

Three Legged Cross First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113678
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	325861
Inspection dates	20 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Barron

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Victor Redpath
Headteacher	Justine Turner
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2006
School address	Church Road Three Legged Cross Wimborne Dorset BH21 6RF
Telephone number	01202 822460
Fax number	01202 822460

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how well pupils presently achieve, especially in regard to writing, with a focus on Year 2 and Year 4
- the quality of pupils' personal development, especially pupils' awareness and understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society
- the quality of care, guidance and support, especially academic guidance and support.

The inspectors gathered evidence from discussions with pupils, staff and representatives from the governing body, observations of teaching and of pupils at work and at play, scrutiny of school documentation and self-evaluation, samples of pupils' work and an analysis of parental questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report

Description of the school

This is a small rural school situated in an area of high social deprivation. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the school's Reception class. Pupils from both the travelling and circus communities attend the school for short periods each year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It has a highly inclusive ethos and prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their education. Parents are overwhelming in their support for what they believe is an excellent school and appreciate the outstanding quality of education it provides for their children. 'I hold the school in high regard' is typical of the many positive comments from parents.

At the heart of the school's success are outstanding leadership and management, especially that of the headteacher, plus an outstanding curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils very well. However, the school is not complacent and regularly analyses its performance rigorously in order to ensure that any gaps in learning are identified and improvement strategies put in place. This is evident not only in the way the school has tackled the issues raised by the last inspection, for example in improving the quality of teaching, but also in the school's recent successful drive to raise standards in writing. It is clear that the school demonstrates an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Children enter the school's Reception class with well below average standards, especially in regard to their social and language development. They make good progress because good teaching caters effectively for their needs. Achievement is outstanding in all other year groups because high quality teaching caters very effectively for the needs of all pupils. Lessons are very well structured and teachers and very effective teaching assistants work very well together to ensure all pupils are included in learning. By Year 4, standards are above average and pupils are on course to meet or exceed the challenging targets set for them by the school. Pupils from the traveller and circus communities, and also the well above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent progress because of the very effective level of support they receive.

Pupils are proud of their school and realise it is helping them to be successful learners. They describe it as a friendly place where everyone gets on very well together. Pupils say they really enjoy all aspects of school life and comment that learning is 'fun' and that 'we have lots of freedom'. They know there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Their behaviour is exemplary and their attitudes to learning are excellent. They are confident that any extremely rare instances of anti-social actions by others will be dealt with quickly and fairly. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils fully understand the importance of keeping safe and the need to make sensible and healthy choices. Their contribution to the wider community is excellent. Pupils play a very active role in local life, for example in regularly visiting nearby care homes. The school council gives them a real voice in school affairs and pupils say they are proud of the way they have helped raise money for both the school and a wide range of charities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and pupils' appreciation of the multicultural nature of modern British society is very well developed. The school's good links with the circus and travelling communities helps pupils to appreciate that there are people living in this country who are from different cultural backgrounds from their own. Attendance figures are improving. Most pupils attend very well but there are a few pupils who do not receive enough parental support for attending school. The school makes huge efforts to encourage

better attendance, especially by traveller community children. These efforts even involve visits to individual pupils' homes by the headteacher.

The curriculum is designed to ensure learning is relevant, purposeful and enjoyable. Subjects such as science, history and geography are used effectively to develop speaking and listening skills and pupils' ability to complete longer pieces of written work successfully. Pupils say they look forward to lessons, especially when they involve practical work in subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT). They talk enthusiastically about the range of extra-curricular activities they take part in, especially in sport and music. A wide variety of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest, including residential stays, enhance their personal development. Pupils also benefit from the opportunity to learn French from a young age whilst themed weeks featuring subjects such as art and design play an important part in their learning.

The level of care, guidance and support for pupils is excellent and is the basis for their outstanding personal development and well-being. Parents are particularly pleased about the way the school looks after their children and comment that pupils are 'very well looked after'. Pupils' health and well-being are securely safeguarded and child protection procedures are very robust. Very effective induction and transfer arrangements help pupils settle quickly into new routines. Teachers' marking is consistently of a high standard and always gives pupils a good understanding of how to improve their work. The quality of care for individual pupils is excellent because of the contribution of skilled support staff and the use of very effective systems for monitoring well-being and progress. The school has implemented very good procedures to assess and track pupils' progress and uses these very effectively to set individual pupils challenging targets for improvement.

The headteacher works very well with staff to ensure the school quickly addresses inconsistencies in learning. She is well supported by the governing body, which has improved its effectiveness since the last inspection and now offers the school a good level of challenge and support. Parents appreciate the fact that their views are regularly sought and acted upon. Resources are very good and used highly effectively to enhance pupils' achievement. Links with external agencies and partnerships with other schools, especially the school's strong links with other local primary schools, are used to support pupils' learning extremely well.

The school makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion and this is evident in the way pupils work and play very well together whilst accepting each other's differences. It is also evident in the way the school has successfully involved hard-to-reach families in their children's education. However, the school has yet to evaluate how well it has promoted community cohesion so far and identify aspects in need of further development.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and achieve well because good teaching caters effectively for their needs, regardless of their abilities. Even so, because of their low starting points, many children often enter Year 1 with below average social and language development.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The class teacher and effective teaching assistant work well to ensure children enjoy learning. The classroom is colourful and well resourced and provides a safe and secure learning environment. Lessons effectively blend opportunities for children to learn both independently and with adult direction. Children with less well developed social skills or who need extra help with learning are given the support they need to make the same good progress as all others. Recording of children's progress is thorough and used well to plan future work. Staff work effectively to ensure there is always an emphasis on language development. This ensures that children make good progress in developing their communication skills.

Progress in personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Behaviour is very good and nearly all children play and work well together and are happy to share and take turns. Regular visits to interesting places are used well to build up children's growing understanding of the wider world. However, although a secure outdoor area is used well to help children build up the skills associated with outdoor play when the weather is fine, the outdoor covered area is extremely small and this severely limits opportunities for outdoor activities during periods of inclement weather.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to provide children with the facilities they need to develop the skills associated with outdoor play during periods of inclement weather.

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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

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.

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B



21 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Three Legged Cross First School, Wimborne BH21 6RF

What a great school! Thank you for being so friendly and making both the other inspector and me feel very welcome during our visit to see you all. It is obvious why you like school so much. We all agree that Three Legged Cross First School is what adults call an 'outstanding' school and this means that it is exceptionally good at making sure you all do your very best. There are so many things we like about your school that we have not got the space to write them all down here, but these are the most important ones.

- Your school gives you an excellent education and makes sure you make outstanding progress in learning.
- You are lucky to have such great teaching. Your teachers always try to make learning very interesting.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are all very polite.
- Your teachers make sure you all know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve your work.
- Teachers and the other adults who work in the school care for you really well and make sure you are always extremely safe and very well looked after.

Your headteacher, her staff and your school governors are working as hard as they can. To try and make your school even better we have asked them to

- make sure that children in the Reception class have an undercover outside area to use so that when it rains, they do not get wet when they work outside.

We hope you all work hard and continue to make outstanding progress.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Michael Barron
Lead inspector