

Courtney Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109054
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	377863
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Merchant

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Apps
Headteacher	Keith Ledbury
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 September 2008
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	2–3 May 2012
Inspection number	377863377863



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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Merchant

Additional inspector

Jill Bavin

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Nineteen lessons or parts of lessons were observed, amounting to nine hours and thirty minutes in total. All seven classroom teachers present in school at the time of the inspection were observed teaching. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the plans for improvement, assessment information, lesson plans, the school's monitoring information and various school policies. In addition, the work of a range of pupils was scrutinised. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires received from 48 parents and carers, 104 pupils and 22 staff members.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those pupils supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Large numbers of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has achieved many awards including Activemark. It also has National Healthy Schools and International School status.

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

Key findings

- Courtney Primary School is a good school. It has improved significantly since its previous inspection and most pupils make good progress thanks to good teaching and their good attitudes to their learning. The school is not outstanding because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that are preventing all pupils making rapid progress and not all subject leaders are operating effectively.
- Pupils achieve well from starting points that are similar to those expected nationally. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above average and rising. A relentless focus on teaching sounds and letters ensures that by the age of six nearly all pupils are confident readers, and that reading skills by the age of 11 are above average.
- Teaching is typically good, and sometimes outstanding. Teachers display very good subject knowledge, give clear explanations, and expect much of their pupils. However, a few inconsistencies remain and, in some lessons, pupils are not given sufficient time to work independently. On a few occasions tasks do not provide maximum challenge for the more-able pupils to ensure they reach the higher levels in their work.
- Pupils behave well and know how to keep themselves safe in school and in the wider community. Pupils' personal development is good because they are encouraged to see their own potential; they are given the self-confidence to work hard and aim high, and their attitudes to learning are positive.
- School leaders have a very clear vision of high-quality provision. They manage performance rigorously and provide constructive advice and training to staff. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning, and consequently pupils' achievement, is improving. The subject leaders are not yet fully accountable for pupils' attainment and progress in their areas of responsibility.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress across all year groups by:
 - ensuring that effective techniques to teach reading, writing and mathematics are employed consistently in all classes
 - developing the role of subject leaders so that all become accountable for pupils' attainment and progress in their respective areas.
- Ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning is always consistently effective by:
 - giving pupils more responsibility for their own learning by encouraging them to be more active and inquisitive in class
 - making sure that all teachers plan for and extend the learning of the more-able pupils at a consistently challenging pace throughout lessons.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are broadly those expected of their age but their language and communication skills are weaker. They make good progress from these starting points. Impressive gains are made in children's reading skills in the space of one year. Consequently, by the time they start in Year 1, pupils' communication skills have improved and they are now similar to age-related expectations and nearly all children are working just above the levels expected at their age in all other areas of learning.

As pupils move through the school, they make good progress and nearly all reach at least the expected levels for their age in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Actions to teach writing more effectively, such as through raising awareness of the differences between formal and informal language, ensure that many pupils make good gains in writing. Pupils' number skills have improved markedly since the previous inspection and most are confident in solving number problems. Pupils' progress is best in Years 5 and 6; many pupils make outstanding gains in writing and mathematics. However, some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 4 prevent progress from being better than good.

A very large majority of the parents and carers rightly feel that their children are making good progress at the school, and that their needs were well met. Inspectors' evidence supports this view and found that the quality of learning in the majority of lessons observed was good, and sometimes outstanding. Pupils are keen to do their best, work purposefully and enjoy what they are doing. For instance, in a highly successful Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils were spellbound by the class teacher's lively

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and inspirational exposition and clever use of questioning. She 'fired them up' encouraging them to eagerly and enthusiastically express their feelings about the way a story is presented in different formats, and prompted all to make rapid progress in developing their descriptive writing skills.

Comprehensive systems are used to assess and track pupils' progress. Detailed records enable senior leaders and teachers to keep a close check on how individuals and groups of pupils are achieving. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. There is very little difference in the progress made by pupils known to be entitled to free school meals because staff are very conscious of pupils' individual needs and work successfully to ensure they make similar progress to their peers.

Pupils make particularly strong gains in reading due to the systematic programme of interventions for those who find learning difficult. These carefully planned programmes of one-to-one and small-group support are highly effective in raising pupils' attainment and self-esteem. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 demonstrate that they have acquired good strategies to tackle unfamiliar words in their reading books and reading skills are average by the end of Year 2. This pattern continues through Key Stage 2 and reading skills are above average by the end of Year 6. Teachers encourage pupils to experiment with vocabulary and imagery so that they develop a good 'feel' for words.

Quality of teaching

Typically, teaching is lively, tasks and concepts are clearly explained and activities are carefully designed to challenge the pupils to learn at a swift pace. Adults ask perceptive questions and these help pupils to think and use more varied vocabulary in their answers. Effective use of talking partners, drama, role play and 'letter and sounds' activities helps pupils make good progress in their speaking and writing. High-quality teaching, such as that seen in a Year 6 numeracy lesson where pupils were learning how to calculate the area of irregular shapes, captivates and enthuses pupils and keeps them on their toes with stimulating questioning and challenging tasks. However, this is not always the case and in some lessons the more-able pupils are not consistently challenged. Learning and progress are sometimes held back because teachers talk too much and over-direct the tasks pupils undertake. Teachers mark books and set targets for improvement thoughtfully and carefully.

Teachers plan well to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Skilled teaching assistants provide effective support for these pupils. They ensure that all are fully included in lessons and help them to overcome many of their barriers to learning. Consequently, they make progress equal to that of their peers. The school works effectively to support pupils who enter the school with particularly low levels of attainment and who join the school mid-way through the school year. Detailed plans to support these groups, coupled with the thoughtful deployment of learning assistants and timely interventions, ensure that they make similar progress to that of their classmates. Parents and carers, and the pupils

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themselves, are right to be pleased with the quality of teaching.

Recent curriculum reviews have ensured that teachers plan activities with strong links between subjects. For instance, in a Year 5 literacy lesson where teaching was outstanding, pupils used their knowledge gained from their research project on the Second World War to help them write vivid descriptions of two characters from 'Goodbye Mr Tom', the text they had been studying. The system for teaching phonics is well organised and pupils gain confidence in using their skills to tackle new words. Pupils value the diversity of their local and wider communities because there is a strong and pervasive emphasis on celebrating social and cultural aspects in school and beyond. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour of pupils in lessons is at least good. Pupils readily work collaboratively in pairs or small groups, are courteous and help each other when tackling challenging tasks. A few parents and carers expressed concerns that their children's lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour, although the great majority feel that overall behaviour in the school is good. The school's own records confirm that behaviour in lessons and around the school has been consistently good over a period of time. The procedures that the school has in place to deal with any incidents that might occur are comprehensive and records show these to be effective in preventing any disruption to other pupils' learning.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards school and their learning. There are strong relationships between the pupils and adults in the school and a mutual respect clearly exists. Pupils say bullying is extremely rare. They show a clear understanding of different types of bullying and are confident that any bullying would be dealt with effectively. Pupils say that they feel very safe. They are taught how to keep themselves safe and have a good awareness of the dangers of social network sites on the internet. Parents and carers also firmly believe that their children are safe at school. Attendance is above average and the school has worked hard with the very small minority of pupils who find punctuality a problem, so that this has improved greatly.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear and unwavering vision for his school that is supported and implemented by all staff. Consequently, the satisfactory performance identified at the last inspection has been greatly improved. For instance, pupils' writing and mathematical skills have improved significantly.

School leaders keep thorough checks on all aspects of school performance and manage the quality of teaching well. The senior team use their coaching and mentoring skills to provide constructive advice and training. Particularly good use is made of the most effective teachers to extend and share good practice. In this way,

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the quality of teaching and learning is steadily improving. Staffing changes in recent years has led to minor inconsistencies in the way subject leaders monitor standards, learning and teaching.

The governing body, school leaders and staff promote equal opportunities well, and the school is fully inclusive, with no evidence of discrimination. The governing body holds the school to account for its work well. Good practice in safeguarding and child protection is evident in all areas of the school's work. For instance, checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and meet current requirements.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and appeals to the pupils, meeting their individual needs and motivating them to learn. It is reviewed regularly, and the impact of this is seen particularly clearly in the improvements made in pupils' writing. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are taught to be thoughtful and reflective, and to consider the needs of others.

Even though the school has many good features, the senior leaders and the governing body are not complacent and want to lift pupils' attainment even further. They know exactly what actions to take next as a result of thorough systems for self-evaluation. Improvements since the previous inspection show the school is well placed to sustain further improvements.

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.



4 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Courtney Primary School, Bristol BS15 9RD

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting and talking to you. You go to a good school that is improving quickly. It has many good features and you are right to be proud of it. Here are some of the good things we found out about your school.

- You make good progress as you move through the school and you achieve well. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, your attainment is higher than that of pupils in most other schools. This is because you work hard and you receive good teaching.
- Your teachers and other adults take good care of you. You told us they make sure that everyone feels completely safe and secure.
- You behave well around the school and in your classes and you look after each other so well. You relish working in groups and helping each other to learn and you readily help your classmates when they find things difficult.
- Your headteacher, the governing body and all the other staff know in detail how to make sure that your school continues to improve.

To help the school improve further, we have asked those who lead and manage the school to do two things.

- Make sure that more of you make even faster progress in your learning by ensuring that all the things the school does to improve your reading, writing and mathematics are done equally well in all classes.
- In lessons, ensure that all teachers plan your work more carefully so that it is better matched to pupils' different abilities and make sure that you are able to learn more things on your own.

I am sure that you will help them by always working hard and aiming really high.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant
Lead inspector

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