

Bickleigh Down Church of England Primary School

School Drive, Woolwell, Plymouth, PL6 7JW

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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:

- Although dips in attainment and progress for both English and mathematics have been arrested this year, good achievement is not yet securely established.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough. Some teachers do not check pupils' learning and understanding sufficiently throughout lessons.
- In some lessons time is not used effectively and tasks are not challenging enough so pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Boys do not make as much progress as they could in reading and writing because sometimes the resources used do not appeal to them.
- Pupils do not yet engage enough with teachers' marking to help them to improve their work.
- Middle leaders do not have the skills they need to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
- The best teaching practice is not used enough to develop teachers and teaching assistants who are not yet consistently good.

The school has the following strengths:

- The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have taken a strong lead in driving forward improvement since January. As a result, achievement has risen and there have been improvements in the quality of teaching. The new headteacher is already securing a very good relationship with senior leaders.
- The governing body is now far more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is strongly challenging it to improve.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and underpins pupils' good behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and attend very regularly. They get on very well together.
- Learning is well planned and interesting and supported very well by after-school activities, visits and visitors.
- The school has strengths in sport and music, enhanced by their partnerships with other local schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 21 lessons and observed 15 teachers. They also talked to pupils about their work and heard pupils read, including individual pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including 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 governing body meetings.
- The inspectors looked at samples of pupils’ work across a range of subjects and ages.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, school staff and groups of pupils. Individual pupils were spoken to in lessons and around the school. A meeting took place with the school adviser from the local authority.
- Questionnaires from 21 members of staff were analysed. The inspectors took account of the views expressed by parents and carers in 49 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and comments during informal meetings with parents and carers before school.

Inspection team

Anna Sketchley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Roisin Chambers

Additional Inspector

Martin Greenwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bickleigh Down is a larger than average-sized primary school and all pupils are taught in single-aged classes. Pupils attend from the local area.
- There are no disabled pupils in the school at the present time.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion of those at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children of service families) is below average. In this school it applies to pupils eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed services.
- There are a small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, none of whom are in the early stages of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and English.
- The school has been led and managed by an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher since January 2013. A new headteacher has now been appointed and took up his position on 1 June.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that teachers have the skills needed to enable them to check pupils' learning and understanding throughout the lesson
 - making sure teachers' marking makes it clear how pupils can improve their work, is linked to their individual targets and that pupils have time to respond to teachers' comments
 - ensuring that in each lesson there is a better balance between times when teachers talk and when pupils are working by themselves on tasks
 - developing the skills of teachers and teaching assistants by sharing the best expertise that exists in the school.
- Ensure that the recent rise in attainment and progress in English and mathematics is secure by:
 - ensuring that during group reading and writing times pupils are consistently given challenging and purposeful tasks, especially the more able, so that they make the best possible progress in the time available
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across other areas of learning
 - providing more appropriate texts to engage boys in the reading and writing process, especially non-fiction books
 - developing a more consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics throughout the school, particularly for methods of calculation.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the Reception class with the levels of knowledge and skills expected for their age. Most children meet the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year.
- After a decline over the last three years, achievement is beginning to rise again throughout the school. This year progress is good and attainment in Year 6 is above average. Achievement in reading is stronger than in writing because the school has developed a good culture for reading and is beginning to provide a wider selection of books, especially to interest boys.
- Letters and sounds are taught well to younger pupils, helping them to segment words and develop their reading skills. They can describe the strategies they use to attack unfamiliar words.
- By Year 6 most pupils read fluently with expression and can discuss books and authors they enjoy.
- Achievement in writing and mathematics has improved considerably this year due to a more robust use of data about pupils' individual progress and the strong actions taken to improve the quality of teaching.
- Strategies such as reading and writing groups are becoming more effective. These are particularly successful when teachers and teaching assistants are guiding the learning of small groups of pupils and asking challenging questions. However, there are too many occasions when the pupils working independently during group time, especially the more able, are not challenged sufficiently by purposeful tasks so do not make rapid enough progress during the lesson.
- The school has worked hard at improving pupils' mental ability in mathematics while giving them strategies for calculating number. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 2 lesson when pupils were challenged to double and halve numbers. They used their good mental skills, and the ability to partition numbers, to double 62 by separating it into 50 and 12. They quickly came to the answer of 124.
- The school recognises the need to secure this good practice in all lessons, ensuring a more consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics, especially in the teaching of calculation, so that all pupils will continue to make good progress.
- Pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, and those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language make similar progress to that of all other pupils because tasks are accurately matched to their needs. Teachers and teaching assistants prompt and challenge pupils without over-supporting them so they achieve well in lessons. Interventions put into place for pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, such as small-group work in learning key skills for reading and writing, are very effectively enhancing the provision and outcomes. The attainment of these pupils is two terms ahead of the national average for their age and their progress is more than the two levels expected between Years 2 and 6. Consequently, the gap between their achievement and the attainment of all other pupils has closed.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not been good enough and remains inconsistent, although much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good and a small percentage of lessons were outstanding. No teaching was inadequate. This recent improvement is beginning to lead to improved progress and higher attainment.
- Teachers often begin lessons really well with interesting and stimulating ideas that immediately engage pupils in meeting the objective for the lesson.
- However, during these introductions, teachers sometimes dominate the lesson by talking for too long. This slows the pace of learning and pupils have too little time to work by themselves on tasks. Teachers miss the opportunity to check on and assess pupils' learning and understanding at various points throughout the lesson.

- Where lessons are good or outstanding teachers have high expectations of both learning and behaviour, questioning is demanding and the lesson is planned in bite-sized pieces of learning that successfully build pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils' thinking is challenged and learning accelerates. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 6 literacy lesson when pupils were learning how to recognise and use bias in an argument. Pupils moved rapidly from recognising exciting and biased vocabulary in a short video clip, to writing their own list of words and then working in pairs on sentences and finally writing their own paragraphs.
- The quality of marking is not of a consistently high standard and sometimes the next steps in learning are not clearly enough articulated for pupils or closely enough linked to their targets for improvement. Pupils' are given too little time to respond to teachers' comments in their marking.
- When they are used well, teaching strategies that encourage pupils to discuss their work in small groups or pairs make a significant contribution to their very good social development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is high. Mutual respect, friendliness and a very caring attitude are major characteristics of pupils' good behaviour. In the words of one pupil, 'I'm glad I came to this school because I feel I belong. We treat each other the way we would like to be treated.'
- Pupils are polite and well mannered and behaviour is at least good and sometimes exemplary both in lessons and around the school.
- Very good relationships exist between pupils and adults so pupils want to do their best.
- Records over time show that incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are rare. There have been an extremely small number of exclusions since the last inspection.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They know who to go to if they have a problem and are confident that an adult will help them.
- A very small minority of parents and carers were concerned about bullying incidents that they felt had not been dealt with quickly enough. However, others felt that the school does listen and deal with things rapidly so that any problems stop immediately. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and no aggressive behaviour was seen during the inspection. Recent school records show carefully recorded reports of a very small minority of incidents. Issues had been quickly dealt with and parents and carers had been fully involved.
- Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of the different types of bullying especially in relation to the internet and mobile phones because the school has alerted them to these dangers.
- Many pupils have responsibilities in school as play buddies, librarians, assembly monitors, sports leaders and as members of the school council. These make a major contribution to the development of their very good social skills.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Insufficient monitoring in the past of key areas of the school's work resulted in a decline in standards since the last inspection. National test results showed a further dip in achievement last year. In January the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher addressed the issue immediately. They enlisted the help of the local authority and have arrested the decline in standards and there has been rapid improvement. Their actions have been fully supported by staff and governors.
- There is now a rigorous monitoring programme. This is regularly telling the school how well pupils are learning and what needs to be done next to ensure that standards continue to rise.
- Working with a school adviser, a detailed and correctly prioritised action plan has been drawn up that is successfully guiding developments, especially improvements to the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated but there remains the need to use existing expertise to ensure that teaching moves from requiring improvement to being consistently good or outstanding.

- The process for managing teachers' performance has improved is now robust and carefully aligned to the national teaching standards. It clearly identifies the skills that are still required to improve the quality of teaching further. Teachers understand that they do not move up the salary scale unless pupils' progress is at least good from their starting points.
- Since the new headteacher joined the school the senior leadership team has become even stronger. Together, they demonstrate the drive and ambition necessary to sustain recent improvement and a good capacity to develop further.
- The roles of middle managers are not clearly enough defined and some do not have the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
- A good structure is in place for the planning of topics and it is carefully monitored to ensure the correct balance and coverage of different subjects. However, there is room for more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across other areas of learning. Topics are enriched by a wide range of interesting clubs, visits and visitors such as Indian Dancers, artists and speakers. Opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument and to take part in a variety of sporting activities are strengths of the school.
- Pupils benefit considerably from the school's partnerships with external agencies, other schools and the immediate community, especially the local church. Links with a school in Burma and raising money for various charities contribute significantly to the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Equal opportunities for different groups of pupils are promoted well and the school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. The governing body and the school staff ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously and all requirements are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Recently governors have become considerably more aware of the strengths and weakness of the school. They have more fully realised their responsibilities and acted quickly to address weaknesses in governance. Some have undertaken training in order to better understand school performance data and this is enabling them to ask challenging questions about pupils' progress in relation to national standards. Governors have also addressed previous weaknesses in the objectives set when managing the performance of the headteacher and have received detailed information about teachers' performance and salary progression related to good teaching. Governors are well informed about the use of the pupil premium funding and its impact on the progress of eligible pupils.

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	113493
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	412954

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	379
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Cannon
Headteacher	Martin Hancock
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 June 2010
Telephone number	01752 301837
Fax number	01752 301838
Email address	admin@bickleighdown.devon.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

