

Kilmersdon Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123834
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380742
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2012
Lead inspector	Stephen Lake

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Lamb
Headteacher	Beth Hopkin
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 October 2008
School address	School Lane Kilmersdon Radstock BA3 5TE
Telephone number	01761 432283
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	11–12 July 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Lake

Additional inspector

Liz Kissane

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. A variety of classroom observation techniques were used, some in partnership with a senior member of staff. Six teachers were observed during visits to a total of 17 lessons or parts of lessons with a further five short focused visits to classrooms. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan and samples of pupils' work. Other documents looked at included curriculum planning, documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, records of pupils' attainment and progress and records relating to the monitoring of teaching. Inspectors spoke informally with some parents and carers at the start of school. The responses to questionnaires from 79 parents and carers and from pupils and staff were analysed.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school which serves mainly the local village and another nearby village. An increasing number of pupils come from villages and towns further away. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage with very few from other minority ethnic groups. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The main difficulties are speech, language and communication needs and moderate learning difficulties. A few pupils have difficulties on the autistic spectrum. The headteacher has been in post since September 2011 and two other members of staff are new to the school in the last year. The school meets the current floor standards which set the minimum standards expected by the government.

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. It is not yet good because pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics lags behind that in reading; achievement in Year 2 is not improving rapidly, especially in reading and some middle managers are not sufficiently engaged in promoting school improvement. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved recently and is now good. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6 achievement is good in reading but attainment is broadly average overall. Progress is slightly slower in writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and improving rapidly in Years 3 to 6 although some inconsistencies remain. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is broadly satisfactory. In some lessons, assessment information is not used effectively to match tasks closely enough to the needs of all pupils. Learning objectives are not always detailed enough and the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is inconsistent. Key skills such as mathematics are not used consistently in other subjects.
- Behaviour and safety over time are good. Pupils are polite, courteous and have a good understanding of how to stay safe. The school is an orderly community where pupils enjoy learning.
- The school is improving rapidly under the strong leadership of the new headteacher supported by the effective governing body. Leaders have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and use this information effectively in the good quality school improvement plan. Clear revised roles have been defined for middle managers, but some are just developing their skills of monitoring and evaluating, and promoting school improvement. Performance management is used effectively to improve teaching.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in writing and mathematics across the school by July 2013 through ensuring that the large majority of teaching, especially in Years 1 and 2, is good or better by:
 - using assessment information more effectively to set tasks matched closely to the needs of all pupils
 - ensuring that clear short-term success criteria linked to precise learning objectives are shared consistently with pupils
 - ensuring that the curriculum allows more opportunities for pupils to develop their key skills in all subjects.
- Raise attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 by July 2013 by ensuring that the new system for teaching letters and sounds is followed consistently by all teachers.
- By December 2012, develop the roles of the middle managers so that:
 - they are all fully engaged in robust monitoring and evaluation
 - the impact of their work can be seen in further improvements in provision and outcomes.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

A large majority of parents and carers perceive that pupils make good progress in their learning. Inspection evidence shows that this has not been the case until recently but progress is improving. Children start school with skills broadly in line with those normally found at that age, although early literacy skills are slightly lower than expected. After a number of years when progress was only satisfactory, children in Reception Year now make good progress and start Year 1 well prepared for learning as a result of improved teaching. Progress slows in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' skills in reading at age seven are broadly average and have been at this level for some years. The school has identified that the teaching of reading does not make consistent use of systems for teaching letters and sounds. This affects pupils' spelling by age 11 which contributes to the slightly lower attainment in writing. By the end of Key Stage 2, improved teaching has resulted in pupils now making good progress in reading to achieve standards that are above average.

Progress is accelerating in Years 3 to 6, especially in writing and mathematics. More pupils in Year 6 are reaching above-average levels of attainment and Year 5 pupils are on track to achieve at least as well as the current Year 6, thereby halting the previous wide variation from year to year. A clear focus on raising expectations of what pupils can achieve is contributing well to the improvement seen. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson on creative writing, pupils made outstanding progress because of the brisk pace and the teacher's high expectations of what pupils could achieve in

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the lesson. Well-structured questioning and guidance allowed pupils to build up excellent individual story openings from a common theme. The challenge given was at an appropriate level that was individual to each pupil. This challenge is not consistent throughout the school and in too many lessons progress is slowed because the work set does not meet the needs of the whole class. For some more-able pupils the tasks set are too easy, but more usually progress slows when tasks set are too demanding for a significant proportion of the class. This affects pupils of average ability most and they make only satisfactory progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well to enable them to be fully included in lessons and make the same progress as other pupils.

Quality of teaching

A large majority of pupils, parents and carers feel that teaching is good. Inspection evidence shows that teaching is satisfactory because there is not enough consistently good or better teaching especially in Years 1 and 2. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good and the majority of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good or better. The quality of teaching is improving rapidly as a result of the robust actions taken in the last year to improve it. Recent appointments and changes to staffing are strengthening the quality of teaching further. However, these changes have not been in place long enough for the impact of this to be seen in national assessments.

In most lessons learning objectives are shared with pupils, but the detail of what teachers expect pupils to learn by the end of the lesson is not always clear enough. This slows the pace of learning in those lessons. In too many lessons, further improvement in achievement is limited because lessons do not proceed at a brisk pace. Some teachers talk for too long at the beginning of lessons and do not always take enough account of the differing abilities of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs have clear short-term targets for improvement that help teachers plan for their learning needs, but this does not happen as regularly with other pupils. Pupils say that teachers talk to them about how they can improve their work and most understand the long-term targets in the front of their books. The new marking system based on colours, 'tickled pink' and 'green for growth', is understood but is not yet used consistently throughout the school to identify the next steps in learning.

Almost all adults share a consistent view of how to help pupils learn effectively. This is particularly true of the way in which behaviour is managed in lessons. The vast majority of pupils work together in a cohesive manner and respect each other's views because teachers make their expectations of behaviour very clear. The curriculum is being revised to increase opportunities for teaching that link learning across subjects. For example, the school has identified that until recently there has been an over-reliance on following published schemes in mathematics and pupils do not have enough opportunities to use mathematics in other subjects. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is becoming central to some of the revisions to the curriculum to support writing. For example, pupils are given good opportunities to develop their imagination and creativity as they write poems with openers such as:

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'She entered the gymnasium as confidently as a submerged crocodile waiting for its prey.' This approach to improving achievement in writing is evident throughout the school. Visitors to the school, visits to local places of interest and residential visits enhance learning and make a strong contribution to learning and further support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and safety over time are consistently good and attendance is above average. The large majority of parents and carers agree that there is a good standard of behaviour and feel that their children are safe. A large majority of pupils agree, although a few said that lessons were sometimes disrupted by poor behaviour. Discussion with pupils shows that this is just one or two individuals, is generally of a low level and does not happen regularly. When it does occur it is dealt with quickly. Inspection evidence supports the positive views of parents and carers.

Discussion with pupils shows that they have a very good understanding of bullying including name calling, physical bullying, discrimination-based bullying and cyber bullying. Pupils say that there is very little bullying and scrutiny of records showing behaviour over time supports this. A few parents and carers were concerned that the school does not deal with bullying well enough. Pupils say that they trust adults to deal effectively with bullying because any that does occur is dealt with well. The overwhelming majority of pupils are polite, courteous and engaged in learning. During discussions pupils listen carefully to each other and show respect for each other and for adults. These positive attitudes support the improving progress being made.

Leadership and management

The new headteacher has an ambitious vision of how the school can improve further and has quickly drawn staff together into a team that shares this vision. The effective governing body has a sound understanding of the strengths and areas for development and provides clear direction for the work of the school. Since her appointment the headteacher has revised the leadership structure to enable more teachers to contribute to leadership and management. Good quality professional development, linked closely to performance management, is improving the quality of teaching and improving the leadership and management skills of middle managers. Nevertheless these roles are just developing for some and not all middle managers are engaged in school improvement to the same extent. The school has identified that, although generally well structured, the curriculum does not make strong enough links between subjects. It is revising the curriculum to provide a greater focus on using key skills such as mathematics in other subjects. The revisions to the curriculum are also aimed at strengthening further the contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example through the recently started Forest School project. Procedures for safeguarding, especially those for child protection, are secure. Training in safeguarding and child protection is up to date for staff and governors.

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The school takes care to ensure equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination. The progress of all groups, especially the increasing number of those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, is monitored regularly and frequently. Revised procedures are enabling early identification of those with special educational needs. The information gained is used effectively to provide suitable support for these pupils. Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have accurate information on the school's performance. Strengths from the previous inspection, especially in pupils' personal development, have been maintained. Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in reading at the end of Year 6 has improved. Areas for improvement identified in the previous report have been addressed and the drop in standards at Key Stage 2 of last year has been reversed through well-targeted actions to improve the quality of teaching. This indicates a secure capacity to improve further.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



13 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kilmersdon Church of England Primary School, Radstock, BA3 5TE

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to visit your school and talking to us about all the things you enjoy.

Kilmersdon is a satisfactory school and you reach standards similar to those in most schools. Your school is improving due to the positive leadership of your headteacher. Here are a few of the things that we liked about your school.

- Those of you in Reception are making good progress because of good teaching.
- Your attainment at the end of Year 6 is improving and you now attain above average in reading.
- Your behaviour is good. You say that you feel safe in school and adults care for you well.
- Your new headteacher has a very accurate view of what is working well in school and where improvements are needed. In partnership with new teachers and the governing body, she is using this information effectively to help improve the school.

To help improve your achievement further, I have asked the school to help you learn more effectively, especially in Years 1 and 2 by:

- making sure that teachers plan lessons with clear details of what you should learn by the end of the lesson and provide more opportunities for you to use mathematics in other subjects; you can help by always trying to achieve what teachers plan for you to learn in each lesson
- making sure all teachers use the new system for teaching letters and sounds
- developing the management role of some teachers so that all of them help to continue the improvements taking place.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake
Lead inspector

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