

Symondsbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Symondsbury, Bridport, Dorset DT6 6HD

Inspection dates 16–17 July 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' progress has risen sharply this year and their attainment in English and mathematics at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 is above average. The achievement of all groups is good because the school meets the learning needs of almost all pupils.
- Teaching is good; it is energetic and vital. Teachers set high expectations and encourage pupils to work at a good pace to meet the lesson aims. Pupils are receptive, keen to learn and enjoy lessons, saying teachers make them great fun.
- Behaviour is good. Positive relationships are typical and the school is generally calm and orderly. Bullying is very unusual and well dealt with should it occur. Pupils have a good grasp of how to stay safe.
- The headteacher has introduced many changes and his drive and optimism have raised expectations for the school. The impact of recent reforms is rapidly becoming evident in improved assessment methods and better teaching. These developments have helped to raise achievement across the school.
- The governing body is very well informed about all aspects of the school, it strongly supports improvements and members provide robust challenges.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all lessons provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils and there is not enough learning out-of-doors.
- Leadership and management responsibilities are not shared sufficiently among the staff.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited nine lessons taught by six teachers and undertook four joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, teachers, the headteacher, representatives of the governing body and a local authority officer.
- The inspector examined numerous school documents including policies, assessment information, planning documents and records of all kinds.
- The views of 22 parents were analysed through the Parent View website.

Inspection team

John Carnaghan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-size primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is well below the national average. The school has no children in the care of the local authority or pupils from service families.
- Most pupils are White British. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is a little above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is approximately double the national average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils (lessons that take place regularly away from school).
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher took up his post at the school in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by improving the standard of teaching through:
 - planning lessons that consistently challenge more able pupils so that they reach the highest possible levels of attainment
 - ensuring children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a wider range of activities and experiences by developing their learning out-of-doors.
- Improve leadership and management to:
 - enable all staff to participate more fully in running the school
 - broaden pupils' horizons by planning the school's subjects and activities to provide pupils with a wider variety of experiences that include more educational visits.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Reception class with expected levels of attainment. They receive a good start to their education in a caring environment and develop good learning routines such as sharing, taking turns, getting along well with their friends and working effectively both together and independently. Early reading skills are well developed and by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage most children can read simple sentences. They move into Year 1 well prepared for the National Curriculum.
- Improvements in teaching have led to accelerated learning during this academic year. Good teaching across the school promotes good progress. A perceptive use of assessment information ensures that virtually all groups of pupils have the correct degree of support and challenge in their lessons, with the exception of a few most able pupils who are sometimes insufficiently stretched. Overall the school provides equality of opportunity and ensures there is no discrimination.
- Attainment across the school has risen sharply from its previously average levels. However, attainment, while improving, has no examples of pupils reaching the highest levels. At the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment in English and mathematics is above average. This represents good achievement for all groups of pupils.
- Good learning is typical. This is because lessons are fun and engaging. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 in a good English lesson benefited from a quick dash across the school field to clear their minds between finishing their preparations and the writing of a story. They quickly settled back in the classroom. The teacher and pupils showed a great sense of urgency to get on and pupils were soon producing interesting, high quality introductory paragraphs.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and their activities are planned with great care. They know individual pupils' likes and needs very well, enabling them to adjust their activities to provide the best learning opportunities. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well, just like their peers.
- Pupils who receive additional pupil premium funding benefit from well-tailored support. Regular checks made by the school enable constant adjustments to support to be made. There have been no significant gaps in attainment in English and mathematics measured in national assessments between this group and their peers during the last two years. Their progress has also been similar to all other groups in the school.
- Pupils' reading is well promoted and most are confident readers. This is because there are numerous opportunities for reading throughout the school day and because those pupils who face reading difficulties receive quick and effective support from specialist staff.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good and lessons have shared qualities that promote good learning across the school, particularly in Years 1 to 6. Teachers are energetic and set an urgent pace; pupils are receptive and obedient. They demonstrate a love of learning that is encouraged because so many lessons are enjoyable. Teachers generally set high expectations that pupils strive to meet.
- Most lessons offer varied, engaging activities that help to maintain interest. The needs of most pupils are met because work is adapted to challenge most abilities, although sometimes the most able are not kept at full stretch.
- The work of teaching assistants is well planned so that they are on hand to help those who most need it. They are well trained, get on very well with pupils and provide well-judged assistance that often proves successful in accelerating the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Classroom relationships are very positive. Pupils listen well and usually concentrate fiercely on the task at hand. The Early Years Foundation Stage promotes strong independence and the

benefits of working together and pupils maintain these valuable habits right across the school.

- An excellent Years 5 and 6 English lesson, where pupils were writing a biography of Neil Armstrong, typified many of teaching's strengths. Brief, varied introductory activities clarified for pupils what was expected and how to go about it. They started writing with energy and concentration; planned interruptions by the teacher introduced other factors and advice so pupils were all empowered to write clearly expressed, interesting opening paragraphs. They made outstanding progress in developing their writing skills.
- A whole-school emphasis on marking this year has ensured consistently helpful feedback across the school. There are clear, regularly updated targets for all and pupils say they value the helpful advice that teachers offer through their comments.
- Occasionally, teaching is less effective. This happens where planning does not focus enough on promoting learning, especially for the most able. The school is aware that the rather plain outdoor spaces in the Reception area do not encourage learning out-of-doors well enough and plans are underway to develop a much more stimulating zone for children to work and play.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Good behaviour is the norm in all aspects of school life, making Symondsbury Primary a particularly harmonious environment in which to work and play.
- Pupils display very positive attitudes to learning. They take their studies seriously and are good listeners. Teachers' courtesy, empathy and love of fun promote a positive but purposeful atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils respond in kind, being friendly and polite to all staff as a matter of course.
- Behaviour at playtimes and when moving around the building is orderly and sensible. For example, pupils 'froze' at the sound of the hand bell ten minutes before the end of break and did as staff requested by moving with minimal fuss into the shade to cool off at the end of a very hot lunchtime.
- Positive relationships encourage good progress. Pupils work very well in pairs and groups to support one another's learning. Those individuals or small groups who receive extra help show appreciation of the adults who work so closely with them.
- The school provides clear guidance to pupils about how to stay safe. They are well briefed on the potential dangers of the internet and how cyber-bullying can be a difficult issue. Pupils demonstrate a good grasp of keeping safe in their everyday lives, whether avoiding fire or being safe on the narrow local country lanes.
- Pupils report that bullying is most unusual and show confidence in their teachers to nip any potential issues in the bud. The school works hard to promote better attendance but term-time holidays, although not approved, keep absence figures at the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- After a period of uncertain leadership, the appointment of a new headteacher who is ambitious for the school has galvanised staff and governors to perform at a higher level. Recent reforms that have improved teaching and assessment have begun to have a marked impact on pupils' progress. As a result, achievement has risen sharply this year.
- The school runs a comprehensive programme of checks to ensure what it provides is of high quality. Teaching and marking have improved recently because teachers know what is expected and are empowered to improve their practice. Regular, detailed assessments are recorded and analysed so the progress of each pupil is closely tracked. This data are used well to initiate extra help for pupils whose progress is not fast enough and to hold individual teachers to account for the achievement of each pupil in their class.
- The school development plan sets high expectations for the school and provides a relevant, well-considered template for improvement. The local authority has stepped in and provides valuable

support to the school in its quest for improvement. The school has capacity for continuing improvement in the future.

- Most of the reforms, although supported by all staff, have been managed exclusively by the headteacher and there is an understanding that leadership and management responsibilities are to be shared more widely in the future.
- The subjects and topics taught meet requirements. Their planning promotes links between subjects that are used to promote English, mathematics and other skills, while studying other topics, such as the Second World War. There are growing opportunities to develop writing skills more widely, but the school accepts that it can do more and has plans to increase the frequency of opportunities for pupils to do extended writing in a number of subjects.
- The mixture of subjects and topics is under review so that it offers more opportunities to use local and other environments to promote learning. More educational visits are necessary and planned. The school is developing links with a school near Srebrenica in Bosnia.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual, social and moral understanding. Strong links to the adjacent church, including attending assemblies run by the vicar, promote spiritual understanding. All pupils complete a 'reflection diary' that is linked to themes covered in assemblies. The UNESCO 'Rights Respecting Schools' initiative is being adopted and provides good opportunities for pupils to think about others with fewer advantages in life and to consider the moral issues surrounding poverty. Many express their concerns by organising and contributing to charitable fund raising.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - the governing body has very strong links with staff and members visit lessons regularly. This gives them a good grasp of teaching standards and an understanding of the way teachers' performance management is linked to pay progression
 - the governing body has developed a thorough understanding of assessment information and how the school's results compare with national averages
 - governors receive regular reports on the allocation of pupil premium funds and routinely review whether this provides value for money. This means that there are no significant gaps in attainment or progress between the group who receives this resource and other pupils
 - members of the governing body regularly check up on what they should know and, as a result, undertake relevant training to develop the required skills
 - safeguarding checks by governors are rigorous, this helps ensure that the school's procedures in this respect are thorough.

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	113815
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	412633

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	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Earwicker
Headteacher	Colin Haley
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 December 2009
Telephone number	01308 423502
Fax number	01308 421164
Email address	office@symondsbury.dorset.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

