

# St Luke's CofE First School

Plymouth Road North, Southcrest, Redditch, B97 4NU

**Inspection dates** 30–31 January 2013

<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 strong leadership of the headteacher, well supported by a good governing body and effective staff team, has led to considerable improvement since the school's previous inspection in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school, in all classes. Thanks to leaders' thorough checks on teaching, followed up with effective training, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and promote learning well.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and by Year 4 are in line with those usually found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly and most pupils come to school regularly.
- The school accurately evaluates how well it is doing and what needs to be done next to improve.
- The high quality of care, coupled with good teaching, ensure that children achieve well in the Reception class. Children respond well to the stimulating activities provided, including regular 'Forest School' visits, and are inquisitive about the world around them.
- Pupils' good behaviour contributes strongly to their successful learning in all lessons. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, how to avoid it and what to do should it occur.
- Pupils enjoy a good variety of exciting additional activities throughout the school year, usually linked to their current topic focus. These include visits, and visitors to the school and residential stays.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their independent learning skills and, in a small minority of lessons, the pace of learning slows after a brisk start.
- Standards in mathematics, while improving, are not yet as high as in reading and writing.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions were held with governors, members of staff, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils.
- The inspector took into account the 15 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers (Parent View).
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Clive Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most other first schools.
- An average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (those known to be eligible for free school meals, in care or with parents in the armed services).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is broadly average and the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- No pupils are currently educated in alternative provision away from the site.

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

- Improve achievement in mathematics by devising ways to improve pupils' problem-solving skills.
- Further raise the overall quality and consistency of teaching to be outstanding by ensuring that:
  - all learning in lessons proceeds at a brisk pace throughout
  - pupils are provided with more opportunities to develop their independent learning skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Good teaching leads to pupils making good progress throughout the school. This progress is reflected in the good quality of learning in lessons observed and is confirmed by the work in pupils' books.
- Children's experiences and skills when they enter the school in the Reception class are below those typically found for this age group. They get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in their first year in school.
- Achievement has improved in all areas. Pupils in Reception and in Key Stage 1 quickly learn the sounds letters make (phonics) to support their writing, as well as the mathematics skills they need to complete simple calculations. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to build on these good achievements and, by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, attainment in English and mathematics is in line with the attainment usually found nationally at this age.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. Younger pupils are taught to read by linking letters to the sounds they make (phonics). The teaching of reading, through regular phonics lessons (linking sounds to letters) and guided reading activities, continues in all age groups. As a result, pupils throughout the school read confidently.
- Although significant progress has also been made in mathematics, the improvements in pupils' reading and writing skills have not yet had the impact intended on their ability to solve mathematical problems expressed in words.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make at least as good progress as other pupils in the school. School data indicate that those eligible for the pupil premium attain similar standards in English and mathematics to those of other pupils. Any barriers to learning are quickly identified and the funding is used well by the school to provide very carefully matched additional support through frequent one-to-one or small-group work. The school also uses a proportion of the money allocated to ensure these pupils can join in all the extra activities provided for other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies provide good support. This ensures that work is set at the right level for them, enabling them to make small but progressive steps in their learning.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching enables pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to learn successfully. Teachers plan lessons well, sharing with pupils what is to be learned and how they can judge successful learning for themselves.
- Frequent marking of pupils' work typically gives them guidance about how well they have done and how to further improve their work. Good use is made of resources, including information and communication technology, to motivate pupils and enhance their learning.

- Teachers use pupils' practical experience well to enthuse and encourage their learning. For example, in one Year 2 lesson, following up a visit to the local woods pupils had made on the previous afternoon, the teacher motivated them very well by arranging a visit from a 'local councillor' who told the pupils she was researching how they felt about the facilities provided. The teacher set a good pace to the learning, which was maintained throughout the lesson. The work was demanding for pupils of all abilities and there were high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Good use was made of questioning to gauge and guide pupils' understanding. This encouraged pupils to discuss their ideas and recall their experiences and provided a good basis for their writing.
- Teachers' strategies to manage pupils' behaviour are very effective, with the result that lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils concentrate on their work and work hard without the need for constant reminders and adult intervention.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding. In most lessons, learning moves along at a good pace but in a small minority of lessons, the pace of learning slows after a good start. Similarly, in a few lessons, teaching directs pupils' learning too much and pupils are given little opportunity to develop their independent learning skills. This applies particularly to pupils' difficulties in solving mathematical problems which are presented in words.
- Pupils are well supported by a well-deployed and strong team of teaching assistants who provide good individual support for individuals and groups, including pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium, within classes.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics subjects is checked and tracked rigorously as they move through the school. Each class teacher meets senior management every half term in order to evaluate and discuss the information about assessments of progress and attainment gained. These meetings make sure that teachers have a good understanding of how the pupils in their charge are doing and the action they will need to take in order to support them in reaching their improvement targets.

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

- The school is a calm, friendly and very orderly place in which to work and learn. Pupils' behaviour is typically good, both around the school and in the classroom, where they listen carefully, cooperate well and contribute eagerly. This good behaviour is a major factor in the good progress made in lessons. Pupils like the system of sanctions and rewards, which ensures that any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively and promptly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and describe the school as being 'very safe'. They are clear about seeking help for themselves and others should the need arise and are confident that any issues they raise would be dealt with promptly and fairly. They understand the need for healthy lifestyles and exercise.
- Pupils respond well to the school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They embrace new experiences enthusiastically and have a clear sense of what is right and wrong.
- Pupils say they find learning fun and are enthusiastic about their education. They particularly appreciate the educational visits and after-school clubs. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including that which might be encountered through internet sites.

- Pupils all say they enjoy coming to school and this is demonstrated in their much-improved rates of attendance.

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

- The high expectations of what the school can achieve and strong leadership of the headteacher are a significant factor in the good improvement made since the previous inspection. As a result of these improvements, most aspects of pupils' education are good and leaders have successfully identified the appropriate areas for further development.
- The school is highly valued by parents and carers, all of whom would strongly recommend it to other parents.
- Staff are well motivated and demonstrate a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to improving their school further. They work effectively together and regularly take advantage of training to enhance their work.
- The school cares well for all its pupils. Its small size ensures that all pupils and families are known very well by the staff. The positive relationships with parents and carers and the good links with a wide range of partners contribute much to pupils' achievement and well-being. Good links with local schools and schools further afield, for example, in Evesham and Ghana, help to overcome the potential isolation of such a small school.
- Staff make sure that pupils benefit from a good balance of interesting and exciting activities in and out of classrooms. The recent strong focus on supporting literacy and numeracy across all subjects, tying in with the imaginative links developed between different subjects, has had a positive effect on pupils' progress, enthusiasm and ability to learn and work on their own. Pupils' enthusiasm is further enhanced by a good range of activities out of lesson time, at lunchtime and after school, and regular visits to the school's 'Forest School' site.
- The headteacher and staff know the school well due to the regular and thorough checks they carry out on its work. The quality of teaching is checked and improved through regular observations by leaders and ongoing training for teachers and teaching assistants.
- With the full support of the governing body, the school makes effective use of the pupil premium. It supports frequent small-group activities and funds a small 'nurture group' for eligible vulnerable pupils, including those who find it difficult to work in the classroom. This helps to ensure that eligible pupils achieve as well as their classmates.
- Local authority support has been helpful to the school in supporting training for both leaders and governors, assisting the school in establishing more robust assessment systems and in supporting improvements in pupils' writing skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body provides strong support and holds leaders and managers to account for the school's performance. It checks rigorously that safeguarding arrangements are secure. Governors oversee arrangements for relating teachers' performance to pay and know what the quality of teaching is across the school. They understand the data on how well pupils progress and achieve and compare the school's performance to that of other schools. They understand how pupil premium funding is used and how it benefits pupils eligible for it. The governing body plays an active role in the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning processes. It knows what is going on in the school, is aware that overall provision is good and

is ambitious for the school to improve further.

## 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>	116844
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401624

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>	5–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	144
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Phillip Mitchell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ceri Marshall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 541219
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