



Christchurch Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113734
LEA Dorset
Inspection number 279230
Inspection dates 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector David Curtis AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Addiscombe Road
School category	Community		Christchurch
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Dorset BH23 2AE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01202 485851
Number on roll	363	Fax number	01202 479149
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jane Ashenden

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is the largest infant school in Dorset. Most pupils are White British heritage, with a small proportion from minority ethnic and Traveller families. A very small number have English as an additional language. The school has a much higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities than is found in most schools. The school provides specialist places for 16 pupils with speech and language disorders in the Speech and Language Base .

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. It gives good value for money. The school's evaluation of its own performance is robust and accurate.

The school is on an impressive journey towards achieving excellence. The headteacher, since her appointment four years ago, has transformed the school through her outstanding leadership. Together with her excellent deputy, strong senior team, staff, governors and parents she has created an exciting and stimulating learning environment. Having initially sorted out behaviour problems, they then completely revitalised teaching and learning and the curriculum. The result of this is a school in which pupils want to learn and teachers want to teach. The success story is that all of the hard work has resulted in significant year-on-year improvement in standards and achievement since 2002. Provision in the Reception Year is now good and children make good progress. Standards in Year 2 have moved from well below average to above average. The school is justifiably proud of this success, and particularly with the increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in national tests. Pupils in the Base make good progress.

The school knows that the journey is incomplete. It has the passionate desire to raise standards further, especially in science and, for boys, particularly in writing. It is striving hard to improve attendance, which at the moment is satisfactory.

Pupils love every moment of their day in school. They work hard in lessons because they understand what they have to do and work is matched to individual needs. The playground is full of exciting things to do, many of which they chose. Because of these factors, pupils' behaviour and relationships are very good. Pupils are prepared extremely well for their next stage of education.

Parents are fulsome in their praise for the school and the headteacher. As one wrote, 'It is a wonderful school with dedicated, good teachers and I am proud to be involved in it as a parent'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with greater experience of the investigative and experimental aspects of science.
- Improve the achievement of boys in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make good progress from the day they start school and this is confirmed in the school's excellent tracking of each individual. By the end of Reception, most children meet the goals they are expected to achieve. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and continue the trend of year-on-year improvement. Boys do not achieve as well as girls, particularly in writing.

Standards in science are improving rapidly although pupils need more experience in the investigative and experimental aspects of the subject.

Detailed and thorough tracking shows that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. Pupils in the Base make good progress because of high-quality teaching from specialist teachers and teaching assistants. Those pupils from traveller families, together with those who have English as an additional language, make good progress.

Through the use of 'chatty partners', pupils make particularly good progress in speaking and listening. Pupils make good use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects, especially science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's high expectations produce consistently very good attitudes and behaviour. Reception children quickly understand the behaviour routines. Thereafter, classrooms are calm and purposeful as pupils try their best and enjoy their learning. Pupils enjoy a stretching and productive learning journey with their teacher that enhances their good progress. Pupils develop independence and confidence. Their sensible approach in the playground guarantees safe and unthreatened play. Bullying is not an issue and any challenging behaviour is effectively anticipated by staff. 'I am well looked after, and learn a lot', said a Year 2 pupil as a summary of his school life.

Pupils' personal qualities are developed successfully by good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Moral and social education are especially strong and stimulate very good relationships and good knowledge of behaviour boundaries. Spiritual education gives pupils an understanding of their own place in the world, and they learn eagerly about Christianity and other faiths. Pupils' cultural awareness is good because of an exciting range of clubs and activities. Pupils' awareness of the diversity of faiths and traditions in modern British society is satisfactory. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of healthy eating and exercise, which the school promotes excellently. Good key skills prepare them well for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The reorganisation and review of teaching and learning in the last three years has had a major impact on raising standards. There is now a strong team approach, with consistency of teaching and a high standard of pupil behaviour which allows good learning to take place. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are very involved and responsive. In exemplary lessons, pupils love the challenges set by their teachers and the opportunities to share their thinking with 'chatty partners'.

Teachers plan and set work to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are particularly well supported. Assessment is used very well to monitor pupils' performance and progress. Targets in reading, writing and mathematics are carefully and thoughtfully set. These challenge pupils to strive for their very best achievement. Pupils are beginning to judge the success of their own learning and this is an aspect of continuing school improvement. The school is aware of the need to ensure that boys are fully motivated in their learning. Teachers have begun to use and evaluate strategies which research has shown to improve boys' achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides very well for all learners, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, to make good progress. Teachers have worked together successfully to plan a curriculum which links subjects coherently. It is very well enriched by special event weeks and regular 'super-solving' days which develop pupils' learning skills across the curriculum.

The curriculum continues to be a focus of school improvement with a current drive to make it relevant for children in our multicultural society and to further promote healthy living through physical activity. The ICT suite is a very good facility and is well used to increase pupils' skills. ICT use across other subjects of the curriculum is developing steadily.

There is an extremely good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs on offer. Children very much enjoy activities such as ballroom dancing and parachute play. The school makes outstanding provision to keep its pupils safe and healthy. The very positive ethos of high expectations engendered in the last four years means that pupils value their personal endeavours and success.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

In a safe and supportive environment, pupils' personal development is nurtured and they thrive. They enjoy their learning and make good progress towards challenging targets which are carefully and regularly monitored.

All staff work together, and with outside agencies where appropriate, to ensure early identification of pupils' needs, particularly those with learning difficulties and disabilities. This starts with the school's greatly improved induction for its new children. Increasingly, the school is also registering very able pupils and making opportunities to fully extend their learning. A high level of academic care and guidance is in place to support individuals in feeling confident about their learning and achieving well.

Procedures for child protection are robust and rigorous risk assessments are made on aspects of everyday school life and before children go out on visits. The high level of supervision at playtimes, the consistent good management of behaviour and the improved quality and use of equipment are now real strengths of the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher is an excellent leader. Ably supported by her very strong deputy and senior leadership team, she has created a team of staff and governors dedicated to continuous school improvement. They have transformed behaviour, teaching and learning and the curriculum to create a vibrant learning environment. As the result of much hard work, there has been a significant year-on-year improvement in standards. Pupils in the Base are now included fully in all aspects of school life.

The school improvement plan is a very effective document which is focused on the further raising of standards. It contains a strong emphasis on improving the quality of education for pupils. The success story of this school over the last four years is a ringing endorsement of its very good capacity for further improvement.

The school actively seeks the views of pupils and parents in moving the school forward. The exciting playground environment which pupils really love is the result of the school acting on their views. Parents are delighted with the way the school works with them to support their children's learning. A good example of how the school responded to their suggestions is the revamped home-school reading programme.

Governors are supportive and challenging. Recently there was the first ever election for parent governors which reflects the far greater involvement of parents in the life of the school. However, governors do not have an action plan to further develop their roles and responsibilities, especially in relation to training. Consequently, some new members are not fully aware of their responsibilities as governors.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you so much for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. May I say a particular thank you to those of you in Year 2 who gave up part of your lunchtime to speak to Mr Wood?

You are very lucky pupils to go to such a good school. We know from you and your parents just how much you like being there. You work very hard in lessons and we thought the way you work with your chatty partners was excellent. We noticed how much you enjoy playtimes and lunchtimes. You are proud that many of your ideas have contributed to the wonderful choice of activities that you have each day. We noticed just how many clubs you can join and I thought the performance in the dance club was very impressive. I am sure your parents will think the same when they see how well the dance club performs.

We have asked Mrs Ashenden and your teachers to do a few things to make your school even better than it already is. We think that you should spend more time doing experiments and investigations in science. We know you are doing well with your learning but there is still room for the boys to improve their writing.