 6 and often the youngest children in Reception, demonstrate good and often better attitudes to their work and behave well in lessons.
- The very large majority of parents who either spoke with an inspector or responded to the questionnaire also expressed the view that pupils' behaviour is good.
- Occasionally, a few pupils in Years 1 and 3 need reminders to concentrate on their work and do not make as much progress as they could. This is why behaviour is not yet outstanding.
- Pupils state that there are few incidents of unacceptable behaviour. One pupil reflected the widely held appreciation shown by others when commenting that, 'Staff sort things out quickly.' School records also show that the school deals effectively with any incidents.
- Attendance is consistently above average. This reflects the positive partnership between staff and parents, the headteacher's rigour in promoting good attendance and pupils' love of school.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Recently updated checks on staff prior to appointment meet the statutory requirements. All staff show high regard for the pupils' safety and implement health and safety procedures effectively.
- The staff work well with parents and outside agencies to ensure that there is good support for pupils at risk of falling behind.
- Pupils share warm friendships and are well cared for in the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Pupils are taught and know about the different forms of bullying, including verbal, racist and cyber bullying. They know how to keep themselves and each other safe. Pupils learn well through discussions linked to the school's emphasis on being a community that respects the rights of the child and puts these at its heart.
- Pupils have few concerns regarding bullying and inappropriate behaviour and say that they feel safe in school. One pupil commented, reflecting the views of others, 'We have lots of friends and there is always someone looking after us.' Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their children feel safe and are well cared for at school.

## The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good. This reflects the positive impact of assertive action by leaders to raise expectations and to secure equally good teaching and learning across the school.
- Pupils' learning continues to improve, enriched by the very supportive relationships promoted by the teachers and skilled teaching assistants.
- Teachers question the pupils effectively to promote their thinking and to engage them fully in learning. Pupils respond eagerly during discussions and are keen to express and share their ideas. This is an improved feature across the school. It is particularly effective in accelerating the progress of the very youngest and oldest pupils. Occasionally, teachers do not move pupils on to harder work swiftly enough when it is clear they are ready to do so. This limits some pupils from making even better progress.

- Even so, teachers are improving the level of challenge presented to the pupils, including those with most ability, and this is quickening their progress. During mathematics in Year 3 the pupils' interest and learning lifted noticeably with the challenge of identifying three-dimensional shapes based on their properties.
- Pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to improve their descriptive writing skills. Pupils in Year 5 were moved when reflecting on the plight of refugees in Syria and this enriched their ability to write expressively. The good progress seen in the quality of pupils' work in their books also shows that the teaching of literacy and mathematics is good.
- A variety of thought-provoking texts, drawn from favourite story books, enrich pupils' interest in books and the development of their reading skills. However, the strongest phonics teaching has yet to be reflected in all classes in order to accelerate the rate of progress some pupils make in phonics.
- Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and regularly. All teachers offer praise when pupils' work is accurate. Teachers have improved the quality of the written guidance they give to pupils about what they need to do to improve their work.
- Most pupils respond positively and make the necessary corrections to move forward. At times though, not all pupils are required to demonstrate their full understanding in response to teachers' marking. This restricts the amount of progress they make.
- Staff provide good guidance to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Adults also ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive the right level of work and additional assistance that enables them to learn well.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Pupils make good progress overall and achieve well. By the end of Year 6 they reach above average standards.
- In recent years, above average standards have been maintained well at the end of Key Stage 1. Above average standards have also been continued at the end of Key Stage 2, but have not always been as strongly above average in recent years. This stemmed from inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and level of challenge presented to the pupils in lower Key Stage 2.
- The school has evaluated the reasons for the standards in Year 6 very carefully. It has taken effective steps to ensure there are more frequent checks of pupils' needs and that these happen at an earlier stage. Alongside raised expectations and challenge, these strategies have restored pupils' good progress through the school. Pupils currently in Year 6 are already working at levels higher than those expected.
- Pupils demonstrate a good breadth of vocabulary during class discussions which help them to develop above average skills in writing. For example, during an English lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils shared ideas about the dilemma facing Cinderella when she was alone in the forest. This enriched their ability to write using powerful adjectives well.
- Pupils' good progress in mathematics was also evident in Year 6 as the pupils responded enthusiastically to the teacher's questions and relished the challenge of comparing fractional and percentage discounts.
- From their differing starting points, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. This is because they have their needs and developing skills checked regularly, and the levels of adult support and learning activities adjusted, to ensure they achieve well.
- White British pupils achieve well. Pupils from a minority ethnic background and those who have English as an additional language also achieve well and benefit from having their developing skills checked regularly. Teachers then use information about their attainment to make sure that they receive the right level of support and sustain good progress.
- Over the past year, the school has raised expectations and strengthened the level of challenge presented to the most able pupils. As a result, the most able pupils make good progress. This is evident in the increased and above average proportion of Year 6 pupils already working at higher levels than expected.
- In recent years, the school has considerably improved the additional adult help and range of learning opportunities given to disadvantaged pupils. School records and inspection checks of the attainment of disadvantaged pupils currently in Year 6 reflect rapid improvement and at least good, and sometimes better, progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 are currently working at similar levels to their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, they are close to a term ahead in these subjects. This shows a significant improvement over the previous year when disadvantaged pupils' attainment in Year 6 tests was two terms behind other pupils in the school and nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Reading is generally given good emphasis across the school and many pupils continue to read and enjoy books frequently at home. As a result, over time, most pupils build well on their excellent start in Reception and achieve well in reading by the end of Key Stage 2. The current fairy tale theme in several classes is enthusing pupils and raising their interest in reading. However, the phonic understanding of some pupils in Years 1 to 3 does not always develop quickly enough to sustain rapid progress.

### The early years provision

### is outstanding

- Children start school in the Reception classes having experienced a wide variety of pre-school experiences, and their skills vary considerably from year to year. Most often the levels of children's knowledge and skills are below those typical for their age, especially their personal, social and speaking skills.
- Children settle quickly and happily into school and parents report that they are very pleased with the way that the staff welcome and support their children. Parents also rightly feel that the school keeps their children very safe and secure.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. This is because the leader moulds together all staff from the two Reception classes to form a highly effective team. Staff sustain a consistently strong focus on developing children's language skills, as well as their social, emotional and personal development.
- Very good teamwork between staff also makes sure that all children across the two Reception classes derive equally beneficial access to the breadth of the highly stimulating indoor and outdoor facilities. As a result, all children across the range of abilities, including those with special educational needs and the most able, learn extremely well and make excellent progress. For example, children joyfully share and extend their speaking skills when exploring in the 'fairy tale castle'.
- In response to the staff's high level of care and guidance, children demonstrate extremely positive attitudes to learning and behave impeccably. For example, they strive to please each other as well as themselves as they pedal their large wheeled toys and explore sand and water resources.
- Teaching is outstanding. Staff observe the children and take notes and digital photographs to check the children's developing skills. Staff question the children carefully to gauge the level of their understanding. This enables them to make sure that learning is successful during activities chosen by the children themselves and when supported more closely by adults.
- Teachers develop the children's understanding of the sounds that letters make and their early reading skills extremely well. They use favourite fairy tales, such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, to enthuse children and make learning fun.
- Children also confidently extend their counting and number skills during practical activity, for example by excitedly counting the spots on 'giant ladybirds'.
- By the end of the Reception year the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is above the national average. This shows the children's outstanding achievement across all areas of learning and represents excellent preparation for future learning in Year 1.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113766
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	453212

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	256
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Walters
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ann-Marie Kampf
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01935 812318
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