

Bincombe Valley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113716
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	338225
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neville Wood
Headteacher	Leslie Strong
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons, and held meetings with staff governors, and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's records of pupils' standards and achievement, the school development plan, minutes of governors meetings, various policies and documents related to safeguarding of the pupils. Questionnaires from the staff and pupils and 82 questionnaires returned by parents were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- current levels of progress made by all pupils, especially the boys in Key Stage 1, and girls in mathematics at Key Stage 2
- the extent to which teaching and the curriculum meets the needs of all ability groups, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more-able pupils
- the accuracy of school's self-evaluation and its capacity to improve

Information about the school

Bincombe Valley Primary is a large school. The majority of pupils come from families of White British backgrounds and no pupils speak English as an additional language. An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals and there is a much higher proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities than is found nationally. A unit for pupils identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties is based at the school. The unit is closed at present for refurbishment but is due to reopen in January. The school provides full-time education for children throughout their Reception Year. There is provision for a breakfast club at the start of each school day which is managed by the school. An independent Sure Start Children's Centre was established on the school site in January 2008.

The school has successfully gained the Healthy School Award, the Artsmark Gold and the FA Charter Standard Award. There have been a few changes in teaching staff this year.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Bincombe Valley Primary is a good school that enables pupils to achieve well. The outstanding care, support and guidance provided by all staff underpin the school's success. Many pupils have a wide range of difficulties. They are well supported, quickly grow in confidence and are soon able to tackle learning effectively. Over the past four years pupils have achieved better than could be expected given the many barriers to learning that a significant minority face. Attainment fluctuates year on year, but is broadly average overall. This represents good progress and achievement from their well below average skills on entry to Reception. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This provides a good start to their learning.

Although teaching is good overall, the more-able pupils do not always achieve as well as they should because they are not always sufficiently challenged. Some pupils do not feel they know how to improve and although there is good practice in many classes, in a minority of cases teachers' marking does not support pupils' understanding of how well they are doing or how they should improve. These areas for development have been accurately identified by the headteacher. A new management structure has been introduced and this has already started to influence improvements. For example, good improvement has already been made in the teaching of reading and writing and standards have risen throughout the school. Both boys and girls have improved in these subjects to make good progress, but the boys are not yet as successful as the girls. The staff are now focusing successfully on improving standards in mathematics which dipped last year.

Many improvements have been made to the opportunities available for pupils to extend their experiences, skills and knowledge. This was clearly evident in pupils' enthusiasm for sport but also their enjoyment of school. They feel safe and secure and know that if they have any problems or concerns, they can go to the headteacher or any member of staff for help and support. The headteacher provides the driving commitment to ensuring the well-being of all pupils, which is recognised by many parents and by the pupils themselves. Attendance, which has been a concern for several years, is improving and is broadly average. There are no longer any persistent absentees. This success, the school's accurate self-evaluation, the track record of good achievement and continuing improvement, especially in the provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the school's strong support for the development of an on-site Sure Start Children's Centre, confirms the school's good capacity for further improvement.

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Staff work as a very supportive team. Many staff expressed their pride in working at Bincombe, their confidence in the strong leadership of the headteacher and their great satisfaction in seeing pupils blossom. Nearly all aspects of pupils' personal development are good. They behave well and show real empathy and care for one another. Although the school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory overall, with strengths in its engagement with the local community, pupils do not have as many opportunities to develop their awareness of the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom and internationally.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide a consistently high standard of teaching by:
 - ensuring sufficient challenge is provided for the more-able pupils
 - developing consistent strategies through which pupils gain an understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve
 - ensuring boys make progress as strong as that of the girls.
- Ensure that pupils gain a better understanding of the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom and a greater understanding of the differences in people's lives in other parts of the world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Although there are fluctuations in both pupils' attainment and in their progress, achievement overall is good and pupils reach the challenging targets set for them. The number and severity of pupils' additional needs in each cohort account for much of the variation. Vulnerable pupils and those with behavioural and/or learning needs are very well supported both by teachers and the good number of experienced teaching assistants. Consequently, these pupils achieve well in lessons and participate fully in all activities. In a very challenging mathematics lesson in Year 6, for example, the teaching assistants quietly encouraged, questioned and supported the pupils with learning difficulties, helping them to make their own calculations and to give correct answers. The good progress of one pupil in particular drew strong praise from the class teacher and a look of real pleasure from the child.

Pupils are eager to learn and try hard. They want to do well and work very well with partners and in groups sharing ideas and solving problems. Improvements to the quality of learning have enabled standards of attainment to rise by the end of Year 2. These pupils are now working at the levels expected for their age and this represents good progress from their starting points in Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress overall in Key Stage 2. Test and assessment data shows that most pupils in Year 6 are attaining average standards overall. However, this is the result of good

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progress from their below-average starting points in Year 3. Attainment in English has risen in the last two years, but the numbers reaching the higher Level 5 are not as strong as in mathematics and science.

Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They have a sensible awareness of the potential dangers around them and have a good range of strategies to keep themselves safe. They are aware of the need for healthy lifestyles and how to promote them. They make a positive contribution to the life of the school through their care of the environment, their eagerness to take on responsibility and their ability to carry it out sensibly. They suggest ways to make improvements in the local environment and many have taken part in litter-picking, cleaning up areas of local parkland as well as organising their own money-raising schemes. Pupils' work well together and have a strong sense of right and wrong, so that despite some shortcomings in their awareness of cultural diversity, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their good attitudes to learning and their successful application of basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills, prepares them satisfactorily for their next stage in education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils' good achievement is securely underpinned by the outstanding levels of care, support and guidance. The school works tirelessly with pupils, their families and with outside agencies to help further learning and pupils' well-being. Where

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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communication between agencies is slow, the school is quick to challenge systems, so moving more rapidly towards successful outcomes for the pupils. The breakfast club provides an important start to the day for many pupils. It provides a calm and safe place in which to eat breakfast, to meet friends and prepare for the day. Relationships are exceptionally strong throughout the school and pupils feel well cared for and secure.

In the school’s harmonious and calm environment pupils are able to settle to learning well. Pupils find their lessons interesting, especially when using the computers and the interactive whiteboards to help them understand new work. The pace of lessons is usually brisk. Teachers use assessment satisfactorily to identify what pupils know and can do and to plan activities that build on past learning. These tasks are not, however, always sufficiently challenging to extend the learning of the more-able pupils. Systems for sharing targets with pupils and marking their work so they understand how to improve their performance are inconsistent. There are some very good examples that celebrate pupils’ good work and effort and clearly identify what they have done well and point out where they can improve. In Years 1 and 2, for example, teachers use small stars which are stuck in pupils’ work where they have correctly used a capital letter, for example, or are where they have achieved the objective of the lesson. These strategies are not, however, a regular feature of teachers’ marking in all classes.

The curriculum is suitably broad and well balanced and effective links are made between subjects to make learning meaningful and relevant. It promotes pupils’ personal development and learning well. A strong element of the personal, social and health education programme is the opportunity pupils have to discuss and share ideas that promote emotional and social development. A good range of after-school clubs and additional activities enhance pupils’ learning and give them an opportunity to try and develop new skills. Each year pupils spend a week exploring the aspects of different cultures including food, art and music. However, opportunities to work alongside adults from other cultural and social backgrounds are often limited to these events. This means that the opportunities to develop tolerance, respect and understanding of others are restricted. The curriculum is well adapted to meet the needs of most pupils, but the provision for the most able and those who have specific gifts or talents is not yet sufficiently developed to ensure they are challenged consistently in lessons and given opportunities to extend their talents.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the headteacher provides the drive and focus for ensuring that pupils receive the best care and education so they are able to achieve well. The leadership is successful in tackling discrimination and ensuring pupils are fully included in the life of the school, especially those who have personal, emotional or special educational needs and/or disabilities. They all feel valued members of the 'Bincombe family'. Information from the national tests and other end-of-year assessments are very effectively analysed to identify weaknesses in learning. Changes in the curriculum are duly made or interventions planned for pupils who need greater support. However, the results of other monitoring activities are not always evaluated with sufficient rigor to ensure that teaching is as effective as it should be in all classes and pupils have a secure understanding of how to improve. This has been correctly identified by the headteacher and a new structure of responsibilities has been put into place to remedy these concerns. Safeguarding policies and procedures are of good quality, meet all requirements and at the time of the inspection were rigorously followed.

Governors provide good levels of support. They are well informed and monitor the school's work effectively through visits, discussions and meetings, although they are not yet as fully involved in longer term strategic planning. Governors have yet to be involved in monitoring or evaluating the school's provision for promoting community cohesion. There is a strong commitment to promoting cohesion within the school community. The school recognises that it needs to establish meaningful national and international links so that pupils develop a better understanding of other communities. The financial management of the school is good and judicious use is made of its budget to support school priorities such as supporting the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they are able to attend full time in their first term. The school works well with its local community and with its parents. There are good links with many other schools, colleges and outside agencies which enhance the school's provision.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and	2

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tackles discrimination	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in the Nursery often with very limited language skills and personal social development. They settle into the Nursery well under the sensitive care of the teacher and support staff. Children make good progress and are well prepared for learning in the Reception classes, where staff work very well together to provide a rich and varied learning environment. There is a good balance between adult-led tasks and those activities chosen by the children. Space is used well within the Reception classes, but the outside area lacks opportunities for children to experiment, explore and extend the learning they have made in the classroom. Children make good progress in Reception. Attainment by the time they move into Year 1 has been rising and while attainment was below average in the past, last year the large majority of children reached the standards expected for their age.

Good links are made with parents when children start in the Nursery and they continue throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. The levels of care and support for children’s welfare are a real strength of both the Nursery and Reception. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is well led and the provision has improved over the last two years. Assessment data is not always analysed sufficiently rigorously to help staff identify the most important priorities for improvement, although in general discussion about the children who the staff know very well these often become apparent. The school has clearly identified the importance of developing greater links with the children’s centre so that children transfer smoothly from the pre-school group into the school provision, but although there has been some work on the outside area used by children in the Nursery and the Reception classes there has been less of a focus on the importance of developing children’s opportunities to write outside which would also benefit their further development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents who returned the questionnaires were very supportive of the school. Several parents wrote to say they felt that the leadership provided by the headteacher was excellent and that teaching, especially in the Nursery and in Reception, was particularly good. The proportion of parents who showed they were pleased with the education provided by the school was much higher than those who had concerns.

Very few parents expressed individual concerns about the school. For example, one felt strongly that the school does not keep their child safe but gave no reasons for their concerns. Inspectors' evidence led to a judgement that safeguarding is good and pupils are extremely well cared for and supported. Six parents felt that the school does not manage poor behaviour sufficiently effectively. During the inspection there was evidence of the vast majority of pupils behaving well both in lessons and about the school. Strategies for managing inappropriate behaviour, which was rare, were effective and pupils responded quickly to the adults' expectations.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bincombe Valley Primary to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 289 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	67	22	27	4	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	60	73	21	26	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	45	55	29	35	5	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	63	23	28	1	1	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	55	67	20	24	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	53	65	23	28	3	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	70	25	30	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	49	60	23	28	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	51	62	26	32	3	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	70	19	23	3	4	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	54	32	39	2	2	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	61	74	15	18	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	61	74	17	21	1	1	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bincombe Valley Primary School, Weymouth DT3 6AF

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a good school. Here are some of the things we found out about you.

- You get a very good start to your schooling in Nursery and Reception.
- You make good progress and you reach standards in Year 6 that are expected of most pupils of your age.
- You behave well. You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You told us how everyone gets on well together.
- You told us that you like your teachers a lot and you feel very safe in school. We could see that you are taught well in many lessons and you enjoy trying to meet the challenges teachers set you.
- We could see that you want to do well in your work, but some of you are not sure how to improve your work.
- Everyone in the school works together as a strong team and there is a good partnership with your parents and others who can help you to learn.
- The staff look after you extremely well so you are kept safe and feel happy at school.

Even though Bincombe Valley Primary is a good school, there are some things it can do to make it even better. We have asked the headteacher and governors to:

- help you to get even better in your work by asking teachers to make sure that those who find learning easy are challenged more, and that you all understand how to make your work better
- help you understand more about the wide range of peoples that live in the United Kingdom and around the world.

Thank you again for helping us and I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Hazel Callaghan
Lead Inspector.

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