

St Bartholomew's Church of England First School

Kithill, Crewkerne, Somerset, TA18 8AS

Inspection dates 13–14 December 2012

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| 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.

- Over the last year the senior leaders have taken firm action to address any weaker teaching so that it is now consistently good.
- Pupils make at least the expected progress and many exceed this because the teaching focuses well on meeting pupils' needs and engages their interests.
- Achievement is good. Attainment is rising year on year so that more pupils are reaching levels above those expected for their age by the time they leave in Year 4.
- Pupils are making exceptional progress in reading because it is taught very thoroughly across the school. They are developing a love of books as well as the essential skills to handle a variety of texts.
- Pupils are very committed to their learning and show good levels of engagement in lessons. They behave well in and around the school because of the effective system for managing their behaviour.
- The school's leaders have made improvements to the quality of teaching by supporting colleagues through appropriate training and the robust checking of their work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally the pace of learning slows because teachers talk for too long at the start of lessons. In a few lessons, the expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough.
- Governors have not been rigorous enough in developing their understanding of the impact of the school's work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the team made other short visits to lessons. Inspectors heard pupils read, talked to them in lessons and evaluated a wide range of their work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Community Governor and the school's staff, including senior and middle leaders. In addition the lead inspector consulted the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View as well as the school's parent survey, and consulted informally with parents and carers before school.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' attainment and progress, planning and monitoring information, as well as records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspection accommodated the school's rehearsals for the nativity play during lesson time.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Robert Arnold

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- It became part of a federation with two local first schools in October 2011.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special education needs supported at school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational special needs is below average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British and come from the surrounding area.
- There is no alternative off-site provision for any pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure that teachers do not talk for too long at the start of lessons
 - raising the expectations of teachers so that pupils produce work of a high quality and quantity consistently across the school.
- Improve strategic leadership by:
 - increasing the involvement of governors in monitoring activities so that they develop a more in-depth understanding of the impact of the school's work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good.

- Children join the Reception class with skill levels similar to those expected for their age, although there is variation within this as an increasing proportion start school with language skills that are below typical expectations. They achieve well overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in reading and writing.
- Since the last inspection, attainment has risen year on year because many pupils are making better-than-expected progress, especially in reading. By the time they leave in Year 4, the large majority of pupils reach standards above those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Across the school, teachers make sure that work is matched precisely to pupils' needs and abilities and this is helping to accelerate rates of progress. All groups, including the more able pupils, are making good progress because teachers track their achievement systematically and any drop in progress is quickly addressed.
- The pupils supported by the pupil premium and those with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are clearly identified and support plans are designed carefully to close any gaps between their attainment and that of other groups. Consequently, there has been a significant reduction in the proportion of pupils requiring additional support.
- Pupils enjoy their learning because the teaching extends their thinking and takes full account of their interests. They are very motivated in lessons and persevere well with their tasks to try to achieve their best.
- Reading is well taught and the new range of books and library resources has heightened pupils' engagement in reading. Early reading skills, including phonics (letters and the sounds they make), are developed exceptionally well and there are good links to home learning. Most pupils achieved higher than the national average in the Year 1 phonic screening check this year. Older pupils read widely across a range of authors so that they are able to compare and contrast their styles.

The quality of teaching is good.

- The quality of teaching is good overall, with some elements of outstanding practice. This profile has improved over the last year because of the effective training provided for staff. Also, teachers' work has been checked more robustly to hold them to account for pupils' progress.
- Teachers are skilful in matching their questioning and the planned activities to the ability levels of groups of pupils. In the best lessons there are very high expectations and pupils are given the opportunity to apply their new learning straight away. However, occasionally the pace of learning drops when teachers talk for too long during lesson introductions. In some instances, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not as high as in the best lessons.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught effectively. The improvements to the way reading is taught have ensured that not only the early reading skills but also more advanced skills are being developed very systematically. For example, Year 4 pupils, having read extensively the works of certain authors, practised their critical skills by writing to them, giving an appraisal of their style.
- The pupil premium and the allocation of funding for pupils with special educational needs have been used to support the development of language skills in particular. Support staff have been well trained so that they are able to lead the learning of small groups in reading and writing very effectively.
- Teachers give pupils clear feedback about their learning in lessons. Marking is consistent in books so that pupils have a good grasp of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good.

- Behaviour in and around the school is good. The school has implemented an effective system for managing behaviour that promotes pupils taking increasing responsibility for how they conduct themselves.
- Typically pupils are polite, friendly and very well mannered. Younger pupils respond well to the school's approach of developing the 'animal' attributes of personal skills, such as 'persevering away like a beaver'. Older pupils are aware of the needs of others and often take the initiative to be helpful in a range of social situations.
- In lessons pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. They concentrate hard, are determined to achieve well and are proud of their accomplishments.
- Parents and pupils are correct in their view that bullying, of all types, is extremely rare and that staff deal effectively with any problems that may arise.
- Clear procedures for managing safety ensure that pupils feel safe and secure in school. The positive relationships, with good cooperation between pupils and adults, make sure that the playground is a harmonious place.
- Attendance is above average, with little persistent absence. Punctuality is not a problem. The breakfast club is appreciated by pupils and helps to promote a good start to the school day for those who attend.

The leadership and management are good.

- The school's senior leaders have inspired the whole school with a sense of ambition and determination to provide the best opportunities for pupils to learn. They work well together to drive forward improvements and share good practice. They have received good support from an outside adviser.
- The partnership work across the federation of schools has had a positive impact on the quality of the teaching of reading and writing. Leaders in charge of subjects have been trained in new initiatives that they have then introduced to teachers. This support is helping to raise standards in literacy.
- Teaching is checked thoroughly and often. Support and training are provided where needed and this has helped to improve the level of staff skills and eradicate weaker teaching. The introduction of stronger systems for checking pupils' attainment and progress means that teachers are held to account more effectively and any slowing in progress can be addressed promptly.
- The new appraisal policy makes clear links between the progress pupils make and the way staff are rewarded for their performance. The expectations of performance are related to the level of experience and the extent of the leadership responsibility of staff.
- Literacy is very well led, especially in the improvements that have been made to the teaching of reading, where progress is outstanding. Since the last inspection, improved leadership of special educational needs has resulted in more tailored provision for this group of pupils.
- The school is rigorous in ensuring that all pupils are treated equally and that there is no discrimination. As a result, all groups of pupils achieve well, regardless of ability or background.
- Since the last inspection, improvements to the curriculum mean that it is broad and balanced, with increased opportunities for enrichment through exciting and interesting activities. It engages the interests of pupils more fully because they help to design the topics of study. More precise planning in English and mathematics means that the needs of all pupils are being met more effectively, and this is improving outcomes.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is promoted well, especially the spiritual aspect, through the extended curriculum and links with the wider community. The relationship between home and school has been strengthened and a variety of supportive activities have enabled parents and carers to become more involved in their children's learning.

- All statutory arrangements for safeguarding are met. The school has very effective systems in place for managing attendance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have received good support in setting up the federation of three local schools over the past year. They are well organised and systematic in their creation of policies and procedures as a result of the support and training they received from both the local authority and the diocesan adviser. They have developed good processes for receiving information about the outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching so that they have an accurate overview of the school's performance. In addition, they have a good understanding of how the performance of the staff is managed. Governors have started to make more monitoring visits to school in order to check developments for themselves. However, their involvement is not extensive enough for them to have a full understanding of the impact of actions taken by the school. Governors manage the school budget efficiently. They have a clear grasp of how the pupil premium is being allocated to support pupils' academic and personal development and the impact that it has had over the past year.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 123750 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 406192 |

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

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| 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 | 190 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Trevor Lowe |
| Headteacher | Gillian Harcombe |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16–17 September 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01460 72829 |
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