

# Swanage St Mark's Church of England Primary School

Bell Street, Swanage, BH19 2SA

**Inspection dates** 19–20 June 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher's principled leadership and vision for the school lead to the very positive ethos. Governors, teachers and other staff offer good support. All the parents and carers who took part in the online survey agreed that they would recommend the school to another parent or carer.
- From starting points that are below or well below expectations, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils in the current Year 5 are on track to reach broadly average attainment in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- In recent years, attainment at the end of Year 2 has mostly been broadly average in all subjects, although there is an improving trend.
- Progress in the Reception Year is good in all areas of learning.
- Teaching is brisk and learning is well organised. Teachers set tasks that are appropriately matched to the learning needs of groups in classes with wide spans of age and ability.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and feel safe. Parents, carers and members of staff agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils' progress is carefully tracked. Self-evaluation is accurate, and whole-school improvement planning is of good quality.
- The curriculum supports the development of pupils' knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and meets their personal needs and interests.
- Governors have a good understanding of their role. They are supportive of school leaders, but also confident about holding them to account.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Although pupils make good progress in writing, their attainment is lower than in reading and mathematics.
- Marking does not include enough advice about how pupils could improve the quality of their writing, and teachers do not refer pupils

- There is not a sharp enough focus in the school's planning on the actions necessary to improve the quality of pupils' writing.
- Expectations about the neatness of pupils' handwriting and high standards of presentation have not been consistently set.
- sufficiently to their learning targets.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in seven lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. The inspector also heard a sample of pupils in Years 1 and 2 read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Because there were not enough responses, the inspector was unable to take account of the online questionnaire, Parent View, in planning the inspection. However, he analysed the 32 responses that were on Parent View by the end of the inspection. He also received a written communication from one family.
- The inspector also took account of the 27 responses to the questionnaire for school staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current attainment and progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding and staff performance management.

## Inspection team

Chris Grove, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a primary school that is much smaller than average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding to support children in local authority care, children from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is broadly average. There are currently no children who are looked after by the local authority or who are from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- The extent of mobility (the proportion of pupils who have moved into or out of the school) has increased in the last two years, and is now above average.
- Since the previous inspection, this former first school has been re-designated as a primary school, and now has pupils in Year 5 in addition to the year groups up to Year 4.
- The present headteacher took up post in September 2009.
- The school is to be relocated from September 2014 to the nearby site of a former middle school.
- Among the school's accreditations are the International School, the Eco School (Green Flag), and the Rights Respecting School (Level 1) awards.

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

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing so that it matches their higher attainment in reading and mathematics by:
  - sharpening the focus in improvement planning on measures designed to improve the quality of their writing
  - helping pupils to develop a clearer understanding of the next steps in learning how to write at greater length, through better marking and use of target setting to indicate the necessary improvements
  - making sure that teachers set more consistently high expectations for the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils in all year groups consistently make good and sometimes better progress. The high proportion who are disabled or have special educational needs make similarly good progress.
- The oldest pupils, currently in Year 5, are on track to reach broadly average attainment in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, their attainment in writing is somewhat lower.
- Over the last three years, nationally reported attainment at the end of Year 2 has typically been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there is also a trend of improvement, and the school's current assessments indicate that this is set to continue.
- When children first enter the school, their knowledge and skills are often below, and sometimes well below, expectations. Because of the lively teaching, children make good progress, providing them with a firm foundation for later learning. By the end of the Reception Year attainment in all areas of learning is closer to, and sometimes meets, national expectations.
- As there is no Year 6 as yet, it is not possible to make year-on-year comparisons between the attainment of those supported by the pupil premium and that of others. The school's tracking shows that the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is as good as that of others. The school has used the funding in part to provide additional teaching for any eligible pupils who are identified as making less than expected progress. The funding also supports specially trained staff offering emotional support to pupils who experience challenging personal circumstances, and to their families. In addition, school uniform is provided for eligible pupils. In such ways, the school demonstrates its strong commitment to Christian values and the promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination.
- The school has done well to maintain pupils' good achievement, given the below expected starting points, the higher numbers from more vulnerable groups and the increasing mobility (pupils entering the school at times other than the beginning of the Reception Year, or leaving during the course of the year).

### The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching leads to pupils' good progress. In their responses to the online survey, every parent and carer agreed that their child is well taught and makes good progress.
- The cordial relationships between pupils and their teachers and teaching assistants reflect the school's strong, Christian ethos. Adults set high expectations for behaviour and participation which make for the good climate for learning. The good pace to lessons fosters pupils' attentiveness and motivation.
- Lessons are well planned and organised. The expectation that the tasks set should be effectively matched to pupils' prior attainment is firmly established, with the result that levels of challenge are appropriate for the wide span of ages and abilities in each class. The teaching assistants, and the assistants who support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, carry out their roles well. In a lesson on guided reading for pupils in Years 1 and 2, for instance, the most able completed a piece of work independently, while the three other groups of pupils worked diligently on their different tasks with the teacher or with one of the teaching assistants.
- A strong feature is teachers' good involvement of pupils in whole-class work, for example through opportunities for discussion with a partner about aspects of their learning. Teachers also seek feedback from pupils, for instance by asking about the extent of their understanding or their confidence about completing a task, indicated by showing 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down'.
- Teaching in the Reception class has a good impact on children's learning. The teacher maintains a brisk pace, and lessons are well structured and sequenced. Together with the seamless cooperation from the teaching assistants, this leads to the very positive climate for learning and

children's success, for example in developing the skills for reading.

- The school is aware that pupils need to develop further the complex range of skills involved in writing at greater length. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 were greatly helped by opportunities to analyse the clauses in their sentences as they recorded aspects of their current topic. Exercise books show that teachers regularly respond positively to pupils' work. However, opportunities are missed to help pupils to develop a clearer understanding about how to reach a higher level of writing attainment, through better feedback from marking and greater reference to their learning targets.
- In addition, expectations about the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work are not consistently high. The result is that not all pupils produce well-presented work in neat handwriting.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils' behaviour towards others is considerate. Many show mature attitudes, for instance in their tolerance of those who pupils say need 'kind hands and kind words.'
- In classrooms, pupils show a clear readiness to learn. They develop good skills in listening to others, are responsive to teachers and assistants, and cooperate willingly, for example as learning partners. The classroom 'charters' create ownership of agreed rules. Pupils enjoy their roles as 'welcomers', who explain what is going on in the classroom to visitors.
- Pupils confirm that behaviour is also good at playtimes and lunchtimes. They understand the different types of bullying behaviour, but say there is little bullying, and have confidence in staff to address any problems that occasionally arise. Exclusions are rare.
- In the survey, all parents and carers agreed that their children feel safe in school. Responses to the staff questionnaire were also unanimous that pupils are safe.
- Although pupils' behaviour is regularly good, the school does not yet build on this to the extent that it could to promote greater independence in learning, for example through more detailed feedback on how pupils could improve their own attainment.
- Attendance has been below average but is improving, following effective action by senior staff, and in the current year is broadly average.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher's vision aims to meet pupils' personal and academic needs, summed up in the school's motto, 'Opening doors to the journey of life'. In pursuit of that vision, the school also successfully seeks the close involvement of families and the local community. Teaching and support staff form a close-knit team and share this vision. Without exception, they express their pride in being members of the school. They all agree that the school is well led and managed, as does every parent and carer who completed the online questionnaire.
- High expectations are set for staff and pupils. Self-evaluation is accurate and is based on good evidence gathered from a well-developed range of activities, including observing the quality of teaching. Leaders regularly track pupils' progress and undertake a range of measures to check the quality of teaching and learning. The resulting whole-school improvement planning is of good quality. Besides aiming to enhance teaching and learning and the school's Christian character, planning rightly focuses on completing the change to primary status, and preparing for relocation to new premises. Other planning is less consistent in quality, and in particular does not sufficiently focus on raising pupils' attainment in writing.
- The curriculum supports the school's vision well. In the Reception class, well-planned opportunities for learning through practical activities indoors and outside complement whole-class and small-group teaching of reading, writing and mathematical skills. The curriculum in Years 1 to 5 has a continuing focus on developing these skills, and provides good opportunities to explore exciting topics, such as ancient Egypt. There is specialist teaching of music. In achieving the International School Award, an active link with a school in South Sudan has been

developed. The Rights Respecting School and Eco School awards attest to the strong focus on values which do much to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's performance. It has confidence in the abilities of the school's leadership, and so has provided light-touch support.
- It is evident from responses to the online questionnaire that parents and carers strongly support the school. Family sessions are organised to help parents, carers and their children. The website provides good levels of information.
- The school's leadership maintains a rigorous focus on all aspects of child protection and safeguarding, which fully meet requirements. Furthermore, leaders are meticulous in ensuring that vulnerable pupils are especially well supported.
- Thorough and robust self-evaluation, and maintenance of the good quality of the teaching, indicate the school's capacity for improvement. In addition, the carefully devised whole-school improvement planning and the well-designed systems now used to track pupils' progress have effectively addressed issues that were identified at the previous inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body knows the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors understand that national data provide only partial information about the school's performance, but have a good overview of pupils' achievement from the headteacher's reports and those of the local authority's school evaluation partner. They know that the quality of teaching has been maintained. Governors take their responsibility for the headteacher's performance management seriously, and are aware that other members of staff are effectively appraised, and that salary progression has been earned. They recognise the purpose of the pupil premium, and have satisfied themselves that the funding is being appropriately spent. They acknowledge the importance of ongoing training. Governors subscribe to the local authority's training arrangements, and also undertake training with fellow governors in nearby schools, in order to continue to hold the school to good account.

## 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>	113814
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	412632

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	113
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marion Marchant
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Armstrong
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01929 422949
<b>Fax number</b>	01929 425504
<b>Email address</b>	office@stmarksswanage.dorset.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

