

East Brent Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123809
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380736
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2012
Lead inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Wendy Kingdom
Acting headteacher	Ms Nicola Hare
Date of previous school inspection	June 2009
School address	Church Road East Brent Highbridge Somerset TA9 4HZ
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

Inspection team

Hazel Callaghan

Additional inspector

The inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed six lessons taught by four teachers and made other observations of pupils learning. Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, staff, representatives of the governing body, a member of the local authority and a good number of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documents in respect of safeguarding, the school's evaluation and planning documents, reports made about the school from the local authority and information about the attainment and progress of the pupils. The inspector analysed 33 questionnaires from parents and carers along with questionnaires from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than most schools of its type. Almost all of the pupils come from families of White British heritage. There is a below average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than is found nationally. The proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the beginning of the Reception Year is much greater than is usual. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the combined Reception and Year 1 class. There is a class of pupils in Year 2 and another for pupils who are in Years 3 and 4. The school runs a breakfast club and a privately run pre-school group uses the school hall every Friday. At the time of the inspection the headteacher was on long-term sick leave. The school's senior teacher took up the role of acting headteacher in December 2011.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain broadly average standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. However, there has been good progress in the development of teaching and learning in mathematics since the previous inspection and achievement in mathematics has risen.
- Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. They make good progress in their personal development and academic skills and knowledge.
- There has been a successful focus on ensuring that activities and support match the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. An increasing number are making good progress and the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is closing. However, there are occasions in lessons when the more-able pupils find their work unchallenging.
- The school promotes pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils feel very safe and get on really well together. They are polite, caring and behave well.
- On occasions, teachers do not use time effectively in lessons and pupils do not always have opportunities to complete their work. Although teachers are developing successful strategies to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work, these strategies are not yet consistently used across the curriculum to be fully effective.
- The acting headteacher has made a very good start in tackling important issues that have been slowing school improvement. She has already been successful in raising pupils’ attainment and achievement in mathematics. She has also successfully implemented initiatives that are enabling teachers to grow in confidence and improve their practice.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils’ achievement are not yet sufficiently rigorous, despite the strong start already made.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring

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visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' achievement, especially in reading and writing, by:
 - ensuring time is always used effectively in lessons and pupils have enough opportunities to complete their work
 - ensuring the more-able pupils are always actively engaged in work that they find challenging
 - making sure teachers' marking clearly reflects how well pupils are progressing and also provides pupils with ideas about how to improve their work.
- Develop a rolling programme of procedures which rigorously monitor teaching and pupils' achievement and use the evaluations from this analysis to create a clear development plan so that the school improves more rapidly.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children typically start school with skills and knowledge at similar levels to those expected for their age. However, the size of the cohorts and the balance of abilities fluctuate from year to year. Whatever their starting points, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress because teaching in the youngest class is good. Staff are very experienced, have high expectations for children's development and, for the last two years, the outcomes for children at the end of the Reception Year have been above average. Children really enjoy their activities and this was evident in observed lessons. Their paintings about an imaginary train ride were detailed, brightly coloured and completed with real care. Children eagerly took part in counting activities and were able to keep up with the pupils in Year 1 when counting in 10s. Pupils in Year 1 are also keen to do well and used their phonic knowledge carefully to help them decode words that they were unsure of in the poem about the train journey.

Although the balance of abilities varies from year to year, the attainment of pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 has been broadly average overall for the last two years. Pupils enjoy reading and hearing the stories used in lessons. Attainment in reading is broadly average in Year 2 and also in Year 4. Pupils' comprehension skills are developing effectively and the older pupils are getting more adept in understanding the text and 'reading between the lines to understand the character's views and actions. Pupils have a secure understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and enjoy them both. There is very little difference in the attainment and progress of boys and girls or of pupils in other groups, such as those eligible for free school meals. In a poetry lesson for pupils in Year 3 and Year 4, boys and girls showed their interest and knowledge of poems delighting in the 'pictures it

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makes in my mind’.

The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs varies from year to year. In the past these pupils have tended to make the same satisfactory progress as their peers. However, over the last term, identification of pupils’ needs has been more clearly defined and the provision better focused on meeting these needs with the result that many are beginning to make good progress. Those pupils with barriers to their learning caused by medical difficulties, or challenges in their lives that make them potentially vulnerable, are successfully helped to settle to learning and the gap between their attainment and that of the rest of the pupils in their class is closing. The more-able pupils make satisfactory progress overall and often make good progress in mathematics. However, there are occasions in lessons when teachers do not use the available time to best effect and this has a negative effect on pupils’ progress. Most parents and carers feel that their children are making positive progress although there are a few who believe that their children could do better.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory but there are elements of good teaching in all classes. Parents and carers and pupils commented on these good aspects, particularly in the care teachers give to helping pupils when they are stuck. Teaching at its best shows a good understanding of pupils’ abilities and their needs. Teachers monitor pupils’ progress during the lesson, adapting their planning effectively to correct misunderstandings or to extend pupils’ learning. Activities are satisfactorily matched to pupils’ attainment and usually build effectively on their previous learning, particularly in mathematics.

Sometimes, however, the introduction of a lesson goes on a little too long and so reduces the time available for pupils to complete their own work, and the tasks provided for the more-able pupils do not always offer them a sufficient level of challenge. Teachers share the objectives of the lesson with pupils but not always what needs to be achieved. Success ladders have been introduced which give pupils an understanding of the elements they need to include, especially in their writing, but these success ladders are not always as closely focused on the activity as they could be to ensure all pupils understand how to be successful. Teachers’ marking has improved since the previous inspection and now gives pupils an understanding of how well they are doing especially towards meeting their targets set in English and mathematics. However, comments on the extent to which pupils have been successful in meeting the objectives of the lesson are inconsistent and pupils say they are not really sure of how well they are doing. Pupils’ literacy and mathematical skills are promoted satisfactorily in other subjects but teachers do not use the same levels of marking in pupils’ topic books, therefore missing opportunities to help pupils gain an understanding of how to improve.

The curriculum is used well to promote pupils’ interest and there is a good emphasis on giving time for pupils to reflect on their ideas, to work together cooperatively and

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to meet new experiences and new people, so promoting their good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The Highbridge Festival is a highlight of the year. It builds pupils' confidence and their performance skills. Additional activities in music and sport also enable pupils to extend their personal skills and opportunities to find success in other areas of their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good. Relationships are positive and pupils show respect for adults and for each other. They really enjoy meeting new people and pupils were polite, yet obviously curious, when talking to the inspector. They look forward to the occasions when they meet up with other pupils from the local schools, especially when working on joint projects, taking part in residential trips or during team sports and games. Pupils recognise that on very rare occasions some children do not concentrate on their work and there can be low-level misbehaviour but they say it is always dealt with well. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire judged behaviour as good, but also thought that there were a few occasions when pupils' learning was disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Pupils were adamant that there was no bullying of any kind in the school and if ever there was any they were confident that the teachers would be quick to act and put things right. This is confirmed by the lack of incidents recorded by the school. There are no pupils currently in the school who show significant social or emotional difficulties and there have been no exclusions for two years.

Attendance is average and improving and absence is usually caused by family holidays or illness. There are almost no pupils with persistent absence. All parents and carers who responded said their child was safe at school. There is strong school ethos about keeping safe and pupils showed real maturity when discussing how they do so, showing understanding of issues such as the dangers of the internet and road safety.

Leadership and management

The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve and this is reflected in the way that the governing body has shown decisive action in moving the school forward. The acting headteacher is firmly committed to school improvement and teachers' professional development. In a very short time, she has put into place strategies and procedures that are enabling staff to feel confident about their part in raising attainment and, as a result, staff morale is high. However, there has been insufficient time for improvements to have a significant impact in raising pupils' overall achievement. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection in developing teaching and learning in mathematics and in developing the use of pupils' personal targets. Communications with parents are effective, but systems to rigorously monitor teaching and pupils' progress are at a relatively early stage of implementation. The development plan for mathematics is a strong management tool but there is little currently that focuses on whole school improvement. Actions to make the school site a cleaner and safer environment have been quickly

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implemented. The acting headteacher, her staff and the governing body have been diligent in ensuring that the school fully meets all safeguarding requirements.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets pupils' needs, aptitudes and interests. Staff ensure there is no discrimination and satisfactorily promote pupils' equal opportunities to achieve. The breadth and balance of the curriculum have been maintained effectively since the previous inspection and pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. There is a strong religious ethos across the school and the many additional activities provided enrich pupils' experiences and learning.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 January 2012

Dear Children

**Inspection of East Brent Church of England First School, Highbridge
Somerset TA9 4HZ**

Thank you for making me so welcome and answering my questions when I visited you recently.

Here are some of the things I found out about you and your school.

- Your school has many good things to feel proud about but overall it provides a satisfactory education for you.
- You get a good start to your schooling in the Reception class.
- You make steady progress to reach standards that are similar to other pupils of your age and you are doing well in mathematics.
- You want to do well and most of you try hard and enjoy your work.
- You behave well. You are polite, friendly and helpful and you told me that you have lots of friends.
- Teachers help you to get better at your work but sometimes you are not sure how well you are doing.
- The staff work well together and some important changes are being made to help you get even better at your work.
- The staff look after you well so you feel safe and happy.

I have asked your teachers and the governing body to do two main things to make your school even better.

- Help you to make better progress in all your work and particularly in reading and writing by ensuring you have plenty of time to complete your work, to help you understand how to improve and to ensure those of you who find work fairly easy are given plenty of opportunities to think hard about your work.
- Check on all aspects of the school's work, especially the quality of teaching and your achievement, so that plans are made to help the school improve.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Callaghan
Lead inspector

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