

Crowcombe Church of England VA Primary School

Crowcombe, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 4AA

Inspection dates 21–22 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.

- Throughout the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress from their starting points.
- In most years there are too few pupils in Year 6 to allow comparison with national averages but typically attainment is above age-related expectations in reading and mathematics.
- Leadership and management across the school have improved since the last inspection. The whole team of teachers in this school and the federated school now work together closely. Leaders, managers and governors have ensured that teaching and achievement have improved since the previous inspection and are now good.
- Accurate school self-evaluation identifies where further improvement is needed. The very strong governing body provides a high degree of challenge and support for the headteacher and staff to drive school improvement.
- The school development plan sets out clear, realistic targets for improvement focused on raising achievement to outstanding and bringing about a rapid and sustained improvement in areas where achievement is comparatively lower, such as in writing.
- The school provides a broad and rich curriculum including strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils behave very well and show respect for others. They say that they feel safe in school and are taught how to stay safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Achievement in writing at the end of Year 6 is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Despite recent significant improvements, the quality of teaching in writing, especially in Years 3 to 6, is not as consistently good over time as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Governors are aware that the coordination and supervision by leaders and managers of the many effective changes to systems, such as marking or strategies to improve writing, are not robust enough to ensure consistency and accelerate the pace of improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons taught by three teachers. Some of these were observed in Stogumber School where the Years 5 and 6 are taught.
- Some joint meetings with the headteacher, members of staff responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage, literacy and numeracy and members of the governing were held with the inspectors of both partner schools. Other meetings were held with the headteacher and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the work of the school, analysed pupils' work alongside pupils and members of staff and held a meeting with a group of pupils. A sample of pupils was heard reading. Displays around the school were also examined.
- The inspector analysed school data, and looked at the school development plan and reports of visits from external consultants and the local authority. He also reviewed other school policies and documents such as those relating to safeguarding.
- The responses of the 17 parents and carers who completed the online survey, Parent View, were analysed and parents and carers were spoken to at the start of the school day and at a sharing assembly. The responses to the five questionnaires received from members of staff were also noted.

Inspection team

Stephen Lake, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is very much smaller than most primary schools and has just two small classes where pupils are taught in mixed-age groups. It is federated with Stogumber Church of England Voluntary Controlled School. There is one headteacher and one governing body and subject leadership is shared across both schools.
- All pupils in Years 5 and 6 from both schools are taught together at Stogumber School and all pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught together at Crowcombe with pupils travelling between the schools on a daily basis. Separate inspectors inspected the two schools simultaneously.
- All pupils are White British.
- Very few pupils are known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium (extra money given to the school by the government linked mainly to the pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). This proportion is well below average
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average. They have a wide range of difficulties including some on the autistic spectrum.
- The school serves a very rural area and is situated between an area of first and middle schools and an area of primary and secondary schools. At the end of Year 4 a large percentage of pupils leave to attend either a middle school or an independent school. This results in very small numbers in Years 5 and 6, sometimes one or two pupils. As a result, there are too few pupils to enable comparison with the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A pre-school is held in the school hall on four mornings a weeks. This is operated by an independent supplier and is subject to a separate inspection.
- A breakfast club and after school attended by pupils from both schools in the federation is held on this site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate progress in pupils' writing so it is as fast as that in reading and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to write longer pieces on different subjects and topics, especially in Years 3 to 6
 - making sure that there is a greater consistency in the way writing is marked in all subjects and giving pupils time to respond to their teachers' advice about how their work could be improved.
- Consolidate the improvements made in leadership and management by ensuring that the monitoring of the new strategies in place, especially those for marking and improving pupils' writing, are more rigorous so that they are used consistently by all teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills that are broadly in line with those expected at this age. Close liaison with the on-site pre-school and further assessments of the children's needs and abilities upon starting are used well to plan work closely matched to individual needs. As a result children make good progress. Some year groups are very small and attainment can vary from year to year, but typically children leave the Reception class with skills that are above the levels normally found and well prepared for learning.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils build upon their good start in Reception and typically attainment at the end of Year 2 is at least above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Over time attainment is typically above age-related expectations in reading and mathematics but attainment in writing is lower and, although in line with age-related expectations, remains a comparative weakness.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 varies considerably due to the extremely small numbers after pupils leave at the end of Year 4. In recent years, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in Years 5 and 6 has been very high and this has affected attainment in the most recent national assessments at age 11. Nevertheless, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and fully integrated into lessons due to the good quality support they receive. As a result, their achievement is good.
- The school is very good at teaching children to read. In the assessments of reading skills at age six, all pupils meet the required standard. This good start is built upon throughout the school and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 attainment in reading is at least above average and often well above. Pupils are confident and fluent readers and show great enjoyment and pleasure in reading.
- In the most recent national assessments at Year 6 there were no pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium and so no comparison with other pupils' attainment is possible. Those eligible for support through the premium receive good one-to-one support that accelerates their progress.
- All of the parents and carers who responded to Parent View believe that their children make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. The vast majority is now good but over time teaching in writing has not always been as strong as that in reading and mathematics. This is an improving picture as teachers implement the changes that have been identified as necessary to improve achievement in writing but it is too early to see the full impact of these changes.
- In most lessons, information on what pupils already know, understand and can do is used well to provide tasks that challenge all pupils to achieve of their very best. For example in a Years 3 and 4 lesson pupils made good progress as they explored decimal fractions using dominoes.
- Pupils made good progress in a Years 5 and 6 lesson where revised strategies to improve writing were used. Pupils were given very short and precise tasks such as adding an adverbial clause to a sentence or a better adjective. One pupil showed his knowledge of *Gulliver's Travels* when he used the word 'brobdingnagion' to describe something gigantic. Pupils are also challenged to explore new words. For example, another pupil was eager to use a local dialect word 'bolve' (which means human mimicry of red deer throating) in a Christmas play script. Nevertheless, although pupils are keen to develop their vocabulary in this way they have too few opportunities to use these skills in extended pieces of writing upon topics and themes that really interest them.
- Teachers plan carefully to provide lessons that stimulate and motivate pupils to learn and make

very effective use of information and communication technology to support learning. This is particularly true for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs whose writing is supported well by the use of tablet computers.

- Teachers take great care to ensure that they teach all elements of the rich curriculum. Discussion of the moral dilemmas and the feelings of characters in stories such as *Not now Bernard* encourage pupils to consider how the characters were feeling and what the reasons for their behaviour might be. Activities such as these, together with regular studies of other countries as part of their geography lessons, make a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The strong links with a school in the Gambia make a further effective contribution to this aspect of learning.
- Teachers mark work frequently and set clear next steps for pupils. The new systems of target setting that have been introduced enable pupils to be involved in assessing their own work. However, several different systems of marking are in use across different classes and teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils are given time to make corrections or follow up suggestions on how to improve their work.
- Good quality assessments of pupils are used to monitor and guide progress and set targets for what pupils should achieve by the end of the year. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 understand these well and most are clear what it is they need to do to achieve a certain level in their work.
- Teaching assistants mostly provide good and, at times, outstanding support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs as well as for those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is a harmonious community where pupils show respect for each other. All ages mix together well. When pupils in Years 3 to 6 change schools within the federation to enable more focused teaching, they mix extremely well with the pupils from the other school. Pupils perceive the two sites as one large school with friends across the whole federation.
- Pupils are very positive about the way the school looks after them and helps them feel and stay safe. They say that behaviour is usually good and it is rare for any disruption to lessons to occur, although this can happen very occasionally. The school is effective in promoting equality of opportunity, positive relationships and ensuring there is no discrimination.
- All the parents and carers who responded to Parent View feel their children are safe, and the vast majority agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and discrimination-based bullying. They are particularly aware of what can be deemed unacceptable language. Pupils say that no bullying occurs in the school and they would trust adults to deal with it should any occur.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning support the accelerating progress being made. Nevertheless, behaviour and safety are not outstanding because a few pupils occasionally do not sustain concentration or work rapidly enough to ensure that they make the best possible progress. In addition, too many pupils do not follow up the suggestions made by teachers on how their work can be improved or make the corrections to their work suggested, especially in writing.
- Over time attendance is good. Recent attendance is held down a little by several pupils who have significant absence for medical reasons.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management, especially by governors, have improved since the last inspection. All teachers share a great determination to improve the school and raise standards. They work together very closely across the federation to share their expertise and skills in different subject areas. This close cooperation, encouraged and supported by the headteacher, is enabling

teachers to take a collegiate approach to school improvement, developing and trying out new strategies such as those for marking pupils' work. These are clearly having an impact, which is why achievement has risen to good, but the monitoring and evaluation of the impact and consistency of application of the new strategies that were put in place to improve achievement are not systematic or rigorous enough to ensure consistency.

- The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and uses this information well in the school development plan which sets out clearly how areas for improvement will be dealt with. Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been addressed well. The local authority provides only light touch support to the school, visiting when requested. The steady improvement in achievement, quality of teaching and leadership and management over the last few years, together with the maintenance of strengths identified in the last report, indicates a strong capacity to improve further.
- Regular and accurate checks upon the quality of teaching and learning are used effectively to make decision about teachers' movement up the salary scale and to identify areas for development. Peer coaching, observations of best practice in nearby schools and well-targeted professional development all contribute to the improving quality of teaching which is now consistently good.
- Detailed records of the attainment and progress of individual pupils are used well to check the progress of pupils and to identify those at risk of underachieving so that additional support can be provided. This also enables the headteacher to check that all pupils are receiving equal access to the curriculum. The use of individual anonymised data also allows the headteacher and governors to check the impact of the pupil premium funding.
- The well-planned curriculum makes strong links between areas of learning and makes subjects meaningful for pupils although too few opportunities are taken to use these links to extend pupils' writing, for example, the stimulating visits to places of interest such as the residential visit to Bristol to provide pupils with the experience of a city. This also supports pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development well.
- Strenuous efforts are made to ensure that pupils have access to frequent and regular physical activity and good use is made of the primary school sports funding to support this. The after-school clubs, often led by sports coaches as well as teachers, provide additional physical activity. Support provided by sports coaches through the grant is also used to train teachers so that the improvements in physical activity can be sustainable.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection the composition of the governing body has changed and the way in which it works has been significantly improved. Governance is very strong and effective with members of the governing body visiting the school regularly. They challenge and support the headteacher rigorously and are extremely diligent in holding the school to account and driving forward school improvement. Governors check upon the achievement of pupils in great detail through analysis of national assessments and school assessments of pupils' performance to obtain a clear view on school performance. As a result governors have a very good understanding of where improvement is required. The information on school performance is linked closely to the performance management of the headteacher. Governors check rigorously the impact of all spending decisions. They are well aware of what is being done to reward good teachers and tackle areas for improvement. They have conducted a very detailed risk assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the federation including the financial viability of the school. Governors make good use of the training offered by the local authority and independent providers to improve their skills. All statutory requirements, especially those relating to safeguarding, are met.

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	123830
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	426784

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	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dylan Chipp
Headteacher	Jennifer Yates
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 September 2011
Telephone number	01984 618273
Fax number	01984 618346
Email address	office@crowcombe.somerset.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

