

Bathford Church of England VC Primary School

Dovers Park, Bathford, Bath, BA1 7UB

Inspection dates 9–10 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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

- The progress pupils make from their different starting points is sometimes not rapid enough - it varies too much in different year groups.
- The quality of teaching has not been good enough to ensure all pupils make sustained good progress.
- In some lessons, work is too easy for the most-able pupils, while others find it too difficult to do without a lot of adult help. When this happens, neither group makes the progress they should.
- Pupils do not have useful targets to help them know what to aim for. Targets are sometimes out of date, or do not give them enough information about their next steps.
- Marking does not always tell pupils how to improve, and when it does, pupils do not always have opportunities to respond to what is said.
- Leaders, including members of the governing body, have not been analysing data about standards well enough. They have not always identified where standards seem high, but pupils have still not made enough progress compared to where they started.
- Leaders are only just starting to look at progress to check whether things are working well. Development plans do not always identify clearly what impact on progress the school is aiming for with the things it is doing.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a clear vision and drive to improve the school and the outcomes for the pupils who attend. This ambition is shared by all staff.
- The school has a strong ethos of care, and pupils feel safe and well looked after as a result.
- The behaviour of the pupils is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy being members of the school. These things are a credit to Bathford Primary School.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, six of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed a school assembly.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and senior and middle leaders. Discussions were held by telephone with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised samples of pupils' work books while in lessons.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents, including the school's information on pupils' recent progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors also took account of 58 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and three letters from parents and carers.

Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lucy Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bathford Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services) is much lower than the national average. Currently, there are no looked after children in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher now in post took over in September 2012, with other members of the current senior leadership team taking on their responsibilities at the same time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to ensure pupils make at least good progress by:
 - making sure work is not too hard and not too easy
 - providing pupils with learning targets that are linked closely to the tasks they are currently working on and that tell the pupils clearly what their next steps are and what they are expected to achieve
 - making sure marking tells pupils how to make their work better, and pupils are given opportunities to respond to their teachers' written feedback quickly.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders at all levels more effectively analyse assessment information to check the progress of different groups of pupils, and fine-tune action to accelerate it where needed
 - school development plans clearly indicate the expected impact they will have on progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The progress pupils make over time has not been good and has been comparatively slow for some groups of pupils. The school recognises that for a number of years the focus has been on attainment, which is high, rather than the amount of progress pupils make from their individual starting points. The amount of progress made in different year groups is inconsistent too.
- Tracking systems are in place to monitor the progress pupils make over a term. The senior leaders identify pupils who may be underperforming and discuss this information with the classroom teacher. They are now beginning to review the progress different groups of pupils make over time, so developing a better overview of pupils' achievement and the effectiveness of teaching and learning. This is not yet fully embedded and, as staff are still developing their skills in reviewing, the full impact is yet to be seen on pupils' progress.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills generally above those typical for their age. The provision enables pupils to make good progress, and provides good opportunities to develop communication and literacy skills. By the time they leave, they are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- Results for Year 1 pupils in the 2012 national screening check about how well they can link letters and sounds were very good. Pupils read well and older pupils do so with good levels of fluency.
- More effective use of teaching assistants this year in small-group work or one-to-one interventions is now showing improvements in outcomes for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs over previous years. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is now generally in line with other pupils.
- The school has a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. These pupils generally make similar progress to their peers, as do the few who speak English as an additional language.
- This year, the school has targeted support more effectively for the small number of pupils eligible for additional funding from the pupil premium grant. The school's own information indicates that these pupils are now making similar progress to other children. Their attainment shows an improvement on the previous year when the gap in attainment in Key Stage 2 assessment tests in English was nearly three terms and, in mathematics, more than five terms. This attainment data should be treated with caution, as there were only a small number of pupils in this group.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning requires improvement as the progress pupils make is not good in all year groups, and has been slow for some groups of pupils currently in the school. Although the school's most recent observations indicate the quality of teaching has improved, some pupils have ground to make up. As a result, teaching is not yet ensuring pupils make good progress over a sustained period of time.
- Teachers do not always use the information about pupils effectively to plan lessons that are matched to the abilities of the pupils. As a result, activities do not all provide enough challenge for learners, so higher-ability pupils are not stretched to accelerate their progress. Less-able pupils and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs do receive effective support from teaching assistants but some activities are not well enough designed to make sure they can work without adult help.
- Pupils do have very general targets. Most do not provide a guide to the pupils on what they specifically need to do to develop their work further or tell them how to make the next steps to develop their understanding. The targets are not used effectively to move pupils forwards as they are not reviewed often enough.

- Pupils are given feedback on their work in a variety of ways. Written comments in some subject areas provide guidance to pupils on how to improve their work but not in all. Where there is guidance, pupils do not always get the opportunity to address quickly the issues raised by the teacher. As the comments do not refer to the targets in the front of the pupils' books, pupils are unsure of how the two link together.
- In mathematics, teachers use a range of resources effectively to engage learners. Teachers usually structure lessons well and clearly model mathematical ideas. Pupils engage in problem-solving tasks enthusiastically and, when work is well planned, learning moves on at a pace.
- In the Reception class, the teaching of writing is effective. Children demonstrate a good knowledge of technical vocabulary for the construction of sentences. Good classroom displays provide clear prompts, which the children use effectively to support independent working.
- In lessons, the relationships between pupils and adults are very good, and when work is at the right level, pupils engage enthusiastically with tasks and make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils feel well cared for and looked after at school. Acts of unkindness are rare and dealt with effectively by the adults in school should they occur. Pupils have a good understanding of how to ensure their own safety and about the issues surrounding any use of the internet. Pupils view behaviour as being generally good. Parents and carers support this picture.
- In lessons, pupils get on purposefully with their learning and are motivated even when the teaching could be better. They discuss ideas well during collaborative activities and, where work is at the right level, demonstrate they can work on tasks successfully without the close supervision of adults in the classroom.
- Pupils identify mathematics as a particularly favourite subject but say teachers try to make all lessons fun and interesting; one pupil commented, 'When I wake up, I know I will learn something new at school.'
- Pupils take on roles within school such as in the Eco-Council and are encouraged to be considerate of others and reflective on important issues in class and in assemblies. Clubs are well attended and drama and music are strong. Sports are popular and include such activities as fencing which sit alongside the more traditional activities of football and netball.
- Attendance is above the national average and the school works hard to maintain or improve it further.
- The school has a strong ethos of caring about others and promotes this well. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes at Bathford are a credit to the school.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The local authority has provided support to the school and the headteacher in his first year in post. The reports from the local authority have identified the need for the leadership team to be more evaluative when reviewing the work of the school. The headteacher has developed links with other schools to enable staff to look at their work and bring good and better practice back into Bathford.
- The headteacher has a clear aim to develop the quality of teaching and learning, and through this, improve the outcomes for all pupils. He is supported by a new leadership team. Together, they are developing their skills in the review of information on how well pupils are doing, to ensure all groups make good progress.
- The headteacher is distributing responsibilities to more effectively utilise the skills of the middle leaders within the school. These middle leaders may be in charge of subjects or age groups. They too are still developing their ability to analyse data about progress in order to fine-tune improvements.

- New performance management procedures are now in place and there is a clear link between pay rises awarded to teachers and how well pupils are doing. The staff are now observed teaching more regularly and this has enabled issues surrounding weaker teaching to be addressed through coaching and modelling of good practice by senior teachers. Teachers' appraisal targets and training are now linked to the school development plan.
 - The school and subject development plans focus on the right areas, and show what is to be done to improve things, but some of them lack detail of what impact is expected in terms of improved progress. This makes it harder to identify quickly whether strategies are working.
 - The school is currently reviewing the curriculum to provide a more creative experience for the pupils and to provide better opportunities for pupils to apply their understanding to more real-world situations. The themed weeks have proved to be popular and engaging, with pupils experiencing multicultural weeks and even an entrepreneurial week in which classes were given £25 and told to 'grow the money'. Pupils in Year 2 bought ingredients so they could open a restaurant that served pupils and parents and carers. The school, with its motto 'Grow, Care, Serve, Share', promotes the pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development well.
 - This year, the school has used the additional funding available to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant to better effect than previously. Small-group work and one-to-one sessions have been used to develop literacy and numeracy skills.
 - Parents' and carers' views of the school are very positive and recognise the work the new headteacher has done already to move the school forwards.
 - The school has the capacity to improve. During his first year, the headteacher has made good revisions to key policies and procedures, such as those for improving the performance of teachers. He has worked with teachers and senior managers to raise awareness of the importance of focusing on progress rather than standards alone. Changes have led to improved progress for specific groups, such as pupils who are funded by the pupil premium and those who have special educational needs. Leaders at all levels have a determination to improve the school and this is shared by staff. There is a clear ambition to raise the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good awareness of the strengths of the school and aspects that require further improvement, and of its own strengths and weaknesses. No external review of governance is required. Governors have had training from the local authority to raise their understanding and appreciation of the role. Specific training has resulted in them beginning to monitor the outcomes for different groups of pupils from the data provided by the school. Their skills in analysis are growing, but they are yet to review pupil outcomes in terms of the progress pupils make from their individual starting points. Governors have a good awareness of the interventions the school are using to ensure improved outcomes for pupils eligible for additional funding from the pupil premium grant and are now looking to evaluate the impact. They understand the systems that link the salary progression of teachers to the outcomes of pupils, and they know how good teaching is. They monitor the school's financial position carefully, make sure safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and check on arrangements to make sure pupils are well looked after and cared for in school.
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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	109185
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	413263

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Craig Stoddart
Headteacher	Matt Stone
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
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