



Shepton Beauchamp Church of England First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123773
Local Authority Somerset
Inspection number 292785
Inspection date 14 February 2007
Reporting inspector Susan Wheeler HMI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Shepton Beauchamp
School category	Voluntary controlled		Ilminster
Age range of pupils	4-9		TA19 0LQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01460 240793
Number on roll (school)	64	Fax number	01460 240793
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Paul Morgan
		Headteacher	Elizabeth Frazer
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

Shepton Beauchamp is a small school. Use is made of adjoining land and village facilities as the building has no hall and little outdoor space. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well below average.

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 that can be proud of its achievements. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is passionate about helping the school to do its best for all the children. She has created a strong and dedicated team who know the children very well and have consistently high expectations of what they can achieve. The school's self-evaluation accurately identifies the priorities for improving pupils' education. It paints an overly modest picture of the school's effectiveness because it does not place enough emphasis on the positive impact of all that the school provides. The school works well with other organisations, particularly regarding transition from pre-school to school and then on to middle school at the end of Year 4. The atmosphere in the school is calm and caring; children feel valued and do very well. Attractive and inspiring displays celebrate their successes. Every available space is used very imaginatively and creatively on this cramped site, with excellent opportunities provided by the redeveloped rectory garden. Resources are used effectively, especially the deployment of support staff to ensure pupils have good guidance and care. Children start school with the skills expected for their age and make good progress towards the early learning goals at the end of the Foundation Stage. These young children are keen to show what they can do and are eager writers. Standards in the Foundation Stage and throughout the school are consistently above average. More able pupils do very well. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve very well as their needs are recognised early and appropriate support given. Regular assessments ensure that pupils are offered appropriate challenges. Pupils have clear targets, but they do not always know exactly what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils succeed because the teaching is good and provides them with a broad range of opportunities to learn through interesting and exciting topics and activities. Lessons are lively and encourage pupils to enjoy working hard. Teachers and learning support assistants demonstrate good teamwork to provide a good curriculum which meets the diverse needs of the pupils and gives them appropriate levels of support. Pupils are beginning to make links between subjects, which helps them to apply what they learn, for example using literacy skills in history. Because staff know the children well, they know how each is doing, but the school's formal records of pupils' progress are not as accessible as they could be. The school provides a safe and secure place in which to learn and develop and pupils are confident that help is there when they need it. As one child put it, 'There are nice people here and staff are always helping us'. There is a good focus on exercise and healthy eating, with a wide range of physical challenges offered. Pupils are developing into responsible young people who make a good contribution to the community. They participate fully in lessons and play well together – they certainly have great fun. Their good personal development is shown in the friendly way they treat each other and visitors. They are keen to learn about the world around them and are developing an appreciation of different cultures. Pupils know that many of the skills they are developing will help them as adults. Parents have positive views, and one summed it up as 'a very special school'.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that targets not only identify what pupils are aiming for, but also make clear to them exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Pupils work hard and meet the challenging targets that are set for them in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, as do the older pupils who are fully involved in setting their equally demanding targets. Pupils know what they are trying to achieve, but are not always clear on how to get there. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and this continues as they move through the school. In 2006, standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were significantly above average, particularly in writing. These were an improvement on the previous year when results were also good. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 reach above average standards in optional tests and in the thorough assessments carried out by the school. The vast majority exceed national expectations and all are proud of their achievements. More able pupils make good progress and reach the higher standards expected of them. Those pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities also achieve very well and, as with all pupils, their success is celebrated.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Staff have high expectations of pupils' achievement in class. This has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils know their views are taken into account, for example in the design and colour scheme of the refurbished toilets. Pupils understand that they are expected to behave well and be responsible members of the school community and they react very positively to these challenges. They appreciate their role in making the school a good place to be. They readily take on responsibilities and are polite and helpful to adults and each other. Pupils feel safe. They are confident that staff will be able to help them sort out any problems which may arise. Pupils enjoy the broad range of opportunities to keep fit, including use of the new playground equipment and numerous sports activities. Pupils' lunchboxes, however, do not always reflect what they say they know about healthy eating. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils value each other's individuality and work well together. They are involved in setting school rules. They also have opportunities to develop their thinking on broader issues. As one girl put it, 'We talk about the difference between what we want and we really need'. Pupils' good basic skills and involvement in a range of community projects are helping to prepare them for the future. Attendance is good and pupils are eager to come to school. They appreciate that the school and church play a key role in village life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good teaching helps pupils to be enthusiastic learners who enjoy doing their best and making good progress. Staff have good subject knowledge and work well as class teams. Planning clearly identifies what pupils are expected to learn and lessons are well organised to meet the needs of the different age and ability groups. Pupils know what they are meant to learn in each session and work hard as a consequence. Lessons do not, however, routinely relate the learning to pupils' targets. More able pupils are given appropriate activities to extend their learning and they enjoy rising to these challenges. There is a real buzz in classrooms, as seen when the older pupils were 'history detectives' researching facts about Elizabeth I. The 'gruesome recipes' devised by Class 2 caused great hilarity. Pupils are given time to think, and the sensitive response of staff to misconceptions helps maintain pupils' self-esteem. Carefully targeted questions are used very effectively to assess learning and to provide additional challenges which make pupils think. Staff use these assessments well and are developing ways to involve pupils more in assessing their own work. Lessons are interesting and engaging as resources are used very effectively. For example, digital projectors help pupils to participate more actively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and appropriately planned to help pupils to achieve well, with full account taken of the mixed age groups in some classes. Given the small size of the school, many opportunities are taken to work in networks of schools and with other agencies to develop curriculum initiatives for the benefit of the pupils. This has enhanced the curriculum for the older pupils, who are now learning French as a result. The music teaching and choral singing also add greatly to the variety and pleasure gained from what pupils are doing in school. Creative links are being developed so that pupils can, for example, use what they learn in literacy and numeracy in other subjects. However, these are still at an early stage and the school has not had time to assess the impact of this initiative. Pupils enjoy a range of enrichment activities which include after-school clubs, an annual residential trip for the older pupils and themed days. Good curriculum opportunities are also offered for the more able pupils so that they do very well. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are motivated to achieve their best through a curriculum that meets their needs very effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good links developed with the local pre-school help children to settle quickly when they start in Class 1. Procedures for safeguarding the pupils are good and they feel safe and secure. Parents agree that their children are well cared for at school and

express very positive views, including one comment that their child is in 'very good hands'. The good level of staffing ensures that the more vulnerable pupils receive the support and guidance they need which helps them to succeed. Staff are adept at helping pupils to work through any difficulties with their work so that the pupils come up with the solutions themselves. Pupils have clear targets, so they know what they are aiming for, but they do not always know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is a good leader who strives to help all pupils to do as well as they possibly can. Her vision is shared by the staff and governors. Parents also agree that the school is well led and managed. Clear plans have been developed with staff and governors to move the school forward. Teaching is monitored regularly and appropriate feedback given to staff. Subject leadership skills are developing effectively amongst staff as they all share responsibility for improvement in this small school. The school has a good track record and this provides a firm foundation for further improvement. Resources are used very efficiently, especially the deployment of support staff, who play a significant role in the school's success. Governors give effective support and are very committed to providing high quality education for the pupils. They are aware that they do not provide enough critical challenge to the management. The school consults well with parents, although a few would like more information on a range of issues and the school is working on this. When summing up what Shepton Beauchamp School offers pupils, one parent stated that 'its standards and ethos will be with our children always'.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

- Thank you very much for helping me to feel so welcome in your school, for answering my questions and sharing your ideas with me. As you know, I visited all three classes and saw you at break-time. I talked to your teachers, your headteacher and governors as well as some of the children in Class 3. I would like to tell you what I thought about your good school. Here are some of the things I liked best:
- your school is a happy, friendly and safe place to be
- your behaviour is good and shows that you care about each other
- learning is fun, as I saw in your lessons - the cake cooked by Class 2 was delicious!
- you work hard and do very well
- there are lots of interesting things going on and I know your parents like looking at the wonderful displays
- you enjoy using all the new outdoor equipment as well as going to the after-school clubs and on visits
- your headteacher and staff do a good job and help you all to succeed. Here is something which will help your school to be even better:
- you all work hard to reach your targets, but I think you would find it helpful if you all knew exactly what you need to do to improve your work. I hope you continue to have such a good time at Shepton Beauchamp and wish you the very best for the future.