

Samuel White's Infant School

Creswicke Avenue, Hanham, Bristol, BS15 3PN

Inspection dates 27–28 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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 is not consistently good over time. Recent improvements in the use of assessment and tracking have not been in place long enough to improve attainment across the school.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics. Teachers do not use the information that is available to them to plan precisely enough.
- Not enough teaching is consistently good. At times, the work pupils are asked to do does not fully match their abilities, particularly for more-able pupils.
- The pace of learning in lessons is not always brisk enough because teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what all pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils make slower progress than they should.
- Teachers' explanations are often too long and are not sufficiently clear about what pupils are expected to achieve in each lesson. When this happens, pupils do not have a good enough understanding of what they need to do to be successful.
- Not all staff are taking a full and active part in supporting senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching and to raise pupils' achievements.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has had a clear vision of what he wants the school to achieve during this year. He has been an inspiration to the staff and morale has risen, ensuring the school is a happy place for staff to work and pupils to learn.
- Senior leaders have made a good start to improving the quality of teaching.
- The transition to being a federated school has been well led through appointing very good interim leaders who have worked exceptionally closely with the new executive headteacher. Leaders are well placed to quickly improve the school to be good.
- Pupils are happy at school and feel safe. They behave very well and show a lot of respect for each other and adults.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 lessons and parts of lessons led by nine members of staff. They were accompanied by the headteacher on five of these lessons and HMI (Her Majesty's Inspector) on two lessons when monitoring this inspection on the second day.
- Meetings were held with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, representatives of the local authority and with pupils from Year 2. Inspectors also took account of the 31 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors heard pupils read in Years 2 and the work in pupils' books was analysed.
- Inspectors gathered the views of parents through informal meetings before school and from the scrutiny of the 46 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted on-line questionnaire.
- A wide range of documentation was considered including the school's analysis of pupils' attainment and progress, the school's development plan, school leaders' monitoring records, pupils' work and the records of checks made on the eligibility of staff to work with children.

Inspection team

Claire Thompson, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Matthew Cottrell	Additional inspector
Laurie Lewin	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized infant school where virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. It is organised into nine classes, three for each year group.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and supported through school action is below average. The numbers of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- The school has a below average proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium. The pupil premium is extra money given to the school by the government to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or are from forces families. The school has no children in this last group.
- The infant school is federating with the junior school on the same site in September 2013, when the headteacher of the junior school will be the executive headteacher of both schools. Each school will have a head of school who has relevant expertise in their phase. One governing body will be in place.
- This year, the school has employed an interim seconded acting headteacher and deputy headteacher whilst the consultation phase for becoming a federated school has taken place.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching and raise achievement to be at least good, sharing the good practice already in the school, to ensure that:
 - teachers always plan activities that are accurately matched to the needs of each pupil so that lessons run at a brisker pace, with staff regularly checking on how pupils are doing against clear learning objectives, and pupils fully involved and engaged
 - more-able pupils are suitably challenged to make their best progress so the school achieves higher levels
 - teachers use all the information available to them to plan precise lessons which will raise all pupils' levels of attainment more swiftly
 - the teaching of writing improves so that pupils can apply their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and they have more accurate use of grammar whilst consistently presenting their work proudly
 - all pupils are given more opportunities for independent and collaborative learning so that they have enough time to acquire and develop new skills.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, ensuring leaders and managers at all levels support the new executive headteacher and head of school by:
 - ensuring all staff are fully committed to school improvement and they take a full and active part in improving the quality of teaching and in raising pupil achievement
 - creating a strong and shared leadership team with high ambition and effective skills and knowledge to embed all recent improvements
 - improving staff knowledge and understanding of the measures used to assess attainment and progress, particularly at the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - measuring more closely the impact of all extra opportunities given to pupils who receive additional pupil premium support to evaluate how well gaps in attainment are being closed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement is not consistently good enough over time. Standards on both entering and leaving the school are strongly similar to those found nationally, but not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' progress is uneven because the quality of teaching is variable. This is because teachers do not always routinely provide work that matches pupils' differing abilities. Consequently, work is not always challenging enough and this slows progress, particularly for the most able.
- Recent school data and the analysis of books show that the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected attainment at the end of Year 2 have improved recently. There has been some confusion about levels pupils are expected to achieve by the end of each year and this has lowered expectations for what pupils can achieve. For example, the school has had previously unreliable information about the starting and ending points for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the expectations for attainment at the end of Year 1 were too low.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in all subjects at the end of Year 2, particularly writing, is too low.
- Pupils' progress in writing varies across the school. There are some very good examples. Reception children have good chances to practise their early writing skills through exciting activities inside and outside. This was seen in an outstanding outdoor lesson when children learnt the sounds of many new words and effectively extended their writing of sentences. In a Year 1 outstanding lesson, pupils edited their work independently to improve their writing, through using a wide and diverse vocabulary beyond the expectations of their age.
- Over recent times, the progress being made by pupils who are eligible for pupil premium support has risen and these pupils are now making similar rates of progress to their peers. The school has wisely appointed strong specialist staff to offer precise support to these pupils and this is having a positive impact. This has been too recent to close the gaps in attainment in English and mathematics this year and so these pupils are currently about one term behind their friends.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Whilst there is good teaching in the school, teaching requires improvement because there are too many inconsistencies in teaching methods and teachers' expectations are not always high enough. No teaching seen was inadequate.
- Teaching requires improvement when the pace of lessons is not brisk enough because pupils sit listening to teachers as a whole class for too long. Teachers often do not explain the purpose of the learning activities and little new learning takes place because pupils are not clear about what they have to do to successfully complete their work or to reach their next steps of learning.
- Too often pupils have the same tasks to do, offering limited challenge for more-able pupils.
- The teaching of writing is in need of improvement because pupils have too few opportunities to write regularly. The work seen in pupils' books shows that there are different expectations between the classes, with the best teachers demanding high standards of spelling, grammar and handwriting. Pupils' use of grammar in their writing and their application of their knowledge of letters and sounds are weak. There were examples when adults' local dialect modelled the wrong expectations for pupils, and this affected their reading and writing.
- Where teaching is most effective, pupils are able to develop new skills quickly because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do. Teachers plan work beyond the age-related levels because they know the pupils are ready to do this. In these lessons, tasks are challenging and highly effective in engaging all pupils and pupils know how well they are progressing. These teachers also use questions well to make pupils think and to build skilfully on pupils' previous knowledge in a well-structured way.

- Marking procedures have been strengthened and most teachers mark work regularly and make positive comments. Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to make sure they correct their mistakes and securely practise new skills.
- Relationships are very good and teachers manage behaviour well so that lessons proceed without interruptions.
- There are extensive opportunities to learn very well in the Reception classes, which include exciting activities inside and outside, and children really enjoy their learning. This is limited by teachers not using enough information about individual children to intervene and offer different expectations of what they do in each activity.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Typically good behaviour is a positive feature of the school. Pupils enjoy their activities, work diligently and want to achieve. They usually show good levels of concentration in lessons and work cooperatively supporting each other well. This was exemplary in the best lessons seen during the inspection. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because, on a few occasions, when pupils' work is not sufficiently well matched to their abilities or tasks are not clear, their attention wanders.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school and that incidents of bullying are rare. They feel confident that adults listen to them and deal well with bullying if it should happen. Pupils showed good awareness of different types of bullying.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and can identify any possible hazards. They have a good understanding of the dangers of the internet and how to stay safe when using different sites.
- The school has a harmonious atmosphere because the overwhelming majority of pupils are polite, courteous and enjoy the company of the adults. They behave sensibly around the school and on the playground.
- Parents support this view of the school. A Reception child's parent particularly praised the highly positive impact of the acting headteacher in ensuring how well their child was welcomed for a smooth start at the school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching is not yet good overall and pupils' achievement is too uneven. Not all staff routinely use many of the new and effective strategies to ensure good teaching and learning.
- The school recognises that training for staff and monitoring of teaching and learning have previously not been fully effective in eradicating inconsistencies. The large number of short-term headteachers has meant there has not been sufficient emphasis on how teaching impacts on pupils' progress. Currently, there are too few leaders in the school who share the strong ambition, have high enough expectations or demonstrate sufficiently developed skills to move the school forward.
- The appointment of the acting headteacher for the year until federation takes place has been a well-chosen move. He has proved to inspire everyone and has worked exceptionally successfully to 'win the hearts and minds' of the school community. This has resulted in significantly higher staff morale and positive attitudes to the changes that federation is likely to bring.
- Senior leaders have correctly identified existing strengths and areas of the school's work that require improvement. Systems for tracking pupils' achievements have been introduced and underachievement is now spotted more quickly. This has been too late to impact on how well pupils' perform in their national assessments at the end of Year 2.
- The extra pupil premium fund enhances the equality of opportunity for disadvantaged pupils and

is becoming more effective in accelerating pupil achievement. This is not yet secure enough to ensure these pupils make better progress to close the gaps in attainment.

- The curriculum provides a rich range of learning experiences for pupils, including a variety of clubs and visits. Pupils are involved in raising funds for charities and the school council help make decisions. This means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and spiritual development is provided for appropriately. The effectiveness of the curriculum is not yet fully evaluated, resulting in differences in the quality of planned activities to extend learning across all subjects and especially for more-able pupils.
 - The enthusiasm and drive of the acting headteacher have been ably supported by a temporary deputy headteacher and, together, they have successfully prepared the school for the transition to the federation. There is clear evidence that teaching is improving and the rate at which pupils make progress is increasing. The active inclusion of the new executive headteacher in all aspects of school development has been very well managed so that new leaders are well placed to make good progress urgently in the new school.
 - The local authority provides effective support for the school. This has been in the form of joint lesson observations with senior staff and has helped the school be certain that judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate.
 - Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are effective.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides good direction to the work of the school. Governors ensure all pupils are supported well and check that those benefiting from pupil premium funding make similar progress to all other pupils. Governors regularly visit the school to share good practice and to check on the impact of their decisions. Their strategic involvement has wisely culminated in agreement to become a federated school with the junior school. This will halt the patterns of short-term and erratic leadership previously experienced. Governors have made excellent appointments of temporary leaders and high quality teachers. They value and hold the headteacher to account for raising pupils' achievement and know that the school needs to do better. They ensure that the performance management of teachers has been robust and know that some teachers have not progressed to upper pay scales until their performance improved. Governors ensure that pupils' day-to-day health and safety are maintained to a good level and discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. The budget is well managed. Governors actively undertake useful and relevant training.
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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	109033
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	405207

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rhona Phelps
Headteacher	Karl Hemmings
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 February 2011
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