

Sherwell Valley Primary School

Hawkins Avenue, Torquay, TQ2 6ES

Inspection dates 5–6 November 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All pupils, throughout the school make at least good progress and achieve well.
- The school has responded very promptly and successfully to the need to accelerate the progress of pupils in receipt of pupil premium. These pupils now make better progress than the similar group nationally.
- Good teaching and a strong curriculum ensure that pupils are highly enthusiastic about school and work very hard in lessons.
- Teachers deliver expertly planned lessons that are creative and interesting.
- Due to high expectations and high-quality relationships, pupils are outstandingly well behaved. They report feeling very safe and secure in school.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership. His vision and drive have been very successfully communicated to all staff and governors. As a result, the whole team is working together to make the school as effective as possible.
- Leaders have ensured that there is an increasing proportion of teaching that is outstanding, and consequently pupils are making better progress. This is an improving school with aspects that are already outstanding and much that is poised to become so.
- Parents are very positive about the school and the education it provides.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The percentage of pupils reaching the highest levels of attainment is not as large as it is nationally.
- A number of the improvements in pupils' achievement are relatively new and, although there is evidence that they are being sustained, a little more time is needed to demonstrate this fully.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day’s notice and took place over two days.
- The inspectors observed teaching in 37 lessons, seven of which were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. They listened to two groups of pupils read and made a number of short visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and four governors. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- A range of evidence was reviewed including: the school’s improvement plan; the school’s data for tracking pupils’ progress; monitoring reports; pupils’ work in their books; and a range of the school’s documentation, including that relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors took into account 103 responses from parents to the online Parent View survey, and 62 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Rowena Onions, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Jane Banting | Additional Inspector |
| Marian Marks | Additional Inspector |
| Terry Payne | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs at school action is below the national average, as is the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils are White British. A very small number speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education and in the last two years had provided support for four local schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of pupils attaining the highest levels in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that time is used to maximum effect in every lesson so pupils are always fully challenged, especially for more able pupils in whole-class activities, or when the teacher is working with a particular group of pupils
 - giving pupils, especially the more able, more opportunities to become independent, confident and resilient learners so they can become better at applying their knowledge across a wide range of problems and situations
 - improving younger pupils' handwriting, particularly that of the more able pupils in Key Stage 1.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the school with a wide range of attainments but, overall, at the expected levels for their age. Because they benefit from a highly stimulating environment and are expertly taught, the children make good progress. Staff are particularly successful in promoting enthusiasm for learning, demonstrated when the children were encouraged to shout words that illustrated the sounds that fireworks make. By the end of Reception the majority reach the expected goals. However, the school is rightly working to increase the number of children who exceed these expectations, particularly in writing and aspects of mathematical development.
- Good progress continues throughout the school. Pupils learn well in class and their books show that this learning is sustained over time. From the earliest stages, pupils are successfully encouraged to apply their writing skills, for example when Year 2 pupils wrote evaluations of the bread they had made. However, progress in writing is hampered, particularly for the more able pupils in Key Stage 1, by some poorly developed handwriting skills that reduce fluency.
- By Year 6, an above average number of pupils have made the expected two levels of progress since Year 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is successful in ensuring that a good number of lower and average ability pupils exceed this progress. They are less successful in promoting accelerated progress amongst the highest attaining pupils.
- Work to accelerate younger pupils' progress in developing phonic knowledge (the links between letters and sounds) is succeeding. Reading standards are rising and are a little above average by the end of Year 2. Older pupils read widely and use their reading skills well to support learning in other subjects. By Year 6, reading standards are significantly above average.
- Until a year ago, pupils in receipt of the pupil premium made significantly less good progress than others in the school. When this issue was identified, action was taken to ensure progress was accelerated. As a result, in 2013, all Year 6 pupil premium pupils made the expected two levels of progress over Key Stage 2. There is evidence to show that pupils continue to make this better progress. Although there remains a gap between the levels attained by these pupils and those of others in both English and mathematics, this gap is being reduced year on year. Currently, the gap is less than nine months in writing and less than six months in reading and mathematics.
- There is an importance placed on ensuring that every individual achieves as well as possible. Systems are in place that mean pupils' progress is regularly reviewed and extra help is provided as required. This ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make better progress than their peers nationally. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language make strong progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Lessons are well planned, lively and interesting. Teachers planning together enables them to pool expertise and ideas, which benefits pupils. Lessons are often linked through a theme, which helps the pupils understand why they are learning to do something. A Year 1 session on 'light and dark' provided pupils with a wealth of opportunities to develop a wide range of literacy skills.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which enables them to provide very clear explanations of skills and concepts. Questioning is often used very well to deepen understanding. In a history lesson about Guy Fawkes, for example, highly skilled questioning helped Year 2 pupils to understand that facts can become muddled if we rely on word-of-mouth evidence.
- There is high-quality pupil management, partly because lessons are interesting and partly because there are strong relationships between adults and pupils. Consequently, lessons are conducted in a disciplined, yet relaxed, way. This enables pupils to concentrate and work hard, and allows them to complete good amounts of work in lessons with consequent positive impact on progress.

- In the best lessons, time is used to the full. In a mathematics lesson, for example, through the judicious use of resources and high-quality questioning and activities which match pupils' different learning needs, time was used very well to ensure pupils gained very secure knowledge and understanding of pie charts. There are occasions, however, when time is not optimally used, for example when more able pupils sit for too long listening to the teacher talk about things that they can do already, or when a teacher focuses their attention on one group of pupils but fails to ensure that all others in the class are fully challenged.
- Good quality marking, careful target setting and ongoing discussions with pupils ensure they are aware of the quality of their work and how to make improvements.
- There is very precise, effective teaching for lower attaining pupils. Lessons and interventions out of class are planned to provide them with an appropriate level of work and they are often very successfully supported by skilled teaching assistants. This is also the case for pupils in receipt of the pupil premium.
- Teachers plan work at suitable levels for the more able. However, on occasions, there is a tendency for more able pupils to be given too much support, for example by too quickly providing them with an explanation or help when they could have been using their knowledge and skills to overcome difficulties by themselves. This reduces the opportunity for these pupils to develop their independence, confidence and resilience when faced with a task that requires them to apply their skills in different contexts. This can have an adverse impact on their ability to gain higher levels. The school identified that, although there were a number of pupils who had the ability to attain the higher Level 6 in mathematics last year, they were not confident enough to apply their skills to the problems they were faced with in the test.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. The way in which this large school community operates so that each individual feels important is of particular note. This very well-ordered, friendly atmosphere provides an environment in which all can thrive. Pupils with additional personal or behavioural difficulties, including some who have failed to settle in other schools, greatly benefit from this provision. These pupils make particularly good progress, both educationally and personally.
- Pupils' strong attitudes to their work, and their very obvious enjoyment of school, play a significant part in the good progress pupils make. Pupils are highly enthusiastic about the opportunities they are given to learn, both in class and beyond, and this gives them a love of learning that should help them make the most in the next stage of their education. Above average, and rising, attendance rates also demonstrate the pupils' liking of school.
- Pupils feel exceptionally safe and secure in school. They report there is very little bullying and that any that occurs is promptly dealt with. They have an in-depth knowledge of different types of bullying and understand their responsibilities in helping ensure it does not happen. Pupils also understand that name calling and use of derogatory or discriminatory language are unacceptable. Pupils are actively encouraged to know how to keep safe. For example, even young pupils understand the importance of e-safety and can talk about the possibility of e-bullying and how to avoid it.
- All the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that their child is happy in school and feels very safe there.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Over the last four years he has developed the skills of the wider team of staff so that there is good leadership at all levels in the school. Senior leaders and middle managers are increasingly involved with directly monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning and are becoming increasingly skilled in so doing. The management of teachers' performance, including appraisal, is having impact in the increasing

proportion of outstanding teaching.

- The determination of the widening leadership of the school to make the school outstandingly successful, together with the track record of recent improvements, shows that the school has strong capacity to make further improvements.
- There is now strong use of data to identify individuals and groups who are in danger of underachieving. Interventions are timely and are having a very positive impact. Improvements in boys' writing and in the progress of pupil premium pupils are examples of the success of the careful checking of data and the influence this has on school improvement planning.
- The school has developed a high-quality curriculum that interests and engages pupils as well as promoting the development of basic skills. The inclusion of special event days, such as the Victorian day that took place during the inspection, are highly appreciated by pupils, as are the annual residentials and the extensive after-school activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported by high expectations of behaviour and the role models provided by staff. There are extensive links with the local and wider community. These, and the pupils' participation in charity events such as a sponsored skip also help promote pupils' personal development.
- The school plays a positive role in helping other local schools to develop their provision and expertise. The local authority provides light touch for this good school.
- Finances are carefully managed. Pupil premium funding has been very successfully allocated to providing both in-class and additional support for these pupils. Additional funding to promote sport in the school has also been carefully allocated and there is evidence of increased pupil skill and participation as a result.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There is strong governance that is helping the school move from good towards outstanding. Governors have a detailed knowledge and understanding of both attainment and progress in the school and how this relates to other schools nationally. They are proactive in gaining first-hand information through school visits. Governors are very supportive, but are robust in holding the school to account. Very good procedures are in place to provide governors with knowledge about the quality of teaching and how this is being developed. They are well informed about systems for managing staff performance and appraisal and about the way that pay rises are decided with this taken into account. Governors have ensured that finances, especially the way pupil premium funding is spent, are focused on successfully promoting pupils' achievement.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 113240 |
| Local authority | Torbay |
| Inspection number | 429531 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 years |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 684 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Davina Schwarz |
| Headteacher | Chris Chamberlain |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27–28 January 2009 |
| Telephone number | 01803 613296 |
| Fax number | 01803 617038 |
| Email address | admin@sherwell-valley-primary.torbay.sch.uk |

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