

# St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Christchurch Road East, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1QG

**Inspection dates** 18–19 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school is an integral part of the local community and has many links that make it a vibrant and a happy place to learn, where individuals are valued and enabled to develop a sense of wonder and curiosity.
- Pupils make good progress from a wide range of different starting points. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average, particularly in writing. Individual pupils' progress is tracked well so that those who may need more support receive it promptly.
- Teaching is usually effective and pupils benefit from well-planned activities that enable them to develop and practise their reading, writing and mathematics skills in interesting and exciting ways.
- Pupils are considerate and behave well. They are confident, articulate and proud of their school. They report that incidents of bullying are rare and if they happen they are dealt with well.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate view of how the school is doing and ensure that they continually make improvements. Parents and carers value the school and contribute well to helping it improve further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to accelerate pupils' learning and do not always provide sufficiently challenging activities.
- Development planning does not always have clearly measurable criteria for success that enable leaders and managers to find out what has been achieved.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 22 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, short visits were made to other lessons and an inspector listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle managers, members of the governing body and informally with pupils and parents.
- The inspector took account of 39 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and results of feedback from parents' meetings.
- The team looked at school documents including the school's record of the results of end of Key Stage 1 tests taken in 2012, school data relating to assessment and pupils' progress, planning for school improvement, monitoring of teaching and learning, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Janet Dinsmore, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Anne Barrett	Additional inspector
Geoff Mason	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a slightly larger than average first school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible to be supported by the pupil premium is average.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
  - all groups, especially the more able, are challenged by the activities in all lessons
  - teachers are more effective at knowing when to intervene to accelerate learning further.
- Develop school improvement planning further by:
  - setting clearly measurable criteria for the impact of each improvement on pupils' learning
  - holding all staff accountable for its success by allocating specific responsibilities.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have reached standards above those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in reading have improved rapidly in the last two years because of clearly focused teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), and incorporating reading with writing. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals reach standards above the national average for this group.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to make better than expected progress and the majority reach standards expected or above those for their age in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 4. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make accelerated progress from below average starting points, so that by the end of Year 4 their attainment is at the levels expected for their age. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium also make good progress because of the targeted support they receive if their progress slows.
- Children arrive in the Reception class with a wide range of stages of development. While there they make expected or better progress so that almost all enter Year 1 with skills at average levels. They have good opportunities to learn through play and from structured activities, especially in developing early knowledge of letters and sounds.
- Pupils in all year groups use their well-developed writing skills in a wide range of ways in response to engaging activities throughout the curriculum, for example: devising the recipe for milkshakes in Year 1; describing the 'Gruffalo' and explaining a visit to the synagogue in Year 2; imagining themselves as a Tudor queen in Year 3; and their experience as evacuees in Year 4.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop mathematics skills well so that attainment is above average. Pupils in Year 1 applied knowledge of coins to place value and in Year 2 used their knowledge of number well to define smaller and bigger numbers.
- Pupils in Year 3 used column addition to add two- and three-digit numbers and demonstrated good mental mathematics skills in applying their knowledge to quick questions. Pupils in Year 4 learnt about negative numbers and used this well to add and subtract using them on a number line.
- Mathematics activities are extended through challenges in homework activities or visits that ensure pupils can apply their skills in real-life situations, such as reading receipts and handling money.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make expected or better progress from their starting points and have made better progress than their peers in mathematics by the time they leave in Year 4.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Assessment is used accurately and well to track pupils' progress and ensures that teaching activities are well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils make expected and above expected progress over time in developing their writing skills. They enjoy writing for a range of different purposes and say that literacy is one of the best things about school.
- Targets are used well in mathematics lessons so that pupils know what they need to do to improve, but sometimes work is not sufficiently challenging for the more able and teachers do not anticipate pupils' learning to reframe and develop tasks within lessons.
- Where teaching is outstanding, activities are well paced and challenging for all groups of learners, particularly the more able. Pupils are highly engaged and motivated by drama and clear exposition, for example in explaining the concept of infinity. Often a variety of teaching strategies is used well and pupils' learning is systematically checked. These include good questioning and effective use of interactive whiteboard resources.
- Ability grouping is used well in the teaching of phonics and incorporated well into reading and writing throughout Years 2, 3 and 4, where pupils work well with their partners. They

check each other's knowledge of sounds and construct sentences well, using their good knowledge of adjectives, nouns and verbs.

- Teaching assistants are well trained and deployed to support individual and group learning in the classroom. They also contribute significantly in developing extended parts of the curriculum, for example links with a school in India. A 'Green Panthers' group monitors and encourages eco projects in the school, examining waste and recycling.
- There is a strong partnership between teachers and teaching assistants and this results in everyone having a good knowledge of individual pupils. This helps ensure that future learning is planned well.
- Observations of children in the first few weeks of their time in the Reception class are used well to gain an accurate picture of children's development. Parents and carers comment about how rapidly their children learn and how well they settle.
- Teaching is adapted well to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Targeted individual and small group short-term interventions are used well by teaching assistants to accelerate progress, particularly with specific aspects of reading and writing development.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils enjoy learning and often enthusiastically engage in activities in the classroom. They play well together in the playground, inventing games and using equipment safely. Pupils are very tolerant and show respect for all members of the school community.
- Pupils demonstrate good social skills in conversations and understand the 'golden rules' and report that pupils rarely break them. They support each other's learning well and know how to minimise risk and keep themselves safe both in the playground and on the internet.
- Behaviour and bullying logs show that unacceptable incidents are rare and are dealt with well by staff. Pupils confirm this to be the case. Pupils are fully aware of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying.
- Nurture group provision is used to pre-empt and prevent any potential difficulties pupils may have with behaviour if they are facing more challenging circumstances. Pupils are supported before this becomes a difficulty for them or their fellow pupils. Social and emotional awareness is promoted well alongside learning activities so that pupils can access the entire curriculum.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Leaders and managers have taken action to improve teaching and raise attainment since the previous inspection. Robust self-evaluation of data on pupils' achievement has identified weaker teaching, less than expected progress and differences between different groups of pupils. These weaknesses have been addressed, although the work for more-able pupils is not always sufficiently challenging. School improvement planning focuses accurately on these areas but will be further improved when criteria for success are clearly defined and measurable and all staff are accountable for this.
- Performance management is used well to identify and address weaker teaching. Grouping and pairing of colleagues cultivate ideas and practice that have improved teaching across the school.
- The pupil premium is used well so that gaps in attainment are closing. All pupils have equality of opportunity and full access to the rich variety of activities that are available, for example music lessons and sports coaching. The curriculum is well planned, creative, exciting and engaging for pupils.
- There are strong partnerships with local schools which ensure transition arrangements for pupils are effective. The school is fully involved in the wider community, including the church and local businesses.
- The local authority reports, and the headteacher confirms, that it has not provided support

for this previously satisfactory school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- has remodelled its structure to be more effective in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school
  - is effective in seeking advice and support to ensure that it carries out its role well
  - provides support and challenge to staff to ensure that pupils' attainment continues to rise.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123843
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	406198

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	288
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Howell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Burgess
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 November–1 December 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01373 462251
<b>Fax number</b>	01373 453713
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