

Loders CE (VC) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113773
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	325880
Inspection dates	1 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Christopher
Headteacher	Michael Kite
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2006
School address	Loders Bridport Dorset DT6 3SA
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Introduction

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

- The effectiveness of assessment systems in identifying pupils who may be encountering difficulties or those who are doing particularly well.
- The quality of support provided for pupils who are gifted and talented.
- The quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- How well the school is promoting community cohesion.

Evidence was gathered from an examination of the school's documentation, parents' questionnaires and pupils' work, observations of pupils in classes, around the school and in the playground, as well as interviews with subject leaders, pupils, governors and parents.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, are not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This primary school is situated in a small village in Dorset. It is much smaller than most schools and nearly all the pupils attending are of White British extraction and none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The Reception children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a class together with Year 1.

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. The pupils who attend benefit from, as one parent wrote, 'a fantastic school where children are given every opportunity to reach their full potential'. Parents wholeheartedly support Lodders and were unstinting in their praise: 'an outstanding school in every respect', 'the school is wonderful, my child has made fantastic progress' and 'brilliant' were some of the typical comments. Many commented on the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and it is this that provides the key to the school's success. The headteacher has a positive 'can do' attitude and this permeates through the whole school from the headteacher himself to staff, governors, parents and children. No problem is too big to be surmounted. When funding created problems with staffing teaching groups, a solution was found that would meet the needs of a Year 4 group which has more difficulties than the rest of the school and which would enable these pupils to make the progress required. There is a genuine enthusiasm for learning engendered in the school and this is down to the headteacher's quietly dynamic approach which motivates and inspires those working with him. There is an excellent team spirit and all staff work together extremely well as a unit. They are all wholeheartedly committed to fulfilling the school's aims and values and strive hard to improve this already exceptional school.

The children in the Reception Year get an outstanding start to their education. They benefit from being taught in a bright and stimulating environment which is as inspiring out of doors as it is inside. They make outstanding progress because staff are aware of the needs of every single child and plan accordingly. In Years 1 to 6, the pupils blossom. They are lively and enthusiastic; they benefit from a varied and inspirational curriculum, and, as several parents commented, 'teaching of the highest standard'. As a result, standards by the end of Year 6 have been sustained at an extremely high level for several years, despite this being a small school where the abilities of different cohorts vary greatly from year to year. High standards are sustained not just in English, mathematics and science but also in other subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT), French, art, sports and performing arts. Achievement is outstanding for all pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is because the school systematically analyses pupils' progress to ensure that any potential problems are identified before they develop into real concerns. The school's assessment systems are exceptional and have been adapted to meet their own purposes, and this enables the instant identification of pupils requiring additional support or challenge.

However, the school's most effective aids to improvement are the headteacher and staff. They know their pupils. They constantly assess progress made, both formally and informally; they share information and ideas and, as a result, their teaching effectively meets every need. Teachers work hard to enthuse and inspire their pupils – and succeed. As several pupils commented to inspectors, 'The teachers really go out of their way to make learning fun for us.' Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn and use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, skilfully. Teachers are highly skilled at planning a wide range of tasks. These are carefully devised to meet the learning needs of all pupils so that all are appropriately challenged or supported. Teaching assistants are deployed extremely well and

provide excellent support for the pupils they work with. Pupils appreciate the guidance they receive. They say marking is very helpful and teachers discuss their work with them individually and regularly so that they know exactly what they need to do to improve.

Excellent links are made across a range of subjects, and this has had a particular impact on progress because pupils have many opportunities to practise their skills across many different subjects. The use of ICT is fully integrated into all topics. A wide range of visits and visitors, as well as an excellent range of out-of-school activities, provide pupils with many additional opportunities to enhance their learning. The school has been especially active in identifying pupils who have particular gifts or talents. It works very closely with parents to ensure that these pupils have every chance to pursue and build on these. As a result, pupils have attended courses ranging from mathematics challenges, to those for music, art, drama and physical education. Pupils take a real pride in their work. It is usually beautifully presented. This is because their efforts are valued and celebrated through the excellent displays of their work that enliven the school environment and illustrate the breadth of the outstanding curriculum.

Pupils are very well cared for. At the time of the inspection, all procedures for safeguarding pupils and child protection were securely in place. The support and guidance provided for pupils is of a very high quality and, as a result, they thrive. Parents say their children feel safe and secure and the pupils themselves confirm this. A comprehensive programme for pupils' personal, social and health education contributes very effectively to their outstanding personal development. When asked, all pupils confessed to really enjoying school. The areas they particularly enjoy are too many and varied to mention in full. However, there were recurring themes: 'it's like a big happy family', 'everyone gets on' and 'all the bits fit together like a jigsaw'. Pupils are lively and energetic and have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and keep safe. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective, assertive and confident. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Behaviour in and around the school is excellent and all the play spaces are happy and harmonious places. Through projects such as recycling, pupils are learning effectively about their wider, global responsibilities. They have an excellent understanding of growing up in a culturally diverse society. As one parent said, 'Children are taught to be curious about the world about them and have confidence in their dealings with it.' All these factors, together with their very good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, ensure they are getting an excellent grounding for their future lives.

Staff and governors know how well the school is doing. Targets set for future development are demanding, but achievable. Their self-evaluation is excellent and also reflects the school's philosophy that 'we can always improve'. There is an outstanding capacity for further improvement, as illustrated by the sustaining of exceptionally high standards over many years and the continual pursuit of excellence. The school uses data extremely well to check its performance and the robust monitoring systems ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is rigorously evaluated. Parents are supremely happy with the school, although a few expressed a slight problem with communication. The school sometimes relies on word-of-mouth or e-mail and not all parents have the internet. This means that occasionally they are not able to be fully involved or participate in their children's

learning. Governors regularly visit the school and their monitoring is rigorous and well focused. They promote community cohesion extremely well and have set up useful educational links at home and abroad. The school is at the heart of the local community and exceptionally well involved with it. A parent's view sums up the overall consensus, 'We are delighted with all aspects of the school, our children are happy, confident, secure and thriving. We feel very privileged to be part of the Loders community.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage **Grade: 1**

The attainment of children entering Reception varies considerably from year to year but is generally broadly as expected for their age. They make excellent progress to reach standards that are above average by the time they move into Year 1. Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent, and the sensitive encouragement and guidance they receive helps them to become happy and independent learners. Teaching is lively and interesting because the class teacher and teaching assistant work very closely together to ensure the learning environment is stimulating and exciting. There is an excellent balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. The use of the outside area is outstanding and children happily pursue activities related to all areas of the curriculum in both environments. This ensures learning is relevant and enriches the exciting curriculum further. The care and attention given to children's welfare are outstanding and children with specific difficulties are particularly well provided for. Leadership and management are outstanding. There is an excellent understanding of the needs of young children and their progress is carefully monitored, allowing activities to be planned at the right level to help them develop and learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve communication systems to ensure that parents are able to participate fully in their children's learning and activities.

Annex A

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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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

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.

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

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?	1
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	1
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

2 July 2009

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Loders CE (VC) Primary School, Loders, Bridport DT6 3SA.**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you really enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. Your school gives you an excellent education and is working hard to make it even better.

The following things in particular are outstanding:

- Your behaviour is excellent and you are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning.
- You are all doing extremely well in English, mathematics and science and many other subjects such as ICT, art, music and French as well.
- You take very seriously the importance of eating healthily and taking physical exercise.
- Teachers make learning interesting and fun for you, and you know how to improve your work from marking and target setting.
- You have an excellent, varied curriculum and the special activities arranged to enhance it are outstanding.
- The teachers and staff take excellent care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher leads the school extremely well and all the staff and governors are very keen to make it even better.

There is one thing that we have asked the school to do to make it even better:

- Make sure that messages about what you are going to be doing always get home so that your parents can be there to help if necessary. Your parents do not all have access to the internet and sometimes spoken messages, particularly from younger children, can get muddled. You can help here by trying to make sure you pass messages on accurately and by reminding your parents about what you are doing and what school events are taking place.

I am glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard to ensure that it stays as successful as it is now.

Very best wishes

Mrs Christine Huard
Lead inspector