

# Norton St Philip Church of England First School

Church Street, Norton St Philip, Somerset, BA2 7LU

**Inspection dates** 18–19 April 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, achieve and are supported well.
- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good. Attainment in national assessments is consistently above average.
- The attainment of pupils entitled to support under the pupil premium (mainly those entitled to free school meals) is above that of all pupils nationally.
- Behaviour and safety are good. The school is a friendly, family-based community. Pupils are polite and courteous and have a good understanding of how to stay safe.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- A large majority of teaching and learning is good and improving rapidly. New teachers have brought enthusiasm and strong skills, complemented by the work of effective teaching assistants.
- The strong leadership and management of the headteacher, supported by an effective governing body, is driving school improvement.
- Improvement planning is based upon thorough and effective monitoring of teaching and learning, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
- Links with parents and carers are good.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too few more-able pupils are making better than expected progress, especially in writing, because assessment information is not used consistently. Inconsistent marking systems mean pupils have different experiences of how they can improve their work.
- In some lessons the pace of learning is too slow especially for more able pupils.
- Historical errors mean that electronic data do not provide clear information to teachers and governors on how well the school performance compares nationally.
- The minutes of meetings of the governing body do not provide a clear enough record of how governors hold the school to account for the quality of learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five teachers and a visiting specialist in the course of visiting 10 lessons or parts of lessons, some in partnership with the headteacher, including short visits to observe the provision for teaching reading.
- Discussions were held with staff and groups of pupils. Meetings were also held with representatives of the governing body the school consultant partner and a representative of the local authority.
- The responses of the 25 parents and carers who filled in the online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. Parents and carers were spoken to at the start of the school day. Questionnaires from 10 staff were also analysed.
- Documentation studied included: the school's own self-evaluation; the school development plan; records on pupils' attainment and progress; reports on disabled pupils and those with special educational needs; documents relating to safeguarding and child protection; and the minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- The work in pupils' books was examined in partnership with the headteacher and two other teachers.

## Inspection team

Stephen Lake, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average primary school. It serves the local village but a significant proportion of pupils come from neighbouring villages and small towns.
- Almost all pupils are of White British origin with only a few from other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs is well above average. The most common needs are speech, language and communication difficulties and specific learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. This funding includes children in local authority care, children of service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school houses an independent nursery which is subject to a separate inspection.
- In the last 12 months the proportion of pupils leaving or joining the school other than at the normal time has increased.
- Almost all teachers, including the headteacher, have joined the school in the last 18 months. Pupils are taught in three classes in the morning and two in the afternoon. During the inspection some of the teachers were on temporary contracts covering for absent colleagues.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in writing, so that a large majority is consistently better than good by:
  - using assessment information more consistently to plan tasks that challenge and extend all pupils especially those who are more able
  - developing a consistent approach to marking and feedback that is understood by all pupils and staff
  - ensuring that learning in all lessons proceeds at a brisk pace.
- Develop a more robust system for recording and analysing data that can be used to judge the performance of the school.
- Ensure that the minutes of meetings of the governing body show clearly how the school is challenged to raise achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The small size of this school means that skills and abilities when children start school vary considerably from year to year. Children currently start school with skill levels below those normally found at their age, especially in language and communication skills. They make good progress in Reception as a result of the good teaching that they receive and start Year 1 with average skills although again this varies from year to year due to the differences in intake.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 4 but this is better in reading and mathematics than in writing. By the time pupils leave the school at age nine, attainment over time is above that normally found at this age, but slightly lower in writing.
- In the recent national assessments of reading skills at age six, fewer pupils than average met the expected standard. However, the school's own most recent assessment of phonic skills shows that pupils' abilities have improved as new strategies for the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are beginning to have an impact. The more consistent teaching of basic reading skills in streamed groups is already improving attainment. Pupils in Year 2 consistently attain above average in reading and are on track for above average attainment in reading this year. The good progress in reading continues in Years 3 and 4 and pupils leave the school at age nine with reading skills above those normally found at that age.
- Good support from teachers and teaching assistants enables disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to take a full part in lessons and make the same or better progress than other pupils. A particular strength of the school is the way some pupils with very challenging behaviour are supported so that they take a full part in lessons and are able to learn.
- Pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium make good progress because they receive well-planned additional support. A direct comparison over time is not possible because no pupils entitled to this support took the national tests last year.
- Pupils use their good information and communication technology skills to support their learning in other subjects, for example researching information for their topic on the Romans.
- The large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that their children make good progress.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils and the large majority of parents and carers who filled in questionnaires agree that teaching over time is good.
- Teachers plan lessons that stimulate and motivate pupils to learn and also provide strong opportunities to support spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, children in Reception and pupils in Year 1 made good progress in a well-planned lesson based on the story 'The smartest giant'. As well as developing good reading skills pupils were able to discuss the moral and social messages behind the story as the giant gives away his new clothes to help others less fortunate than him.
- In a large majority of lessons, information on what pupils already know, can do and understand is used well to provide tasks that challenge all pupils to achieve of their very best. Nevertheless, a little inconsistency remains, especially in the challenge for those who are capable of higher learning.
- As part of the drive to improve writing, teachers place a high focus on talk before writing, and the use of 'Wow' words is developed through discussions on how a sentence or a description could be improved. In a Year 2 lesson on learning how to write a letter from Mummy Owl to the baby owls, pupils made good progress introducing words such as 'colossal' into their sentences. Nevertheless, occasionally learning is slowed because these discussions go on too long and this, in particular, restricts the highest level of learning for the more able.
- Recent appointments have strengthened the teaching team and brought new ideas and

techniques into the school but some are too new to be agreed and consistent. For example, recent analysis of pupils' work by teachers shows that pupils' work is marked frequently and in most cases clear next steps are set for pupils in their work. However, two different systems of marking are used across the school. Both are effective but the use of two different systems is confusing to some pupils and does not allow for a consistency of approach. A staff meeting to address this is already planned.

- Good quality assessments of pupils are used to monitor and guide progress and set targets for what pupils should achieve at the end of the year. Pupils understand these targets well and are clear what it is they need to do to achieve a certain level in their work.
- Effective teaching assistants provide good and, at times, outstanding support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs that keep them fully included in lessons.
- A significant minority of the parents and carers who filled in the questionnaire did not agree that homework was appropriate. The inspector does not agree. Pupils are enthusiastic about their home learning tasks and all pupils share their learning of reading with parents and carers through the well-used home/school reading diaries.

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

- Pupils are very positive about the way the school looks after them and helps them feel and stay safe. They say that they enjoy being there because behaviour is normally good. Pupils say one or two can be silly but it is rare for any major disruption to lessons to occur. All parents and carers who responded to Parent View feel their children are safe and along with staff and governors agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and that related to discrimination. They say that bullying is quite rare apart from a little name-calling that sometimes happens. Pupils say that teachers deal with this quickly and effectively and they trust adults to deal with any that might occur.
- The school is a very friendly and orderly learning community. Pupils are polite and courteous towards each other and adults. They have consistently positive attitudes to learning and co-operate well with each other when working in pairs or small groups.
- Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave and use consistent strategies for managing behaviour that are based upon praise. This ensures the small groups of pupils who demonstrate challenging behaviour are dealt with effectively to avoid any disruption to learning.
- Attendance is above average. The school monitors attendance carefully and the proportion of pupils with poor attendance is very low.

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

- The new headteacher has a very clear and ambitious vision of how the school can improve and grow. Staff, parents, carers and governors support this vision well and are enthusiastic about the leadership of the headteacher.
- The headteacher checks regularly on the quality of teaching and learning and uses the information gained to make well-informed decisions about teachers rising up the salary scale. Areas for improvement are clearly identified and with good support from the local authority robust action is taken to further improve the quality of teaching.
- The revised curriculum encourages pupils to develop curiosity, creativity and imagination that are reflected in the improving quality of their writing. Visits to places of interest such as the Trowbridge Museum stimulate pupils who then are keen to write about their experiences. Activities such as the India day and the letters to pupils in a school in Uganda further enhance the strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Good attention is given to child protection and safeguarding. The school takes all reasonable

steps to make sure that pupils are safe and training for staff and governors is up to date.

- Detailed individual records of the attainment and progress of individual pupils are used well to check the progress of pupils and to identify those who need additional support. This also enables the headteacher to check that all pupils are receiving equal access to the curriculum. However, the headteacher has correctly identified that the electronic system for analysing data is not good enough to give accurate information on the school's performance over time because historical data are not entered correctly. This limits the opportunities for the headteacher and governors to compare performance with other schools.
  - The school has a clear and accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been addressed well. The school development plan focuses upon the most important actions required to improve achievement and the quality of teaching further. The school demonstrates capacity for continued improvement.
  - The governance of the school:
    - The effective governing body provides strong direction to the work of the school. Governors undertake frequent and regular training, including performance management, and use their skills well to set challenging targets for the headteacher. Some training on the interpretation of data has taken place and more is planned. Governors ask direct questions about how well pupils are learning and why but this is not recorded well enough in the minutes of governing body meetings. Regular reports from the headteacher supplemented by visits to the school enable governors to have good information about the quality of teaching. They are well aware of what is being done to reward good teachers and tackle areas for improvement. The budget is managed well and a key governor effectively checks on the impact of spending, especially the pupil premium funding.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123826
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	412626

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>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	43
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mary Morrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Watkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 October 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01373 834 327
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