

West Coker Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

High Street, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 9AS

Inspection dates 20–21 February 2013

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.

- The skilled and respected headteacher, well supported by a talented staff team and governing body, sustains strong leadership and a determined drive for improvement.
- Teaching and pupils' learning have been strengthened since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is consistently good enabling pupils to make good progress, often from starting points in maturity and language that are below those normally expected.
- By the time they leave, pupils have achieved well. Standards of attainment are rising across the school in English and mathematics.
- All adults safeguard the pupils diligently and provide high levels of individual care. As a result, pupils feel safe and enjoy school.
- Pupils behave well and are fully committed to giving of their best. Teachers and their capable assistants encourage and value the pupils' ideas and suggestions and this encouragement to 'Talk for Learning' underpins the pupils' improving achievements.
- The school has very efficient systems for checking pupils' progress. These are used skilfully to identify and then meet pupils' individual needs as soon as possible to ensure the pupils do not fall behind.
- With full support of parents and the community, the school presents a very welcoming family atmosphere that strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, lesson introductions continue for too long, limiting pupils' opportunities to learn more quickly at their own level by themselves or within small groups.
- At times, pupils do not have enough opportunity to rectify errors they have helped to identify or to set up and follow improvements themselves.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 10 lessons and was accompanied by the headteacher during several of these observations.
- The inspector observed morning playtime and lunch breaks and also attended a singing assembly.
- Meetings were held with members of the school council and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes. The inspector met with governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector held meetings with school staff, including senior leaders.
- The inspector took account of 13 staff questionnaires.
- There were insufficient responses to the on-line Parent View website for the inspector to use this to gauge parents' views. However, the inspector spoke informally with a number of parents as they brought their children to school.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is below average in size.
- Almost all pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action broadly matches the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the normal times is above average.
- The school does not use any alternative educational provision (lessons that take place regularly away from school).
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises Reception-age children taught alongside Years 1 and 2 pupils.
- There was a very small number of pupils in the Year 6 cohort in 2012, so that numbers are too small for a valid comparison to be made with the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move the quality of teaching, and subsequently pupils' learning, from good to outstanding by:
 - making sure that lesson introductions are succinct so that pupils can move quickly into the individual and group learning activities that are specifically well matched to their abilities
 - further using the pupils' skills in checking the quality of their own work by giving pupils more opportunities to put things right and devise their own ways of extending learning for themselves.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The progress pupils make and the standards they reach across the school have improved since the previous inspection.
- Good teaching and additional assistance in all classes have brought pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 to average overall. From typically below expected starting points in Reception, this reflects pupils' good achievement.
- Observations of pupils' learning in lessons and a scrutiny of their work show that an increasing proportion of pupils are now on course to attain above average skills, especially in writing and numeracy, by the time they leave the school.
- In response to the teachers' high quality questioning, many pupils also become very confident and capable speakers. The pupils' ability to talk about their work and explain their ideas was clearly evident in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class as pupils accurately and descriptively re-told the stories they had memorised from creatively sequenced pictures.
- Early identification and support of pupils' learning needs mean that all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress, ensuring that pupils are given equal opportunity to learn and there is no discrimination.
- The whole school focus on mathematics, which begins with children confidently counting and singing number rhymes well beyond ten in Reception, has significantly extended pupils' problem solving skills.
- All groups of pupils who benefit from additional adult guidance funded by the pupil premium make at least good progress and are narrowing the achievement gap with their classmates. Numbers are too small for a valid comparison to be made with their attainment as compared with pupils' average point scores nationally.
- Pupils who enter the school roll later than the usual times soon catch up and make the same progress overall as their peers, because their needs are quickly assessed and they are given the right kind of support.
- Reading is a high priority for the school and, in response to a strong focus on teaching phonics (the sounds letters make), school and national assessments show that attainment in reading is rising in all classes. Older pupils support their younger reading buddies each week and regular group reading at school and individual assistance at home help pupils to gain confidence, enjoy books and become fluent readers.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers and their assistants show secure subject knowledge and promote very encouraging relationships and manage behaviour skilfully. Pupils with very complex learning needs receive exemplary individual support.
- The school has continued to build on the strengths in teaching identified during the monitoring visit that followed the previous inspection, and improvement continues.
- Much improved systems for checking pupils' progress have secured the teachers' high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. For example, in mathematics, by providing activities at a level matched closely to pupils' abilities, teachers ensure that all pupils, including those with more ability, achieve well.
- A sustained focus on extending pupils' ability to check their own work and progress towards their individual targets continues to drive up standards. This is because pupils give their teachers good information about what they need to teach next to help pupils improve. For example, in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class, pupils place their 'self-assessment book marks' in their mathematics books at the end of the lesson, indicating their level of understanding.
- At times, across the classes, pupils do not have enough time to make the necessary corrections

to their work or to set up their own ways of making progress before they move on to something new, and this limits progress.

- When teachers or teaching assistants work with individuals or small groups, as is often the case during the teaching of reading for example, there is high-quality discussion and match of work to the pupils' needs. This is because adults use questioning very effectively to probe pupils' understanding. This was seen during a group phonics session in the Years 2, 3, 4 class when pupils 'sound talked' different letter sounds to successfully learn how to read new words.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those for whom the pupil premium provides support, also benefit from such close assistance as individuals and in small groups and make equally good progress.
- On a few occasions, although lively and well delivered, introductions to lessons continue for too long restricting the time available for such effective group activity. Even so, pupils have good opportunities in all classes to investigate, use computers and learn through practical activity. For example, in the Reception, Years 1 and 2 class, children learn happily and effectively in the 'building site' role play area and explore their own ideas in the well-equipped outdoor area.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Typically, pupils behave well in and out of lessons and are polite and well mannered. School records also show that behaviour is good on a daily basis.
- Often pupils' conduct is outstanding around school, but at times a few pupils lose concentration without adult support and at play times behaviour can become a little too boisterous.
- Attendance has improved and is now broadly average, reflecting close links with parents and the rigorous encouragement of regular attendance by the headteacher.
- The school promotes a positive and often joyful learning environment. Pupils' interest and contributions are often stimulated by thought provoking topics such as Africa and Natural Disasters. Regular computer links with pupils in other schools enable pupils to develop knowledge and respect for different religious and cultural views.
- Pupils are very keen to share their ideas with adults and value each other's opinions. For example, pupils say, 'We like everything about this school because people are very kind and there's always someone there to help you.'
- The parents, staff, governors and pupils who spoke to the inspector all agreed that pupils are safe and very well cared for. This view is reflected in the way pupils happily and confidently mix, play and learn together, for example during Golden Time and Buddy Reading sessions.
- Pupils know what bullying is and the different types that they might encounter, for example cyber bullying. They confidently state, and school records show, that bullying is not tolerated at this school.
- Pupils of all ages respond very positively to the school's Golden Rules, which help them to manage everyday risks for themselves, such as those associated with strangers and road safety.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers have ensured that the school has improved well since the previous inspection. Issues identified for improvement, such as checking pupils' progress, improving teaching and learning in mathematics, especially for more able pupils, and developing team leadership, are now, in many respects, strengths of the school.
 - These have helped to secure the good teaching and pupils' achievement that further demonstrate the school's secure capacity for continuing improvement.
 - The headteacher provides the drive and support that encourages staff and governor colleagues to work effectively together to bring improvements, especially in teaching.
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- This is reflected in the way staff have responded to performance management and have engaged in training to develop their skills, for example to sharpen their teaching of phonics and consequently raising pupils' reading skills.
 - A strong unity of purpose is also evident in the diligent way that staff have acted to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills to enrich their writing, and problem solving skills in mathematics. Leaders are determined to sustain this focus on 'Talk for Learning' to raise standards to the next level.
 - The school is well resourced indoors and outside and links well with other schools and organisations to provide pupils with stimulating learning activities across the range of subjects.
 - The school strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and there is a well-established moral code.
 - The local authority provides light touch support for this good, improving school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors play an important role in sustaining very beneficial links with parents, the church and local community, and providing the facilities needed to interest pupils in their learning. For example, the popular weekly Seekers Club organised by members of the church community, encourages pupils to stay and learn after school. Governors are well informed as they frequently visit the school to observe the work of the school, to meet staff and pupils and join in regular reviews of the quality of subject provision, most recently in mathematics. These visits give governors an accurate view of the way teaching impacts on pupils' progress and help them to check and ensure that staff pay is linked to performance and brings improvement. Governors also receive very detailed reports about pupils' progress from the headteacher and question her closely to check that funds are used effectively. For example, governors know that the pupil premium is used well to provide the additional adult support that pupils entitled to this funding need to quicken their progress in reading and numeracy. Governors also know that, following improvement, pupils' attainments now compare well with similar schools. Governors plan their training needs and opportunities carefully to make sure they have the necessary skills to complete their responsibilities. For example, they check and secure safeguarding procedures and provision for pupils with special educational needs.
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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

Unique reference number	123821
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	402201

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ron Viney
Headteacher	Rachel Howchin
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 March 2010
Telephone number	01935 862568
Fax number	01935 864145
Email address	office@westcoker.somerset.sch.uk

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