

Sidmouth Church of England (VA) Primary School

55 Woolbrook Road, Sidmouth, EX10 9XB

Inspection dates

26–27 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		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in all subjects.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is typically good. This has resulted in a rapid improvement in pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Their results at the end of Year 6 are now above the national average.
- The planning for different subjects is tailored quickly to the changing needs of the pupils and society. Topics develop in partnership between teachers and pupils. This ensures that lessons are creative, interesting and usually relevant to pupils.
- Well-planned lessons taught by teachers, supported by teaching assistants, meet the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs so they too achieve well.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They are extremely proud of their school and are keen to represent it within the community. They are highly respectful towards each other, their teachers and other adults. Their attendance is above average.
- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and highly effective team of leaders have ensured the school has rapidly improved. They have driven improvements successfully on raising pupils' achievement.
- All leaders, including governors, have been highly successful in navigating the difficulties associated with bringing pupils and staff together into one school. They are determined to ensure that the 'new' school continues to improve in the future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teachers do not always reshape tasks for pupils in lessons, particularly in Key Stage 1, in the light of their responses to teachers' questions or other ways of checking progress.
- Pupils' opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, including thinking and learning by themselves, are sometimes limited by having to spend too much time listening to the teacher talking.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice and took place over two days.
- Inspectors visited 29 lessons and observed 22 teachers. The headteacher and other senior leaders joined inspectors for a number of observations. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and small-group work to look at phonics (linking letters and sounds), guided reading teaching and additional support activities taught by teaching assistants.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plans, priorities for development, achievement information and documents relating to safeguarding children.
- Inspectors took account of the 69 responses to the online Parent View survey, seven letters from parents and carers and the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to some parents and carers at the start of the day.

Inspection team

John Cavill, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Fran Ashworth	Additional inspector
Malcolm Davison	Additional inspector
Helen Prince	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sidmouth is a much larger than average-sized primary school where most children who attend are from within the town.
- The school is situated on three sites at different locations within the town following a change of designation in September 2011 from a junior school to a primary school, following the closure of two small infant schools. The school has retained all three sites. The previous inspection was of St Nicholas Church of England Junior School.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in Reception classes situated on two of the sites. Pupils from Key Stage 1 are also taught on these two sites and then move to the third site together for their Key Stage 2 years.
- Almost all pupils are White British, with very few pupils from different ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, although the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after and for children from armed service families, is slightly below average but has risen significantly since the amalgamation.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school manages a breakfast club for the pupils, which was included in this inspection. The after-school club is privately managed and was therefore not part of this inspection.
- Two private nurseries are located on two of the school sites but both are inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding overall, especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - making sure teachers use information about the progress of individual pupils to reshape tasks and improve learning in lessons
 - ensuring pupils take more responsibility for their own learning enabling them to think and learn by themselves.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter Reception with knowledge and skill levels that are generally below what would normally be expected for their age. Good quality teaching and interesting learning activities enable all children to make good progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage, which ensures that they are well prepared to move into Key Stage 1.
- Good progress continues throughout the school and pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school is above average in both English and mathematics. School checks indicate that current pupils' attainment may rise still further in this year's national tests.
- Improved teaching is securing good progress for all pupils, especially those who are eligible for pupil premium funding and those who are disabled or have special educational needs. Many of these pupils make accelerated progress across the school from their individual starting points. This is secured with effective, well-focused, learning activities taught by both teachers and teaching assistants. This promotes equality of opportunity well.
- The proportion of pupils who make and exceed their expected progress compares favourably with, and is now above, the national average.
- Pupils' attainment in reading is above average. Regular guided reading sessions, supported by good phonics teaching, are also aiding their writing skills. In a Year 3 class, pupils used their knowledge of letters and sounds to read text and identify words that contained the sound 'igh' and then to identify the different ways that this sound can be written.
- In a Year 4 numeracy lesson pupils demonstrated their understanding of how to work out a perimeter of a regular shape with straight sides to be able to explain how they could adapt this for curved sides to shapes.
- The pupils who benefit from the pupil premium funding reach similar levels of attainment to other pupils nationally in both English and mathematics, reflected in their national tests. The school's checks on progress indicate that this gap looks set to be successfully closed as current pupils now make better than expected progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The work undertaken to improve the quality of teaching continues to drive the quality of learning up for all pupils, which is now good and improving.
- Planning of lessons is effective and tasks are designed well to enthuse and engage all pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs. Classrooms are full of well-behaved children who are focused, working together and eager to do well. There is a positive climate for learning and relationships are good.
- Teachers monitor the progress of pupils in lessons with some probing questioning and checks of their work. However, sometimes this information is not being used to move individual pupils quickly enough onto more challenging work allowing them to make better progress.
- The majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire and all of those who spoke to an inspector thought that their child was taught well and made good progress at the school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children benefit from effective teaching which capitalises on the opportunities to develop the children's basic skills. For example in a session on creating repeating patterns, the children quickly grasped the idea and the teacher then used the following 'choosing' session to allow children to develop patterns of their own. This included a wide range of linked activities that also focused on developing other skills, for example the use of large coloured blocks outside to develop their physical skills.
- In typically good lessons, pupils' learning is more rapid because teachers are able to personalise the learning well. In the Year 5 numeracy lesson about constructing line graphs, pupils

developing their own questions to ask another pupil to answer provided opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning. However, this is not always the case and in some lessons teachers' explanations or discussions are overlong which reduces the pupils' pace of learning.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and include clear next step advice and ways to improve further. Pupils use this information well and improvements to their work are clearly seen. Good use is made of self-assessment and assessment by other pupils, including regular use of talk partners, in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils are well behaved and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They generally work with sustained concentration in lessons. Very occasionally there is some low-level inappropriate behaviour, such as chatting to each other, which is very well managed by the teachers. However, this indicates that not all pupils are yet fully able to self-manage their behaviour in lessons.
- When pupils are playing outside, moving around the school or interacting with each other and adults, pupils say that behaviour is always good and sometimes excellent, reflecting the school's emphasis on developing pupils' strong moral and social awareness.
- A small number of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire or contacted inspectors voiced some concerns about behaviour and bullying at the school. However, parents and carers spoken to during the inspection did not share these concerns. In discussions with pupils they said that the behaviour is typically good and there is now no bullying of any kind, including physical, emotional and cyber bullying. The inspection supports this view.
- All pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, feel safe and very secure. They report that they are well looked after and they are confident that adults at the school will deal with any problems that they may have quickly. One pupil told an inspector that this was a 'cool school where we feel safe and happy'.
- Pupils are keen to do well and enjoy the 'family group' based rewards system that is helping to build a single community at the school following the amalgamation. Pupils recognise the strong sense of community that exists and the school council provides pupils with an opportunity to take an active role in the decision making at their school such as helping decide the charities the school will be supporting. Year 6 pupils actively take on the role as Year 3 mentors when these pupils move to the Key Stage 2 site.

The leadership and management

are outstanding

- Clear vision and high expectations have helped bring together different sets of pupils, staff and governors who have a common purpose. A consistency of approach has ensured that the school has improved since its last inspection, despite the many changes that have taken place. This is most notably seen in improving quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- There are highly effective systems to ensure that the performance of leaders, teachers and other staff is relentlessly focused on improving outcomes. This quest to secure even higher quality of teaching, in a culture where high expectations are the norm, is driven by a desire to improve the life chances for the pupils.
- Leaders have successfully secured improvements in the quality of teaching, despite differences that the amalgamation presented. This has been achieved through effective training and a successful use of peer coaching for teachers. Leaders monitor and manage the performance of teachers well to ensure there is a good match between how well teachers are paid and how well pupils learn.
- The range of subjects taught within the curriculum is vibrant, exciting and is planned to provide

pupils, whatever their background, with a wealth of opportunities to develop both academically and personally, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills. This was highlighted in topic work undertaken jointly by Years 3 and 6 who linked topics on The Second World War and film making to make a short film. This was undertaken using the services of older members of the local community and a film editor to explore the impact of the war on the local community. This was then shown at the local cinema to an invited audience.

- Leaders have been highly successful in promoting the school across the whole community since the amalgamation. Regular opportunities for parents and carers to come into school are arranged with events such as 'tea and chat' with the headteacher. Parent and inclusion workers, based at the school, support families very well.
- Following a period of focused support leading up to the change to a primary school, the local authority is now providing light touch support to this good school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has been highly successful in bringing pupils and staff from differing backgrounds of schools together in the 'new' school. Governors know how well the pupils are doing in relation to all pupils nationally. They have a clear understanding of what comparative information is telling them about the effectiveness of the school and they use their knowledge to monitor the school's arrangements for performance management, salaries and promotion. They have drawn on the experience of governors from the three previous schools to build capacity and take part regularly in suitable training. Governors are fully involved in making checks on all aspects of the school, including whether funding, including the pupil premium, is being spent wisely and having the desired effect on pupils' achievement. They are individually responsible for monitoring performance through being linked to a class. Governors use information about the school well and hold the school rigorously to account, understanding the school's strengths and areas to improve. This helps to ensure that all pupils have the best opportunity to succeed and has resulted in good and improving achievement for all. Governors ensure statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are implemented rigorously.
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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	113437
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	400237

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	536
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Salt
Headteacher	Paul Walker
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 October 2010
Telephone number	01395 514146
Fax number	01395 577064
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