

Powell's Church of England Primary School

Gloucester Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 2DJ

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher provides exceptional and inspired leadership. Her high aspirations for the school are shared by senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body, and parents and carers. Together, they are all totally dedicated to achieving their vision of 'Inspiring Individual Excellence' and to making sure that the school gets even better every year.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- The great majority of teaching is outstanding. It caters extremely well for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented.
- The school's outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins pupils' exemplary attitudes to learning and their impeccable behaviour. Pupils emphatically say there is no bullying and incidents of unacceptable behaviour are extremely rare.
- Reception children make excellent progress because staff are highly skilled at seeing they are happy, very well cared for and that they enjoy just the right balance of work and play activities.
- The governing body has exceptionally good knowledge of how well the school is performing, and the high quality of teaching and learning. It challenges the leadership robustly while offering unstinting support, enthusiasm and commitment to its work.
- The highly imaginative and stimulating way that subjects and topics are taught successfully meets the interests and needs of all pupils. The school not only stretches all pupils academically, but also across a wide range of exciting activities such as mock-trial competitions and performing arts.
- Pupils feel extremely safe at school and clearly enjoy all aspects of school life, as shown by their exceptionally high attendance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons, several of which were joint observations with the headteacher. They also observed the teaching of phonics (letters and letter combinations and the sounds they make) and some guided reading sessions. In addition, the inspectors heard pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read as well as examining pupils' work and discussing it with them.
- A wide range of school documentation was analysed and evaluated including that relating to safeguarding, assessment information, school development plans, pupils' work and monitoring records.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leadership team and staff as well as pupils and members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The 96 responses to the questionnaire on the Parent View website were analysed as well as the letters sent by parents and carers. The 30 responses to the staff questionnaire were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Joyce Cox, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
George Long, Team inspector	Additional inspector
Rowena Green, Team inspector	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Powell's is much larger than most primary schools. It serves the town of Cirencester and also admits some pupils from the surrounding villages. The school is consistently oversubscribed and all classes have waiting lists.
- There are 14 classes in the school, with two classes in each year group. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the two Reception classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is lower than most other schools, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for 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 lower than average.
- The very small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language are bilingual and no pupil is at an early stage of speaking English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Powell's has close links with the Diocesan Board for Education and the local parish church. It was very recently judged to be outstanding in all areas in its February 2013 'Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Put into practice all of the current plans to enhance the outdoor learning environment to support Reception children's learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children's skills on entry generally exceed those expected, but on some occasions, children start with less-well-developed personal, social and communication skills. Nevertheless, all children make outstanding progress in Reception, especially in communicating and working extremely well together, and in quickly acquiring excellent early reading and writing skills. That said, children cannot yet easily access the outdoor learning area to support their learning.
- Excellent progress continues through Years 1 and 2, as pupils make considerable gains in using their impressive spoken vocabulary to enrich their writing and to explain various ways of solving puzzles and problems in mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been exceptionally high for a number of years in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's documentation clearly shows that pupils in every year group make excellent progress because the quality of provision and teaching is consistently high.
- Reading is a particular strength and pupils' attainment is exceptionally high throughout the school because there is an excellent programme to teach phonics to younger pupils and high-quality daily guided-reading sessions throughout the school. Pupils' love of literature is also considerably enriched by excellent links with a local bookshop. This mutually beneficial liaison has successfully inspired all pupils to be enthusiastic readers and writers by hearing famous authors such as Tony Robinson and Tracey Corderoy read from their books and describe their craft.
- Pupils' writing is of a very high quality and they like learning and sharing new words and phrases. For example, Year 4 pupils made excellent progress in using descriptive language such as 'scaly reptilian skin' when writing stories about ice dragons. Pupils are consistently encouraged and expected to remember the basic skills of grammar, and punctuation and spelling, from an early age and, consequently, their creativity is never suppressed as checking these becomes part of writing tasks in all subjects.
- More-able pupils are fully stretched throughout the school in English and mathematics, and harder tasks are readily available for them. Older pupils enjoy being reading and mathematics buddies to younger ones. Several Year 6 pupils in 2012 attained the exceptionally high Level 6 in mathematics because of carefully targeted support and challenging tasks.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make excellent progress, for example by extending their spoken and written vocabulary when working in small groups supported by highly effective teaching assistants.
- The progress of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is meticulously tracked and their needs are considered very carefully, for example by providing 'Fizzy Club' to improve pupils' motor skills, counselling sessions, small booster groups in Years 5 and 6 classes, and/or by providing one-to-one support in mathematics and writing. All groups of pupils who benefit from the pupil premium reach similar levels of attainment to other pupils in the school in both English and mathematics as measured by their average points scores at the end of Key Stage 2, and there are no gaps.
- Pupils' exemplary relationships and their eagerness to learn prepares them exceptionally well for secondary education. One local secondary school Year 7 teacher writes that, 'Powell's pupils are articulate, resilient and resourceful, and often emerge as leaders among their peers.'

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Pupils learn highly effectively because teaching is of an exceptional quality across the school and is underpinned by half of the staff being subject specialist teachers. Staff are confident, have excellent subject knowledge and endeavour at all times to motivate and inspire. Pupils are very eager to learn because, as they said to an inspector, 'Teachers really want us to do well. They are never negative and encourage us to do our best.'

- Reception staff work as an exceptionally effective team and have excellent knowledge and understanding of the personal and learning needs of young children. Early reading, writing and mathematics are extremely well taught so that children have a very secure basis on which to build future learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They challenge pupils very effectively through tasks which are precisely matched to their individual needs. They use an extensive range of strategies to inspire and motivate all pupils.
- The needs of all groups of pupils are carefully considered when teachers plan work. As a result, the support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding, as well as for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is carefully targeted so that they make excellent progress.
- Teaching assistants work very closely with teachers and are organised extremely well. They are very skilled at asking questions and rephrasing information. Consequently, they provide highly effective support and make sure all pupils make excellent progress towards their learning targets.
- Teachers involve pupils extremely well in their learning. Questions are skilfully formulated not only to gauge pupils' understanding but also to extend their thinking and ideas. Marking is excellent and helps pupils move onwards in their learning. Comments are helpful and staff expect pupils to respond to them. An examination of pupils' work showed clearly how pupils succeeded in improving their work after teachers' suggestions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- One parent, expressing the views of almost all who spoke with the inspectors, wrote: 'Powell's is so much more than just a school. We are able to relax safe in the knowledge that at all times our children's education, safety and well-being (physical, emotional and spiritual) are in excellent hands.'
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are extremely polite, helpful and justifiably very proud of their school. 'This is a brilliant school because we learn so much and we can attend a large number of clubs every day of the week,' says one pupil. In lessons, pupils are exceptionally well motivated and display a real quest for learning through their excellent attitudes, perseverance and concentration.
- Inspectors found that, as at the time of the previous inspection, behaviour in lessons and in all parts of the school is consistently exemplary. As a result, attendance is exceptionally high and reflects the pupils' tremendous enjoyment of school. Some Reception children told inspectors that they wished they could go to school at weekends as well.
- Older pupils talk knowledgably about the different forms of bullying, including internet and racist bullying, but confidently say that, 'Bullying is very rare and is always dealt with by the school staff and quickly sorted out.' Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Pupils say they are not allowed mobile phones in school and describe precisely what to do if they see anything unsuitable on their computers at home.
- Pupils invariably look after each other at breaks and lunchtime because they follow the excellent role models of the very caring staff. Older pupils are particularly considerate of younger ones. All pupils like seeing their name on the 'Values Tree' in the entrance hall. A considerable number of pupils have already achieved this term's value of 'Friendship', and they also work exceptionally hard to be listed in the 'Gold Book' for outstanding academic or personal achievement.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and the governing body form an exceptionally impressive team where their distinct areas of expertise combine effortlessly to make this school highly successful. There is a tremendous team spirit, and all staff are extremely ambitious for their

pupils and totally committed to continuous improvement. This vision is shared by all in the school.

- All teachers have leadership roles and have been provided with carefully selected training to enable them to fulfil these highly effectively. Professional targets are highly robust and have been very effective in helping them to develop and hone their skills so that the provision is of the highest quality. There has been regular improvement in teaching, learning and achievement, which demonstrates the school's excellent capacity for further improvement.
- Monitoring is regular and very rigorous, and all teachers are accountable for the progress their classes make.
- The response of parents and carers on Parent View was extremely positive and demonstrates the high level of support the school enjoys. Parents and carers fully subscribe to the school's vision and values, and are encouraged to play an active part in their children's learning. The school's excellent website provides a wide range of information on pupils' learning that enables them to do this most effectively.
- The exciting and stimulating subjects and topics enthuse and motivate the pupils, and offer rich opportunities for high-quality learning. They include 'Forest School' activities which successfully develop pupils' personal and independence skills. All pupils are included in all activities so that all have equal opportunities.
- All pupils have full access to the rich variety of activities the school offers them, and older pupils recall many memorable and vibrant learning experiences. These have a very positive impact on all pupils' behaviour and safety, and contribute extremely well to their academic achievement and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the 100-strong choir recently sang for the Archbishop of Canterbury in a local church.
- A conversation with the local authority confirmed that the school has required no more than light-touch support since the last inspection in 2008. The local authority greatly appreciates the leading role the headteacher and senior staff take in supporting other schools in the county.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and what it is doing to improve further. Governors speak knowledgeably about pupils' progress and immediately challenge the slightest dip in pupils' attainment. They undergo regular training to sharpen their skills so they are confident to both support and challenge senior leaders. They monitor the finances of the school rigorously. They also make sure that money for the pupil premium is used very effectively to support those pupils who require it.
 - Governors are extremely vigilant in making sure that the school is a safe place, and that staff are suitably checked and trained in child protection matters. They check the quality of teaching by asking questions about information which shows how much progress is made by different groups of pupils. The headteacher supported by the governors decide whether teachers and staff should be rewarded with salary increases. The governors review targets for the headteacher. The governing body has a wealth of experience and expertise, and works exceptionally well with other schools and organisations in the local community.
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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	115681
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	403274

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	426
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Annie Powlesland
Headteacher	Teresa Day
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2008
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