

Bow Community Primary School

Station Road, Bow, Crediton, EX17 6HU

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection: This inspection:	Satisfactory Good	3 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.

- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership and management and has created a happy and harmonious school, with an ambitious vision which is shared by staff and governors.
- The achievement of pupils is good and has improved greatly in the last two years, especially in reading and mathematics. By the end of their time at school pupils attain standards similar to the national average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those supported by pupil premium funding achieve well because their needs are carefully identified and appropriate help provided.
- Strong action has been taken to improve the quality of teaching which is now good overall, with examples of some outstanding teaching that motivates and inspires pupils.
- The curriculum is lively and interesting and makes excellent use of the school's beautiful outdoor environment to enhance learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum and well-planned extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are proud of their school and show respect and courtesy towards each other and staff. Pupils form good relationships with others and consequently feel safe and happy at school. This is confirmed by the views of parents and carers.
- The governing body has an accurate view of the school and successfully provides valuable support for the headteacher and staff, while at the same time monitoring the work of the school and challenging staff to do even better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Standards of attainment are not outstanding, despite more rapid progress being made by pupils in the last two years.
- Although the quality of teaching has improved not enough is yet of the quality necessary to lead to pupils making outstanding achievement.
- Even though attainment in writing has improved, is not as high as it is in reading and mathematics, particularly for the more-able younger pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons or parts of lessons, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher. She also paid brief visits to several groups of pupils to observe them learning letters and the sounds they make.
- The inspector listened to pupils read from Years 1, 2 and 6.
- She spoke to pupils during playtime and lunchtime, and more formally during a meeting with representatives from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- The inspector met with two members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Along with the headteacher and senior teacher, she looked at pupils' work in their books as well as during their lessons.
- The inspector met regularly with the headteacher and with the senior teacher to discuss a range of the school's work and activities.
- Account was taken of 50 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector spoke to several parents and carers and received three letters from parents and carers. She took account also of nine responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A wide range of school documentation was examined. This included statutory policies and those relating to safeguarding, evidence of the school's own monitoring records and self-evaluation and also school improvement planning.

Inspection team

Anne Newall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a smaller than average primary school in a rural village location.
- There is one class in the Early Years Foundation Stage and three other classes for Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6.
- Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage and the proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language are much lower than found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for children looked after by the local authority, children with a parent or carer in the armed forces and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- There is a lower than average proportion of pupils supported with school action, while the proportion supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and English.
- Since the last inspection there has been considerable staff turnover. Each of the four classes has a new teacher. Two of the class teachers joined the school during the last academic year and two joined at the beginning of September 2013.
- There is a new Chair of the Governing Body.
- The headteacher joined the school shortly before the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment overall and especially in writing, by:
 - using the expertise within school as well as beyond to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching
 - giving pupils more opportunities within lessons to make the link between spoken sounds and their written shape so that more pupils, especially the more able, reach the higher levels in writing by the end Key Stage 1
 - give younger pupils more opportunities to broaden their vocabulary.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good overall, but there is still some catching up to do in some year groups to make up for previous underachievement, which was the legacy of some weak teaching in the past.
- The abilities of the small number of children who enter the Early Years Foundation Stage each year vary widely, although their skill levels, especially regarding speaking and listening, are often lower than expected for their age. Children make good progress because good teaching and a wide range of well-planned activities ensure they enjoy learning. Adults provide a caring and nurturing environment in which the children feel safe. By the time they enter Year 1 they are well prepared to continue learning although their vocabulary is still fairly limited. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the government's phonics screening check is similar to the national figure.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and reach standards similar to the national average in reading and mathematics, but fewer pupils reach the higher levels in writing. Pupils are taught letters and their sounds which help their reading, but the link between spoken and written sounds is not reinforced sufficiently to help develop pupils' writing skills.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 have made good and sometimes outstanding progress in the past two years, following a long period in which their progress in this key stage was slow. This progress raised attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2012 with a further increase in 2013. Standards are now similar to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, ensuring that pupils are prepared for the next phase of their education.
- The school promotes and checks that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed and there is no discrimination. Different groups, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, and also the very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds, make similarly good progress to their classmates. This is because of the good quality of adult support and learning activities which are carefully matched to pupils' needs.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding to provide additional teaching for pupils eligible for this extra support and to ensure they have access to extra-curricular activities. The very small number of pupils supported by the pupil premium make similar progress to their peers and reach at least similar standards to their classmates in English and mathematics.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school, and following the introduction of 'book bingo' to ensure they read from a wide genre of texts, older pupils are already buzzing with excitement about the book they are going to choose after they finish the current one. Pupils talked enthusiastically about a range of authors and why they like or dislike their books.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers believe their children are taught well and are making good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some is outstanding, and this is resulting in good or better progress being made by pupils throughout the school. This follows a long period when unavoidable staff absence and weak teaching in some year groups led to very little progress being made by a large proportion of pupils. Not enough teaching is yet outstanding to lead to consistently outstanding achievement by pupils in all year groups, and the school does not yet make full use of the expertise within school or beyond to raise the quality of teaching to outstanding overall.
- Teaching is presently characterised by high expectations, good pace and a positive learning attitude among pupils. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 used metaphor and simile to improve their written work on biographies of famous people, before transferring these skills onto their biography of a famous Tudor character.

- Pupils are given imaginative opportunities to learn, for example in Years 1 and 2 they used their senses to touch, taste, smell and look at a range of fruits and vegetables including ginger, beetroot and broccoli. This prompted great excitement and some good writing, but some pupils were hampered in producing good quality writing as they are not securely linking sounds with written letters.
- Work is usually pitched at the right level to challenge pupils and teachers ensure that pupils who require additional support receive it. For some of the younger pupils, not enough opportunity is taken to develop their vocabulary to improve their writing and achieve higher standards.
- Teachers monitor their pupils during lessons to check for understanding and move them on to independent work as soon as they are ready. Teaching assistants skilfully help pupils to make good progress.
- Good use is made of the outdoors, and pupils in Years 3 and 4 thoroughly enjoyed their mini-beast hunt in the forest area and the school field, comparing what they found in the different habitats. They used magnifying glasses to identify the features of their discoveries, prompting great excitement: 'This must be a millipede; it's got thousands of legs!'
- A key factor in raising attainment has been the huge improvement in the quality of marking. Teachers ensure they give praise for targets which have been achieved, but also provide pupils with advice on how to improve. Evidence from pupils' books confirms that they respond well to their teachers' comments and pupils say they enjoy reading the comments. The response of pupils is used by teachers to plan the next steps in learning. All the pupils spoken to said they understand their targets.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are helped to settle into school life by staff who are sensitive to their needs. For example, in a circle time activity they were encouraged to think about feelings by looking at photographs of facial expressions, and to tell about a time when they felt happy or sad. Aware that not all children might want to speak up, the adults gently encouraged the children to join in the conversation without pressurising them to do so.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Relationships between pupils and adults are good, and as a result pupils usually want to please their teachers.
- Pupils' behaviour is typically good and they enjoy learning. In a minority of cases, some pupils do not show a positive attitude to learning or cooperative skills when working with a partner. Staff are alert to this, and sensitively encourage pupils to be thoughtful and to focus upon their work.
- Behaviour observed in less structured situations, for example in the playground, was consistently good. Pupils of all ages played well together, showing consideration for one another, and using the wide range of equipment and the new fitness trail safely.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school, and are confident that the staff care for them. They say bullying does not happen, but if it did they are sure it would be dealt with immediately. The school's records indicate this is the case. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, and know how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet.
- Pupils move around the school safely, and younger pupils are encouraged to do so by older pupils who act as door monitors. The school council has sought the views of all pupils on how to improve the school. Younger pupils, however, have fewer opportunities to hold positions of responsibility within their classes.
- The above average attendance of pupils reflects their enjoyment of school. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is uncompromising in her determination to ensure the highest quality teaching

and learning for pupils. She is supported by a knowledgeable governing body. Together with the senior teacher, who has been with the school for nearly a year, they have accurately evaluated the school and taken concerted action to address the weaknesses. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved.

- There have also been a number of material changes to the accommodation and resources for the benefit of pupils and staff.
- The improvements in pupils' progress confirm that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- The headteacher and governing body have taken strong and decisive action in the past two years, but have managed to maintain the confidence of parents and carers. For example, one parent or carer said, 'I was worried about all the changes, but the new teachers are lovely and very approachable.' Other parents and carers wrote of the 'safe, secure and happy environment' and of the 'dedication and enthusiasm of staff which makes the learning journey interesting, enjoyable and achievable'.
- The school is involved in a wide range of partnerships for the benefit of pupils, including with local schools and churches. Many community groups use the school's facilities, such as the hall and the swimming pool, which enhances its reputation in the community.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is promoted through a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities including visitors from other countries and opportunities for pupils to participate in residential visits and learn new skills such as surfing or fencing.
- Although pupils already have numerous opportunities to participate in a wide range of sports, the school plans to use the additional physical education funding provided by the government to train teachers in coaching skills, for swimming and tag rugby for example, to increase opportunities for pupils throughout the school. The school has not yet received its funding.
- The local authority provides valuable and effective support, and has a good understanding of the school's circumstances and recent improvements to its overall effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has provided effective support for the headteacher during recent difficult times. Governors are fully committed to the vision and ethos of the school and are increasingly involved in monitoring and evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. They actively seek the views of parents and carers through, for example, the school's 'Parent Panel'. Their regular involvement in the day-to-day activities of the school means they have a good understanding of the school's circumstances. Governors have undertaken training to enhance their skills and consequently they are better able to ask questions about pupil progress information and how the school is tackling any areas of relatively slower progress. They are aware of how the pupil premium funding is spent and check on its impact on the achievement of different groups of pupils. Governors are involved in the performance management of staff, including the headteacher. They hold the headteacher to account for the quality of teaching, and have recently reviewed the pay policy, linked to teacher appraisal and the national standards for teachers. As yet, they have not needed to make pay decisions because the majority of teachers are new to the school. Statutory duties are carried out efficiently, including the school's safeguarding arrangements and financial requirements.

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	113060
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	426740

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Downs
Headteacher	Lesley Hodgson
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 February 2012
Telephone number	01363 82319
Email address	admin@bowcps.devon.sch.uk

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