

St Dubricius Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Parsons Street, Porlock, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 8QJ

Inspection dates 16–17 May 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- There have been good improvements since the last inspection especially in the provision for Early Years children in both the Nursery and Reception classes. The headteacher's strong leadership and vision are driving forward further improvement in this area.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points and by the time they reach Year 4, standards in reading are above average. This is another improvement since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good overall and outstanding in the Early Years.
- The provision for those with special educational needs is exceptionally well organised, and any gaps in attainment and progress between them and other groups of pupils are closing.
- Pupils behave impeccably at all times and play well together. They say they feel very safe in school and bullying is exceptionally rare. Attendance is average. Despite rigorous school procedures, improvement is hampered by the rural environment and the seasonal work of some parents.
- The school benefits from the strong partnerships it has forged with external agencies, significantly enriching pupils' learning and personal development.
- Governors' wide variety of skills from the world of work and their knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development enable them to consistently challenge the school to improve. Their commitment and support of the school, and their ability to fulfil their statutory duties is exemplary.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good, more needs to be outstanding.
- Pupils' first-hand experiences are not used sufficiently to practise their writing skills.
- Some mathematics tasks are not sufficiently challenging for middle and higher ability pupils.
- Pupils cannot judge for themselves how much they have learned by the end of the lesson.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited nine lessons. She also talked to pupils about their work and heard pupils read from Year 2 and Year 4.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including pupils' work, systems for checking progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures, the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement, records of monitoring the quality of teaching and the minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, school staff and groups of pupils. Individual pupils were spoken to in lessons and around the school. A telephone conversation took place with a school adviser from the local authority.
- Questionnaires from 12 members of staff were analysed. The inspector took account of the views expressed in 26 on-line responses from Parent View and during informal meetings with parents and carers before school.

Inspection team

Anna Sketchley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Dubricius is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught together in a mixed age class, as are pupils in Years 3 and 4. Reception children are taught as a single age class and Nursery age children have their own dedicated unit. Pupils attend from the village and the surrounding area.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is average.
- There are no disabled pupils in the school at the present time.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services) is below average.
- There are a few pupils from ethnic minority groups, and there are no pupils who have English as an additional language.
- There is an after-school club run by the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure more outstanding teaching so that all groups make rapid progress, by:
 - planning literacy lessons to practise writing skills using first-hand, exciting experiences
 - planning more challenging tasks, particularly in mathematics, for middle ability and more able pupils
 - helping pupils to know whether or not they have succeeded in their learning by the end of the lesson.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the school with levels of knowledge and skills expected for their age except in some aspects of literacy, mathematical calculation and personal and social development. Learning and development opportunities in both Nursery and Reception are exceptionally well planned. The correct balance between exciting and stimulating activities children choose for themselves, and outstanding teaching during adult chosen activities, ensures that children make good progress.
- Nursery children's language and knowledge of the world around them was effectively extended as they enjoyed water play whilst naming and sorting animals that live in the water from those that live on the land.
- Pupils learn their sounds and letters quickly because of daily practice in groups across the school according to the stage of their learning rather than age. This has led to considerable improvements in reading standards since the last inspection.
- Pupils are encouraged to read at home and at school, developing a strong culture of reading for enjoyment. Most read books fluently and with expression. They effectively use the strategies they have been taught, and are prepared to have a go at unfamiliar words.
- Good progress is maintained throughout Years 1 and 2. In an engaging practical lesson about capacity, all pupils demonstrated the ability to estimate and conduct a fair test using different sized cups to fill containers with rice. More able pupils were challenged well as they investigated different shapes and made their own containers.
- Occasionally tasks in some lessons are too easy for middle ability and more able groups of pupils, particularly in mathematics, and they spend too much time practising skills that they can already achieve. This means that sometimes they do not make as much progress as they might.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 3 and 4 and attainment in reading in the current Year 4 is above average.
- Attainment and progress in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics. Pupils in all year groups do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their writing skills using the exciting experiences the school provides. Progress is sometimes hampered by practising insufficiently challenging exercises from text books.
- Specially tailored programmes mean that pupils whose circumstances might otherwise make them vulnerable, and those with special educational needs, make the same good progress as all other pupils. They master reading and writing skills over time because highly trained teaching assistants skilfully help them. For example, pupils are encouraged to build their own sentences and then repeat the writing independently. This instils confidence and pupils are pleased with their success.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. It is directed towards supporting pupils so that the gap between their attainment and that of all other pupils is narrowing. It is also used effectively to improve pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Strong relationships exist between teachers and pupils, who say they are expected to work hard. As one pupil stated, 'All the teachers want is for us to do our best.' This ensures a very positive climate for learning. As a result, pupils remain focused and concentrate well.
- Teachers are very well organised and plan lessons carefully, managing groups about the classrooms efficiently so that no time is wasted.
- Teachers share the learning objective with pupils at the beginning of lessons and use interactive whiteboards well to engage pupils and ensure that they know what they are to learn.
- During the lesson, teachers check pupils' understanding by thoughtful questioning. For example, in a Year 3 class, teachers checked how much pupils knew about fiction and non-fiction books.

- However, pupils do not always have sufficient ways of judging for themselves how well they have learned by the end of the lesson.
- Teachers mark work carefully and this provides pupils with information about the next steps to take to develop their learning and skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- During the inspection, behaviour was impeccable in lessons, around the building, in the well-run after-school club and in the playground. This is typical and fully supported by parents and carers, pupils and adults in the school. Records over time show that there have been no exclusions or bullying incidents since the last inspection.
- Older pupils have a very good understanding of the different types of bullying, especially when using the internet. Opportunities provided for them to learn about assessing risk contribute well towards them feeling very safe in school and they say confidently, 'If you are worried, you can always talk to someone.'
- Pupils get on exceptionally well together and say that if on the odd occasion they do fall out, it gets sorted very quickly.
- Pupils have lots of responsibilities around the school. Monitors are very useful at playtimes and distribute small play equipment. Pupils play energetically together. They really enjoy being part of the active school council, saying that it really makes a difference because 'we all have a voice'.
- The school's exceptionally strong relationship with the local church, the shared joint premises and church/school activities such as involvement in Fair Trade and the Christian 'Jam Club' enhance the lives of families and their children. As a result, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's skilful leadership and vision of where the school needs to develop, together with the strong partnership that he has forged with the deputy headteacher, has secured good improvement since the last inspection. This is especially noticeable in the excellent advancement of the Early Years provision and rising achievement in reading.
- An experienced, stable and committed staff team and challenging governance consistently support the senior leadership so there is a good capacity for further improvement.
- School self-evaluation is accurate because it is informed by rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and careful tracking of pupils' progress. Clear action plans identify priorities to move the quality of teaching from good to outstanding and also to raise standards further in writing and mathematics.
- Exacting use of the national teaching standards to measure and manage teachers' performance, correctly identify areas of professional development for teachers to ensure that action plans are successful.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school and demonstrate this support through the very high number who 'strongly agree' with all the categories on Parent View. No negative responses were received in any category. There is also a 'Friends of the School' group who raise substantial funds for the school on an annual basis.
- Extensive use of the rural environment in which the school is situated brings learning alive for pupils. Partnerships with organisations such as the National Trust enrich learning through initiatives like the Forest School. Use of the Exmoor National Park and working with the Porlock Visitor Centre enhances pupils' learning experiences and makes a very strong contribution to their personal development.
- The school benefits significantly from its resourceful partnership with other local schools. This is

reciprocal and staff share their expertise well with others, demonstrating a truly cohesive community. The local authority offers light touch support.

- Equal opportunity for different groups of pupils is promoted well and the school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. The governing body and school staff ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously. Regular training and thorough monitoring ensure that extremely high standards of safety are maintained.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors bring many skills to the school through their considerable professional experience. Most are local and have very useful connections within the community. They have extremely good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development because they continually interrogate information and data, visit lessons and hold discussions with staff. This enables them to ask challenging questions about the school's performance and other aspects of its work, constantly challenging it to improve. Consequently governors have a full understanding of how the pupil premium is being used and its impact on the progress of more vulnerable pupils. The headteacher's performance is rigorously assessed annually with the help of an external adviser and governors have a very good understanding of teachers' performance and salary progression. Governors make a significant contribution to the life and work of the school.

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	123837
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	412640

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martina Forster
Headteacher	Christopher Blazey
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 March 2010
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