

Bulford St Leonard's Church of England (VA) Primary School

John French Way, Salisbury, SP4 9HP

Inspection dates

2–3 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Despite recent improvements in the achievement of pupils throughout the school, progress is not yet consistently fast enough to raise attainment.
- Pupils' progress is slower in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than it is Key Stage 2.
- Pupils make more progress in English than they do in mathematics.
- The development of language and mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not as strong as the development of children's social skills.
- Teaching in lessons is not consistently good across the school because work is not always set at the right level.
- Systems for improving teachers' performance are not fully developed to ensure the consistent improvement in the quality of teaching over time.
- The governing body does not routinely challenge school leaders on how well resources benefit the progress of different groups of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Inspirational leadership by the headteacher has created a positive learning climate. There is secure evidence of recent improvements in achievement across the school.
- Pupils benefit from working in small groups with teaching assistants to develop specific skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils who join the school part way through the year or key stage settle quickly into the school routines.
- The school expects high standards of behaviour and courtesy and this is seen in the consistently good behaviour and positive relationships between adults and pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed seventeen lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including school data about the progress pupils make, records of how the school manages the performance of the quality of teaching, safeguarding information, attendance and behaviour records.
- Discussions were held with pupils, both informally and formally, and a range of pupils' work was scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 25 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors analysed the 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and a letter from a parent to the inspection team.
- The school meets the current floor standards which set minimum standards expected by the government for pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection team

Clare Saunders, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Bowles	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Cutler	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are from military families.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A significant number of pupils are admitted to the school at times other than the usual time of entry and the school has increased in size over the last year.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs who are supported through school action is lower than that found nationally.
- Those pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are higher than the national average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good throughout the school by ensuring that:
 - all teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are raised, so that all pupils are suitably challenged, particularly in mathematics
 - teachers do not talk for too long in lessons so that there are increased opportunities for pupils to work independently and use their initiative
 - all teachers make frequent checks on pupils' learning throughout their lessons
 - the focus on teaching language and mathematical skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage is increased.
- Improve the teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 by ensuring that there are robust systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and the implementation of initiatives.
- Develop the knowledge and understanding of members of the governing body so that they:
 - have a clear awareness of the allocation of financial resources for pupils in receipt of the pupil premium funding and the impact on achievement for these pupils
 - routinely challenge senior leaders about performance management issues and play a more strategic role in the continuous improvement of the quality of teaching across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage class with skills, knowledge and understanding which are well below those normally expected. The school's effective use of phonics (letters and sounds) in the Reception class builds appropriately on children's low level language skills. For example, children enjoyed finding and repeating a selection of words so that they could then use them with confidence in their reading. Although children make appropriate progress, most enter Key Stage 1 with below age related expectations.
- Pupils make inconsistent progress in their learning as they move up the school. Progress is stronger in Key Stage 2 than in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 because teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can do. As a result, although pupils did not reach the expected levels in mathematics by the time they left Year 6 in 2012, they did reach the expected levels in English.
- School data and inspection evidence confirm that the school is on track to continue this rising trend of improvement.
- The majority of pupils enjoy reading and can use a range of strategies to help them work out meanings of unfamiliar words. The school encourages the pupils to read widely and often through its well-stocked library.
- New pupils frequently join the school part way through the school year or key stage. Many of these have low levels of prior attainment. The school quickly establishes the extent of their knowledge and understanding and, through carefully targeted interventions, the majority of these pupils make the progress expected of them. Those pupils who have been at the school for all of their education make good progress.
- Careful allocation of the additional funding that the school receives through the pupil premium is used to provide effective support for these pupils. Well-trained teaching assistants are effective in helping them to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and to close any learning gaps between the lowest 20% and all pupils nationally. Pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium benefit from the careful allocation of a variety of supplementary support.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers have good relationships with their pupils who behave well because they want to do their best. Some teaching is good, but this is inconsistent across the key stages. Teaching is best in Key Stage 2 where pupils make good progress as a result of work that is carefully planned to meet the needs of most pupils. For example, pupils in Year 6 enjoyed extending their skills in scientific investigation and information and communication technology (ICT) when interpreting results from a science experiment. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching develops children's social skills and self-confidence effectively. However, adults do not consistently follow up on children's choices of learning activity or their comments during lessons. This means that some opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills through dialogue and role play are lost.
- Teaching assistants lead small group sessions with targeted pupils alongside whole-class teaching. This intervention is effective in promoting the progress of those pupils at risk of underachievement (including those with special educational needs).
- In lessons where the teaching is good, most pupils are engaged and interested in the learning activities because they are at the right level. Teachers' good use of questioning accurately picks up on what pupils are learning and lessons are adapted to ensure that pupils can learn as much as they can in the time available. For example, in a lesson where pupils from years 1 and 2 were creating a map of their route to school, the teacher maintained the interest and enthusiasm throughout the lesson by asking questions about their route to school.

- In less successful lessons, learning tasks are too easy for pupils of middle and high ability. They are overly directed by the teacher and limit pupils' progress. In these lessons, teachers and teaching assistants do not routinely identify opportunities for pupils to use their initiative or work independently in open-ended tasks.
- Teachers use marking as an effective way of praising pupils' work and to provide details of what each pupil needs to work on in order to improve. Pupils appreciate being able to respond to their teachers' comments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They show respect for other adults and their peers around the school. They are confident in talking to adults about their school.
- In lessons pupils have good attitudes to learning, especially when they are engaged in interesting and stimulating activities.
- Strategies such as texting parents when pupils are absent have successfully reduced the number of absences. As a result, the rate of attendance is now in line with the national average.
- The school consistently uses its behaviour management system to calmly reinforce high expectations of pupil behaviour. The development of a 'nurture room' provides effective individual behavioural and academic support for pupils away from the classroom when necessary.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe, including how to stay safe when using the internet.
- They are aware of what would constitute bullying, including cyber and prejudice-based bullying. They say that bullying is rare and say that if there are any concerns the school acts quickly and effectively.
- The school plans good opportunities to extend pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development and this ensures that pupils work and play harmoniously. Active links with schools within the United Kingdom and Africa help them to develop understanding of different communities.
- The views expressed by the pupils are supported by parents' positive opinions.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Inspirational leadership by the headteacher has created a positive learning environment in the school. She is supported by leaders who are committed to the continuing improvement of the school and who have an accurate awareness of the school's strengths and areas to improve.
- Detailed tracking of the progress made by pupils throughout the school enables those at risk of underachievement to be identified and interventions to be put in place.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, and meets the needs of most pupils. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to engage in creative thinking, which would encourage skills associated with independent learning, and this is an example of why provision to ensure that pupils have equality of opportunity requires improvement.
- The school actively engages with parents, for example organising opportunities for families new to the school to meet other parents.
- The school makes good use of the support offered by the local authority. For example, the local authority is actively involved in developing the outdoor area for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Systems for the management of performance of teachers are, as yet, not sufficiently developed to ensure that teaching is consistently good across the school. The school is aware of the need to continue to closely monitor the quality of teaching and has identified areas to improve.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- demonstrates an accurate awareness of the strengths and areas in need of development of the school. However, governors rely too much on the headteacher in the organisation of the roles and responsibilities of the governing body
- provides some challenge to senior leaders relating to pupil progress, although it does not routinely explore the reasons for the gaps in achievement of different groups
- has demonstrated sound financial budgeting, but is not fully aware of how the pupil premium funding is spent or the impact on pupil achievement that this has
- ensures that statutory duties, such as safeguarding, are met.

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

Unique reference number	126309
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	406357

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Donna Proctor
Headteacher	Sarah Ward
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 September
Telephone number	01980 632309
Fax number	01980 632309
Email address	head@bulford.wilts.sch.uk

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