

Timberscombe Church of England First School

Timberscombe, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 7TY

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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

- Typically teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers know the children very well and, in the small classes, teaching is personalised to help each child make rapid progress, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The vast majority of children make better than expected progress, and a good proportion, especially those with special needs, make high levels of progress.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have high expectations for the pupils. This can be seen in the richness and variety of activities provided, resulting in above average levels of attainment for many pupils in Year 2 and Year 4.
- The strengths of working in partnership with Cutcombe First School and with other local schools in the wider federation can be seen in the sharing of staff expertise, and the many opportunities for pupils to work with a wider range of people.
- The outstanding levels of care and support seen at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence grow strongly in the nurturing atmosphere provided by all staff.
- Pupils' behaviour is consequently outstanding. They care for one another and want to do well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although attainment in writing is often higher than the levels expected for the pupils' ages, progress is not as strong in writing as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Strategies to help pupils understand what is expected in the quantity and quality of their written work and what they need to do to improve are not used sufficiently effectively to ensure the same high levels of progress seen in other areas of learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five teaching sessions taught by two teachers. Many of these were joint observations undertaken with the headteacher.
- A variety of shorter sessions taught by both teachers and teaching assistants were also observed.
- The inspector held meetings with four members of the governing body and with groups of pupils. A telephone conversation about the school also took place with a representative from the local authority.
- In addition to a number of meetings with members of staff, the questionnaires completed by seven members of staff were taken into account.
- Thirteen parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, a summary of the school self-evaluation and the current areas of focus for staff on improving teaching.
- The inspector also looked at a range of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Hazel Callaghan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Timberscombe First is a very small school. There are just two classes taught by four part-time teachers. The number of children in each age group is small; most cohorts are six or less.
- Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage and very few are from minority ethnic groups.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is smaller than that found in schools nationally. These pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed forces. Currently the school has no children looked after by the local authority and none with parents in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs supported at school action level is greater than the national average. A smaller than usual proportion of pupils is supported at school action plus. There are no pupils currently with a statement of special educational needs.
- Cutcombe First School and Timberscome First School work together as the Beacon Federation. The schools have the same headteacher and the same governing body.
- Both schools are also part of a soft federation called the Exmoor Coast Federation which is made up of Minehead Middle School and six local first schools.
- There is a privately run pre-school group attached to the school. It was not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the levels of progress in writing to equal those made in reading and mathematics by:
 - developing strategies that help pupils know what is expected in the quantity and quality of their work
 - helping pupils to understand how to improve their work and giving them time to develop the ideas made within teachers' marking so that they move forward more rapidly in their learning
 - referring to pupils' learning targets more regularly so they work towards achieving them in their work
 - expecting the same quality and presentation of written work in other subjects as is expected in English
 - helping pupils to use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to improve their spelling.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children in Reception enjoy their activities and gain a great deal from listening to the older pupils in the class who act as good role-models in their learning. Opportunities to experiment and explore in the secure outside area as well as in their own separate classroom promote good attitudes to learning. Children achieve well and are well prepared for learning in Year 1. Attainment is often above average, especially in their early reading, writing and mathematic skills.
- In Year 1, pupils continue to make good progress. They reached expected levels in the Year 1 phonics check, in which pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make was assessed. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are attaining above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. This is the result of at least good progress from their different starting points, with many pupils making high levels of progress, especially in reading and mathematics in Year 2.
- This often rapid and sustained progress in reading and mathematics continues in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' progress in writing is often better than expected but not as consistently strong as in reading and mathematics for many pupils.
- Pupils who are eligible for free school meals are supported effectively and they reach the levels expected for their age and often achieve as well as the other pupils in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs often make excellent levels of progress from their starting point. Several have highly complex needs, including challenges in their lives outside of school which create barriers to learning. They are supported extremely well, both personally and academically, so that their progress is rapid and sustained. Many of the pupils who are supported at school action level reach the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils use their reading and writing skills well to support their work in other subjects but often the quality of their written work is not of the same standard as that seen in English lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan their lessons carefully and provide clear objectives for what is to be learnt.
- Activities build effectively on what pupils already know and can do, so that pupils feel confident in their tasks. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' good behaviour and concentration, and this was a consistent aspect of all lessons observed.
- There are often opportunities for small groups of pupils to work with an adult. This ensures a quick response to pupils' questions or difficulties. Teachers are skilled at asking questions, to probe pupils' understanding, especially in mathematics, and to remodel activities appropriately. It is this individual response to pupils' learning needs that enables most pupils to make often rapid progress.
- Teaching assistants play an important part in pupils' good learning, especially those pupils who have special needs, both within lessons and as part of small intervention groups. Their needs are well understood, and high levels of care and support enable them to make often exceptional progress from their starting points. The support of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is equally as effective and they achieve well.
- The systematic teaching of phonics through the school is effective and enables pupils to split unknown words into their different sounds so they can read them. They use their knowledge of sounds also to help them make logical attempts at spelling, but this skill is not as strong as their reading.
- The teaching of reading is very effective and teachers introduce pupils to all kinds of books to extend their interest and learning in other subjects.
- Pupils have many opportunities to work with others, to share ideas and to discuss their work,

developing the skills of cooperation and collaboration. Pupils enjoy their activities, especially when they are given opportunities to work in pairs or in groups. 'Talking partners' are used well in all classes and give pupils good opportunities to learn from each other.

- Pupils are developing the skills of evaluating each other's work and giving feedback. This strategy helps them to have greater understanding of what can be achieved in their own work but it is not used as often as it could be. Opportunities for pupils to see how much they can achieve in their writing by giving them steps to success or checklists are sometimes missed.
- Teachers' marking is thorough. It celebrates what has been learnt and often sets out what pupils need to improve. Time is not given regularly, however, for pupil to make these changes and practise the new skills and improvements to stop the same mistakes occurring.
- Targets for their next steps in learning are well matched to pupils' work. However, those linked to writing are not regularly highlighted in a lesson for pupils to focus on them and so improve this aspect of their work. They are rarely a focus in other subjects, even if writing is part of the task and so pupils' writing in science and history, for example, is not of the same standard as that seen in English work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils behave extremely well in their classes, in assembly, at break times, and around the school. They enjoy their activities and want to do well. Pupils show extremely good levels of concentration and attention in lessons. Pupils in Year 2, for example, showed high levels of perseverance in their task to find similarities and differences in two story books.
- They show respect for each other's work and effort. In a phonics session observed in the youngest class, pupils celebrated each other's success, in particular that of those who may have had learning difficulties. Older pupils often work together extremely well, sharing ideas and discussing and developing their answers.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school. The good quality personal and social education programme helps to support pupils' understanding of how they keep themselves and their friends safe. Pupils identify possible hazards and make an exceptional contribution to a safe positive learning environment. The recent study of e-safety has helped older pupils to be aware of the potential risks in the use of social media.
- Pupils say that children get on very well together and behave well, and that bullying of any kind is rare, especially any physical, emotional or cyber-bullying. Pupils say that any problems are quickly and effectively sorted out by the staff. Parents share pupils' high regard for the standard of behaviour and very few have any concerns.
- Pupils enjoy working and playing with the pupils from their partner school and look forward to opportunities to join with them, such as the residential trip and the weekly physical education lessons which are taught together at Timberscombe.
- The vast majority of pupils attend very regularly and persistent absence is rare.

The leadership and management are good

- The high levels of teaching and learning seen at the previous inspection have been effectively maintained in reading and mathematics and for pupils with special needs.
- Attainment in writing has risen for most pupils over the past four years due to improvements in teaching strategies such as 'Talk for writing'. Less progress has been made in developing strategies that help pupils understand how to improve, to give them an understanding of how to be successful and how to aspire even further in their efforts.
- Effective deployment of staff ensures that those pupils who need additional support receive it regularly, and they achieve well. Professional development, especially with staff at the partner school, is used well to extend the range of expertise across the two schools. This is shared effectively so all pupils benefit.

- The headteacher has ensured that the significant benefits of working with other schools in the Exmoor Coast Federation has been maintained and further extended so pupils have access to a well-organised and effective progression of activities.
- Relationships through the school are strong and staff show high levels of care for all pupils, enabling all to take a full part in everything the school has to offer.
- The school has enhanced the wide range of activities so that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well promoted. Assemblies are a special time where the children join together as a family. Looking after the school hens which were raised from eggs adds to the learning, including the difficult time when they were attacked by a fox'. Topics are fun the pupils said. They chatted excitedly about the recent topic about the rainforest and well remember the visit of the tall Masai warriors in their full native costume.
- Partnerships with parents are strong and none of the parents who responded to the Parent View was anything but pleased with all aspects of the school.
- **The governance of the school: is good**
 - Governors have recently attended a full range of training. Some governors are well versed in the intricacies of school data and challenge the headteacher about pupils' achievement and school performance.
 - They are fully involved in discussions about the use of the pupil premium funding and make a check on how it is used to impact on pupils' achievement.
 - Governors have high aspirations for the school. They are fully supportive of the school's commitment to the wider federation of schools, seeing the joint working as very beneficial to staff and pupils alike.
 - They are kept informed of the outcomes of performance management and endeavour to reward good teaching and effective management.
 - They carry out their responsibilities to ensure a safe and secure environment, and all safeguarding requirements are met.

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	123841
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	412606

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Rowe
Headteacher	Marcus Capel
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2008
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