

English Bicknor Church of England Primary School

English Bicknor, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 7PG

Inspection dates 16–17 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement has varied too much during a period of rapid growth and staff changes, and is not yet consistently good in all year groups.
- The 2012 Year 6 test results were low and although achievement has improved this year, it is still not as good in mathematics as it is in reading and writing.
- Teaching requires improvement. The quality is improving, but has not been consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- Inconsistencies in the checking and recording of pupils' attainment have meant that lesson activities are not always planned at the right level to match their differing needs and abilities.
- Leadership and management require improvement. The school has only recently established effective system for checking pupils' attainment and progress.
- Some leaders are new to the post and their roles are not yet fully developed.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff at all levels are taking positive action to raise achievement and improve teaching, and as a result standards are now rising.
- The headteacher and staff have created a positive and safe environment for pupils to learn and develop in.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe and well cared for by adults.
- Governors and the local authority are effectively supporting the school's drive for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons. Some of these were seen with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, governors and pupils.
- The inspector took account of the 16 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and the results of the school's own parental survey.
- Seven questionnaires from staff were analysed.
- The inspector examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work and the school's improvement plans.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- An average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave partway through their primary school education is much higher than average. During the last few years, an additional 22 pupils have joined from other schools in the locality.
- There have been teacher changes recently, with new teachers joining in April and September 2012.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is on a phased retirement and is in school four days a week. A senior member of staff is a co-headteacher for the remaining day.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently at least good, and more often outstanding, by ensuring that:
 - pupils' attainment is accurately assessed and recorded
 - teachers use the resulting information consistently to set tasks at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils
 - the more able pupils are quickly moved on to more demanding tasks, especially in mathematics.
 - Accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment in mathematics, by:
 - extending pupils' mathematical vocabulary and giving them more opportunities to explain their calculations
 - making the best possible use of technology to support pupils' learning in mathematics
 - promoting the importance of estimating when tackling mathematical problems.
 - Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that:
 - leaders regularly check on the progress made by individual pupils, and take swift action to tackle any underachievement
 - new leaders receive the training and support they need to enable them to lead their areas of responsibility successfully.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress has varied too much over recent years for them to reach the standards of which they are capable, and progress in mathematics generally lags behind reading and writing.
- The 2012 Year 6 results in English and mathematics were low due to pupils making insufficient progress through Key Stage 2. The school has taken positive action to tackle this underachievement, although progress still requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good in all year groups. There are success stories where individual pupils have made rapid progress. By contrast, some pupils' progress has been relatively slow.
- The school has been through a challenging period of a growth in the number of pupils. Many of the new arrivals have behavioural and/or learning needs. In the main, pupils who join the school in Reception and remain until Year 6 reach higher standards than those who are only at the school briefly.
- Attainment in the current Year 6 is higher than in 2012, and achievement in mathematics is improving.
- Pupils' progress in writing has improved. Pupils write for a range of purposes and their grammar, punctuation and spelling are developing well. Writing tasks are now tailored closely to pupils' level of ability.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now also making better progress. In the lessons seen, these pupils were taught and supported well.
- In the 2012 Year 6 national tests, the very small number of pupils supported by the pupil premium attained much lower standards than the other pupils and were some two years behind their peers in both English and mathematics. However, this is misleading because these pupils joined the school with lower standards. Recent records show that those currently supported by the pupil premium are making faster progress and the attainment gap compared to other pupils is effectively narrowing.
- Pupils often make good progress in speaking and listening when they are given opportunities to discuss their learning in pairs and present their ideas to the class.
- Most pupils enjoy books and show positive attitudes to reading. The youngest are benefiting from the introduction of a new reading and writing scheme. Older pupils enjoy a range of challenging texts by well-known authors.
- Children start in the Reception with knowledge and skills below the levels expected nationally for their age. They benefit from a range of interesting indoor and outdoor activities that are now better suited to their needs.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not been consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- In mathematics, teachers do not always encourage pupils to develop their vocabulary or explain their methods of working out problems. They are not yet making full use of computer technology to enhance learning or promoting the importance of estimating when tackling problems.
- Until recently, the school did not have an accurate and fully effective system for checking pupils' level of attainment. As a result, teachers did not always set work at the right level to match pupils' abilities and needs. This meant that they did not always make the progress of which they were capable.
- Teachers are now assessing pupils' attainment more thoroughly and are using the information more effectively to pitch activities at the correct level. However, at times, the more able pupils are not given hard enough work in mathematics.
- Teachers establish strong relationships with pupils and create a positive climate for learning.

Adults manage the pupils well and this leads to good behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils show consideration and respect for others, and their skills in working collaboratively are well developed.

- In Reception, there is an appropriate balance between adult-led activities and opportunities for children to explore and learn on their own.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is working well, with the introduction of a new scheme and learning materials.
- Teachers are using a range of techniques to promote pupils' writing skills. In a successful writing lesson in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class, pupils had good opportunities to discuss the characters in *Theseus and the Minotaur*. The teacher effectively moved them on to an interesting poem about the Minotaur. Skilful questioning helped the pupils to gain a clear understanding about the character's emotions and feelings. Pupils made good progress in planning and writing their own poem.
- Teaching assistants are used increasingly well and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need additional help with literacy and behaviour.
- Teachers' marking promotes learning well. It provides encouragement and identifies why pupils' work is good. Constructive comments guide improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has successfully maintained and built upon the good behaviour and safety reported in the previous inspection.
- Children in the Reception class settle well into the school because of the warm and positive relationships established with adults. They enjoy the activities on offer, learning and playing well with others.
- Parents who responded to Parent View and the school's own survey stated that their children were happy, safe and well looked after. These positive views reflect the findings of the inspection.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for learning and are eager to 'have a go' at new challenges. They are courteous, cooperative and relate well to adults and to their peers. Pupils have a good understanding of different faiths.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. The school's records of incidents show that this is a typical picture, and that effective action is taken to deal with unacceptable behaviour. Pupils who find it difficult to behave well are well managed and supported by adults so that the learning of other pupils is not adversely affected.
- Pupils show a clear understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including name-calling, physical bullying and cyber bullying. They told the inspector, 'There has been some bullying in the past but there is not any now.' Pupils know what to do should bullying occur, confident in the knowledge that it would be quickly dealt with.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not promoted consistently good achievement for pupils or good teaching in all year groups since the last inspection. Leadership and management therefore require improvement.
- Some leaders of key areas are relatively new to their posts and so their role in checking performance and improving their area of responsibility is not fully developed. The school has clear plans for training them and developing their skills in this area.
- The headteacher and staff have created a positive environment for the pupils to learn in. The school has a welcoming atmosphere. Pupils feel safe, behave well and form good relationships with adults and their classmates.
- Leaders, governors and staff have a clear overview of the school's performance. All are rightly

focused on raising pupils' achievement, sharpening assessment and strengthening teaching. The school's actions are having a positive impact on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The co-headteacher is making a positive contribution to school improvement. The sharper system for checking pupils' attainment puts leaders in a better position to take action when individuals are falling behind.

- Staff training is based on appropriate procedures for checking their performance, and linked to the school's priorities for improvement. Decisions about staff promotion and salary increases are correctly based on responsibilities, staff performance and the progress that pupils make.
 - The pupil premium funding has been properly used to provide eligible pupils with additional class support.
 - The local authority recently carried out a review of the school's performance, and has an accurate overview of its strengths and areas for improvement. Good support is provided and the local authority is contributing well to the school's drive for improvement.
 - All pupils have full access to the range of opportunities that the school provides. Discrimination, in any form, is not tolerated.
 - The school provides a good range of subjects and topics to promote pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy the range of clubs and educational visits which enrich the curriculum. Effective steps have been taken to improve the teaching of reading and writing. Leaders are keen to strengthen mathematics. There have been good improvements to outdoor learning opportunities.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The members of the governing body are enthusiastic and supportive. They have a good understanding of the school's performance and the local community it serves. They are fully aware that pupils' achievement and teaching need to improve and be more consistent. Governors are carefully checking that the school is improving. They know how pupils' attainment and progress compare to those of pupils in similar schools nationally. They are provided with regular updates on the quality of teaching. Governors understand recent requirements relating to management of staff performance, and ensure that pay and promotion are linked to the progress pupils make. They ensure that pupil premium funding is properly spent and check how well eligible pupils are progressing. Governors attend a range of training to improve their effectiveness. They have ensured that all safeguarding procedures meet national requirements.
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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	115621
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	411751

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	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Rodwell
Headteacher	David Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 October 2009
Telephone number	01594 860367
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