

# Churchstanton Primary School

Churchstanton, Taunton, Somerset, TA3 7RL

**Inspection dates** 16–17 January 2013

|                                |                      |             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good        | 2        |
|                                | 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

- Pupils achieve well to reach standards that are above the national average. Standards in reading and mathematics are particularly strong.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are eligible for pupil premium funding achieve well.
- Teaching is good across the school. Teachers structure their lessons effectively and all staff provide high levels of support for the pupils.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and are caring and supportive of each other. They are polite, courteous and develop good levels of confidence.
- The school grounds are used well to promote pupils' learning and personal development.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have high aspirations for the school so ensuring pupils' ongoing good achievement. Recent strategies to further improve teaching are already showing a positive impact.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils achieve well, progress is not uniform across the school. The youngest group in each of the mixed age classes are at first slow to move forward in their learning.
- Although often above average, standards in writing are not as strong as those in reading and mathematics and the most able do not always reach the levels of which they are capable.
- Pupils enjoy school and most want to do well but their activities do not always promote their independent learning skills or excitement in investigating new ideas.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed eight lessons led by four members of staff. Most of these were joint observations undertaken with the headteacher. Further shorter observations of teaching of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) and of a group of pupils in mathematics were undertaken.
- The inspector held meetings with two members of the governing body and with groups of pupils. She also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority about the school. In addition to a number of meetings with members of staff, the questionnaires completed by 11 members of staff were taken into account.
- A meeting was held with a parent and a recorded telephone message was taken into account, along with 22 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school's action plan, leaders' monitoring records, pupils' work and the record of checks made on staff's eligibility to work with children.

## Inspection team

Hazel Callaghan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than average. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. No pupils are learning English as an additional language.
- A below-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for the pupil premium which provides funding for looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at the school action level is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus and those with statements of special needs is above average. Almost half of those identified as having special needs also have other challenges in their lives that make them vulnerable.
- The school meets the current floor standards set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Children are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2012.
- The school has an after school-club held run by a committee of parents and carers. This is inspected separately.

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

- Raise pupils' achievement in writing, especially for the most able, so that standards match those in reading and mathematics by:
  - ensuring pupils understand how they can improve
  - ensuring that marking consistently helps pupils to understand how to make their work a better standard.
- Enable pupils to achieve well at all stages of their education by ensuring teachers use information on pupils' progress more thoroughly so they all make consistently good progress in the mixed-age classes.
- Introduce more activities that motivate children's excitement through investigation, and develop their independent learning skills and a greater desire to find out for themselves.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Reception class with a range of skills and knowledge that is similar to that expected for their age. They make good progress in the Reception year to reach standards at least in line with the national average. Children benefit from the good role models of the older children in the class.
- Because of the low pupil numbers, the levels of attainment sometimes fluctuate. Generally standards are maintained at above average levels at the end of both key stages because of overall good progress.
- Over the two years, they are taught in each of the mixed age classes, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is slower when they are the youngest age group in the class but their learning accelerates rapidly so that by the time they move on to the next class, they have made up for the slow start.
- The most able pupils usually achieve well, especially in reading and mathematics, but a few do not reach the level of which they are capable in writing. Pupils generally use their literacy skills well in other areas of learning and pupils often achieve well in their other activities. Pupils in the Year 3/ 4 class, for example, were very proud of their work on pneumatics and explained how they had made their models move.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding achieve well. Any gaps in their learning are overcome and they frequently reach the levels expected for their age.
- Similarly, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported effectively and most achieve well from their different starting points. Those with significant needs and those with difficulties in their lives that create barriers to their learning are supported very well so they are able to focus effectively on learning and start to find success.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good, which results in pupils' good learning over time. Teachers use questioning well to probe children's understanding and to support new learning. This was seen well in the Reception class, when children were exploring number and counting as part of their free chosen activities.
- In most lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and boys and girls achieve as well as each other. Occasionally, activities do not challenge pupils as well as they might for them to do even better.
- Teachers' good relationships with pupils and clear expectations for good behaviour result in all classes having a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Teachers offer lots of praise and this helps to build the pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and in small groups. As well as successfully promoting the pupils' social and moral skills, this enables them to share and support each other in their learning. Opportunities to keep all pupils fully engaged through talking with a partner or the use of mini-whiteboards, however, are sometimes missed and there are not as many opportunities for them to develop their independent learning skills and to make choices for themselves which would engage them more positively.
- Reading is taught well. The teaching of letters and the sounds they make successfully supports pupils' reading and writing. Pupils are taught to blend and build sounds so they can read new words and to try spelling difficult words in their writing. By Year 6, pupils are reading with confidence and for pleasure. Well-developed reading and writing skills provide a secure basis for pupils' good learning in other subjects.
- Teaching assistants play an important part in pupils' learning, especially for those with significant learning needs. In class, they support a range of abilities and provide many positive

opportunities for pupils to build their confidence and gain success.

- Teachers monitor pupils' work in lessons well and adapt the activities so that pupils' progress is maintained. This was well demonstrated in a Year 5/6 English lesson, when the class teacher realised the pupils were not secure in their knowledge of pronouns and so redirected the activities to address the weakness before moving on.
- Teachers use their marking to celebrate pupils' good work and to explain how the work can be improved, but this is a fairly new initiative and is not always consistently used.
- Pupils are given targets for them to work towards so they can improve. They understand their targets but these are not always referred to frequently enough for pupils to use them in their work.

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

- Pupils behave well in their classes, in assembly, at break times and around the school. They are courteous and polite to visitors. Pupils listened politely and with respect to the group of ladies from the local community who come in regularly to act out a Bible story, for example.
- Pupils say they enjoy their activities and want to do well. Lessons are rarely disrupted by inappropriate behaviour and most show good levels of concentration and attention, and respect for each other's work and effort. However, some pupils in the oldest class are not sufficiently proactive in their own learning. Although there are many opportunities to develop the skills of evaluating their work and to look for ways to improve, not all respond as positively as they could.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school. The good quality personal and social education programme helps to support pupils' understanding of how they keep themselves and their friends safe. 'Forest School' activities also promote their awareness of potential dangers and how to avoid them. The delightful school grounds are made up of woods, small paths and steps which could prove hazardous but pupils talk about these potential hazards sensibly and say they find the sloping playground fun. Their sensible attitudes make a strong contribution to a safe positive learning environment.
- Pupils say behaviour is good and bullying of any kind is rare, especially any physical, emotional or cyber-bullying. Pupils say any upsets or disagreements are quickly and effectively sorted out by the staff. The vast majority of parents and carers who contributed to the Parent View questionnaire believe that behaviour is good and few have any concerns.
- Pupils recognise that some of the children in the school have difficulties that make them act differently and the majority, if not all, are sensitive to their differences and are supportive to them at break times.
- Attendance is similar to the national average. There are very few persistent absentees. There has been an increase recently of parents and carers requesting holidays in term time which has caused attendance to fall from the above average levels seen in the past.

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

- The headteacher has provided a fresh focus for school improvement and clearly set the agenda for further improvement. Pupils and parents and carers commented on the positive changes that are making the school more enjoyable for the pupils and provide improved levels of communication with the parents and carers.
- Although in post for only a term, the headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. In order to improve teaching further, the headteacher has encouraged teachers to visit several local schools to observe outstanding teaching. This, along

with additional training, is broadening the range of teaching strategies in the school.

- Systems for monitoring the attainment and progress of pupils have been improved so that teachers will now be able to see the development of pupils' progress over time, which has not been fully available in the past. There are clear expectations for the minimum progress pupils should make each year and this is now being pursued more actively through pupil progress meetings with staff so that any possible underachievement is quickly identified.
  - All staff have areas of responsibility for leading a variety of subjects, which they carry out well. They work successfully as a team to improve teaching and learning. Good progress has been made in improving the teaching of writing, and pupils' attainment, especially that of the boys, has improved.
  - The range of subjects and activities provided matches pupils' learning needs appropriately. Pupils now have more opportunities to use and improve their writing skills through their learning in other subjects. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally well promoted. Staff recognise the many benefits that come from the 'Forest School' activities. They have identified how these can further enhance pupils' learning, especially their enjoyment and motivation to learn, but these plans have not yet been put into place.
  - Partnership with parents and carers is good. The response to the questionnaire, Parent View, at the time of the inspection was positive. All parents and carers who responded said they would recommend Churchstanton Primary School to other families.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors clearly decided what was needed in their appointment of a new headteacher. They have high expectations for the school and provide suitable challenge to the leaders. As a result of training, they are able to evaluate well the school data provided to them. They have an accurate view of the school's performance. Governors seek information about the outcomes of discussions about teachers' performance. The governing body is fully involved in deciding the use of pupil premium funding and evaluating its impact on raising achievement. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet regulatory requirements in full. The school buildings are very secure and any potential hazards caused by the location of the school in wooded countryside are carefully assessed and moderated.
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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>             | 123701                       |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Somerset                     |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 403540                       |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                      |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                    |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                         |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                        |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 76                           |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body           |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Yehudi Levine                |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Carol Murray                 |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 28 February 2008             |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01823 601354                 |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01823 601354                 |
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