

Ruishton Church of England Primary School

Newlands Road, Ruishton, Taunton, Somerset, TA3 5JZ

Inspection dates 5–6 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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’ achievement in a range of subjects is strong. In reading and writing it is well above average, and the attainment and progress of pupils leaving Year 6 in 2013 exceeded all key national benchmarks in these aspects.
- Pupils read widely and write fluently, and their achievements in music and physical education (PE) are notable strengths. All groups of pupils, including those in receipt of additional government funding and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, achieve equally well.
- Teaching is good throughout Years 1 to 6, ensuring that pupils continually make good progress. Teachers know their pupils well and successfully adapt work to meet their individual needs. They have high expectations of pupils and set demanding tasks.
- Pupils behave very well in and out of lessons and say there is little bullying, any that occurs being dealt with effectively. Pupils are aware of the dangers of bullying, especially through electronic media, and of how to avoid it.
- Pupils’ formerly below average attendance has been successfully improved through action taken by the school and is now above average.
- Reinvigorated leadership and management have led to an accurate analysis of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and an appropriately strong focus on improving teaching. Teachers’ performance is managed effectively and pupils’ progress is monitored well, so that any slow progress is quickly identified and rectified.
- The governing body is effective in monitoring the school’s work and challenging underperformance. Parents rightly hold the school in high regard.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The achievement of some children in Reception is less good than in other years because, temporarily, the class is too large and some staff lack training in aspects of the recently revised curriculum for these children.
- Achievement in mathematics, while good, is not as strong as in reading and writing as there are too few opportunities for pupils to solve problems and use their mathematical knowledge in a range of other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons taught by five teachers. He made briefer observations of groups of pupils learning letters and their sounds (phonics). He reviewed documents, including those relating to pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and safeguarding. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and with members of the governing body, and a telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. Many of these inspection activities were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The views of 36 parents who submitted them on the Parent View website, and of staff who completed a questionnaire, were analysed and taken into account.

Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school and serves a village near Taunton. The number of pupils on the school roll has increased by approximately 15% since the last inspection in 2011. This includes a number of pupils who joined the school unexpectedly in September 2013.
- The number of pupils supported through school action is above average, while the proportion who are supported through school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs is below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of families in the armed services.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher took up his post in September 2012 and a new deputy headteacher was appointed shortly afterwards.
- The school shares its site with a privately-run pre-school which is not run by the governing body and was not inspected on this occasion.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' already good achievement in mathematics, so that it matches the excellence found in reading and writing, by increasing the range of opportunities for pupils to solve problems and apply their mathematical knowledge across a wide range of subjects.
- Improve children's achievement in the Reception year by:
 - ensuring that all relevant staff have been fully trained in the requirements of the current early years curriculum and its assessment
 - urgently deploying new funding received for the purpose so that staff can focus their attention fully on meeting individual children's needs.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' attainment in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has improved steadily over the last three years. In 2013, both attainment and progress in reading and writing were well above national averages. The proportion making more progress than was expected of them was especially impressive. The school's own records show that all pupils make equally good progress in reading and writing in every year, for example the proportion reading well in the check at the end of Year 1 was above average in both 2012 and 2013.
- Pupils in receipt of the pupil premium achieve at the same levels as all other pupils. Data shows that they have made as good, and sometimes better, progress as other pupils over several years, especially in reading and writing. Pupils who are disabled or with special educational needs also make good progress, often due to the extra help they receive as individuals or when working in small groups.
- From the start of Reception, pupils quickly learn to read and by Years 5 and 6 they read widely, both fiction and non-fiction works. A Year 6 pupil explained that he had enjoyed the *Percy Jackson* series of novels by Rick Riordan, which had led to his independent internet research on Ancient Greek gods and mythology, purely for his own interest.
- Pupils rapidly develop their skills of presentation and handwriting so that by Year 3 many can write fluently and at length. In Years 5 and 6 pupils wrote poems for Remembrance Day. Their understanding of the history of the First World War was impressive and enabled them to write sensitive, moving pieces. This exemplified the school's very good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and attain standards that are a little above average. School leaders have recognised that pupils have too few opportunities to solve problems and apply mathematics to other areas of the curriculum, and are in the process of rectifying this.
- Pupils make very good progress in other subjects including music and physical education (PE). In Years 1 and 2, pupils selected percussion instruments and made up their own piece of music to represent the sounds of a firework display. This was an enjoyable, if noisy, activity in which every pupil was able to contribute and succeed.
- In the Reception Year, pupils make good progress in some areas of the curriculum, including literacy, and in their creative and physical development. However, the large size of the class, which also includes some Year 1 pupils, limits opportunities for their social and emotional development so their learning skills develop more slowly than they might.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now routinely good, with some that is outstanding. Pupils' work and the school's own records show that there is consistency over time which enables pupils to make steadily good progress. This is especially true of the teaching of reading and writing.
- In Years 1 to 6 teachers use assessment well to plan work that meets pupils' individual needs. In Reception, staff's understanding of some of the assessments is more limited, so their planning is sometimes less effective. However, these staff have a good understanding of how to teach children the letters and their sounds so their progress in learning to read is good.
- The teaching of handwriting and presentation of work is very effective and is an example of how teachers demonstrate their high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is also reflected in the good pace of most lessons. In Years 5 and 6, pupils were asked to think of and spell words containing the letter combination 'ust'. They quickly came up with a wide range of good examples such as 'adjustment'.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is used well to teach subjects such as French, music and PE. Resources are also used effectively, for example in religious education in Years 1 and 2 where

the Diwali festival was explained in a video clip by a child of primary school age. This helped to develop pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding.

- Work is marked in a helpful manner that enables pupils to improve it. One pupil said, 'We're allowed to make mistakes and learn from them.' Pupils also enjoy, and learn from, assessing their own and each other's work. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have a good understanding of how their attainment relates to national standards. 'I'm at Level 4b now, so I should be able to reach Level 5c by next summer,' said a Year 6 pupil about her writing.
- Teaching assistants are used well to help pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. Their individual skills are also used effectively; for example, a mathematics graduate teaches Year 6 pupils aiming to attain the highest available level in the national tests in the subject. Those working with Reception children have received insufficient training in what is expected of them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. In some lessons, due to the large classes and difficulties in moving around the classroom, noise levels can be high. However, this is almost always due to enthusiasm for the task, rather than misbehaviour.
- Pupils say there is very little bullying and that they always feel safe at school. Parents agree, and say that any bullying which occurs is handled well. The school's records confirm that almost all misbehaviour is minor or has an emotional or medical cause. A member of staff, at the school for more than 10 years, could not recall any pupil being excluded. These points demonstrate the school's success in fostering good relationships between pupils.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe and healthy. They are very knowledgeable about the dangers of electronic bullying and other inappropriate use of the internet. They are taught to play safely, although in Reception outdoor play is occasionally inappropriately robust.
- As pupils are mainly of White British ethnicity, school leaders ensure that pupils are taught about the diverse cultures present in British society, and about the importance of tolerance and the dangers of discrimination. This, together with the equally good achievement of all pupils, demonstrates their promotion of equality of opportunity.
- In 2011–12, attendance was below average. School leaders strengthened the policy for authorising holidays in school time and took other measures in partnership with parents, which led to absence being halved in 2012–13. Persistent absence only occurs for medical reasons. Pupils are punctual to school and to their lessons.

The leadership and management are good

- The recently appointed headteacher and other senior leaders have successfully rectified almost all of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection by improving teaching quality through effective training and management of teachers' performance. They have also identified and dealt with other weaknesses, such as below average attendance.
- Data is used well to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of pupils, and to ensure that any slow progress is rectified. Data is also used effectively to ensure that the governing body is well informed about the impact of its decisions on pupils' achievements.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities, for example much recent work has been based around a visit to the Jurassic Coast, where fossils were studied. Pupils enjoy the wide range of sports on offer and the school has good plans to use the additional funding for sport and PE when it is received. These include enhancement of the range of opportunities to participate in sport, and the purchase of resources to promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupil premium funding has been used imaginatively and successfully. As few of these pupils require additional help with reading and writing, investment has rightly been made in developing

their social and emotional skills, for example through education outdoors (Forest School). This initiative has been evaluated as a success and has been extended to include a wider range of pupils.

- The new leadership team and the governing body have developed a positive ethos for the school, which is evident in the work of staff and pupils at all levels. This is strongly faith based, but is not exclusively Christian. As a result, pupils demonstrate a remarkably sophisticated understanding of philosophical and ethical issues.
- Parents are rightly supportive of the school. All say their children are happy and safe at school, and almost all would recommend it to other parents. Staff also are very satisfied with all aspects of the school.
- An unexpected influx of pupils in September 2013 has led to increases in the size of classes. In most cases this has not led to any significant impact on pupils' achievement; but, in the Reception class, which also includes Year 1 pupils, there are currently too few staff to ensure that all children have the necessary range of experiences or individual attention needed to rapidly develop their learning skills. Fortunately, the local authority has made extra resources available in a timely fashion and governors and senior leaders are now rightly considering how these might best be used. Inspection evidence shows that the provision of improved staffing ratios in the Reception class must be an urgent priority when making these decisions.
- In other respects, the impact of support from the local authority has been mixed. The headteacher was given useful support in his new role. As a school assessed as satisfactory by Ofsted, the progress being made was monitored and reports were made available, but little help was given to the school to draw up an action plan based on these reports, or to monitor its own progress. The authority's decision to significantly reduce the support available to teachers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has left staff unsure of where such support might be obtained. The school is working with others locally to address this need but a number of staff lack up-to-date training on recent changes as a result, and this has had a direct impact on children's progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. It has made a good contribution to the improvements made since the last inspection. Governors have a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving and of teaching quality, and of staff responsibilities and how these link to their pay. They monitor the use of pupil premium funding and are knowledgeable about its impact on pupils' progress. Two parent governor vacancies have been well advertised, leading to three nominations and an election. Parents' views are sought and are well understood, partly explaining parents' high levels of satisfaction. Governors ensure they are well trained, for example in the various models of governance now available to schools, and are rightly debating the future direction of the school in this respect.

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	123822
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	426763

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	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Lock
Headteacher	Christopher Kamin
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 November 2011
Telephone number	01823 442032
Fax number	01823 443664
Email address	sch289@educ.somerset.gov.uk

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