

# St Andrew's Church of England (VA) Primary School

Chardstock, Axminster, Devon, EX13 7BJ

**Inspection dates** 28–29 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage and those with special educational needs and disabilities, achieve well and make good progress from their starting points
- Attainment is rising rapidly by the end of Year 6; in recent years there have only been a few pupils in Year 6, making comparisons with national averages difficult.
- The quality of teaching is very much improved since the changes in staff and is now consistently good.
- Behaviour and safety have improved significantly over the last year. Pupils show respect for each other and for adults. They say that they feel safe in school and are taught how to stay safe.
- The extremely strong leadership of the executive headteacher and the very effective governing body are ensuring rapid improvement in all areas of the school. This is recognised by parents, staff and pupils. Parents said 'much improved' and 'seeing a definite improvement since the executive head and new teachers are in place'.
- The relentless drive to improve further is based upon a very accurate analysis of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This information is used extremely effectively in the high-quality school improvement plan to bring about a rapid and sustained improvement in areas where achievement is comparatively weaker, such as writing or mathematics in Years 1 and 2.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although good, achievement in writing, especially for boys, is not as good as in reading and too few pupils attain the higher Level 3 in mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- Some inconsistency remains in teaching, despite the recent significant improvements. Teachers do not regularly involve pupils in checking on their own progress against the targets set for them and do not consistently challenge more able pupils enough in writing or in mathematics in Years 1 and 2.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons taught by five teachers. Some of these were observed jointly with the executive head or the head of school.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher and the head of school, all members of the teaching staff and representatives of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority and members of the support staff, and lunchtime staff were also spoken to. Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and further pupils were spoken to at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and analysed pupils' work alongside members of staff, including the executive head and head of school.
- The inspector analysed school data, examined the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness and the school development plan, and looked at reports from external consultants. He also reviewed other school policies such as those relating to safeguarding.
- A large group of parents were spoken to at the start of the school day and the responses of the 30 parents who responded to the online survey Parent View were analysed. The responses to the ten 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 much smaller than most schools but is starting to grow rapidly, with around 40% more children than were present at the previous inspection in 2011. It is federated with Mrs Ethelston's Primary School. There is one headteacher acting as an executive headteacher for both schools since 2011 and one governing body.
- Almost 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 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is broadly average, covering a wide range of difficulties, including some with physical disabilities and some with difficulties on the autism spectrum.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A pre-school operated by the governors shares the school buildings. This is subject to a separate inspection.
- All teaching staff and some of the teaching assistants are new to the school since September 2012.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further and raise achievement in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and attainment in writing across the school to match that in reading by:
  - ensuring that targets are shared more consistently with pupils in order for them to be more involved in judging their success in reaching these targets
  - building upon the very good and outstanding practice seen in some parts of the school and embedding this securely in all classes to ensure consistency across the school, especially in the teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation
  - ensuring that themes and topics which stimulate boys to write are provided more consistently
  - using information on what pupils already know and can do to provide tasks that challenge the most able pupils to achieve their best in writing across the school and in mathematics in Years 1 and 2.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Throughout the school attainment has risen sharply from that at the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Attainment is now above age-related expectations in reading and mathematics in most year groups but attainment in writing is lower, especially for boys and, although in line with age-related expectations, remains a comparative weakness. Attainment in mathematics, although slightly above average at the end of Year 2, is not as good as attainment in reading because fewer pupils achieve a higher Level 3.
- Those pupils joining the school other than at the usual time make accelerated progress and catch up with their peers very quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive very good support that enables them to be fully involved in lessons when appropriate, and to make good progress against their starting points.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children start school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. Good-quality assessments of the children's needs and abilities in close liaison with the onsite pre-school are used well to plan work closely matched to individual needs. As a result children make good progress, especially in their communication skills, and leave the Reception class with skill levels that are above those normally found and well prepared for learning.
- Reading has improved significantly. In the most recent check of reading skills at age six many more pupils than average were above the national standard. Older pupils who did not have such a good start are catching up rapidly and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 all pupils have at least met age-related expectations.
- Current pupils in Year 6 have already achieved age-related expectations in reading and mathematics and are close to them in writing. Pupils are on track for much higher attainment by the end of the year but boys' writing remains relatively low, the legacy of lower attainment from several years ago.
- In the most recent national assessments at Year 6 there were no pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium and so no comparison with other pupils' attainment is possible. Those in other year groups entitled to support through the premium receive good one-to-one support that accelerates their progress, and their attainment in English and mathematics is similar to that of other pupils.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The total change of teaching staff has brought about a transformation in the quality of teaching, which is now consistently good, with some that is outstanding.
- Teachers work very hard to make lessons stimulating so that pupils want to learn. Pupils are engaged and motivated by the way that teachers present and teach the well-planned curriculum. For example in a writing lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made outstanding progress as they developed their understanding of persuasive writing. The most able pupils were particularly well challenged to write on a range of subjects allocated randomly, but to do so in the style of a newspaper article, including using computers to replicate the appearance of a newspaper. Topics such as 'Does mum know best?' and 'Are all school lessons really the key for later life?' captured the imagination of the pupils and all strove to complete the task and consider all sides of the argument.
- Despite the rapid improvement in writing, the gaps in pupils' prior knowledge are apparent in their writing as too few use complex writing techniques such as alliteration or embedded clauses to enhance their writing. Motivating, interesting and enjoyable writing tasks such as this are still not consistent across all classes and this is limiting progress in writing, especially for boys when the topics do not motivate them.

- The school has identified gaps in pupils' prior learning that are limiting the quality of spelling, grammar and punctuation for some, especially boys. This is being addressed through a strong focus on this aspect of writing, but it is too early to see the full impact.
- In Years 3 and 4, pupils made outstanding progress in a mathematics lesson as they were engaged in investigating different ways of subtraction through very challenging activities. This type of challenge is not consistent, however, especially for pupils in Years 1 and 2, which limits progress in mathematics a little.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and regularly. They use assessment information well to set targets for pupils' achievement but these targets are not always accessible to pupils. As a result pupils are not engaged enough in checking their own work against success criteria and then seeing if they have met their targets.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning. They work in close partnership with teachers and support groups of all abilities. Particularly effective support is given to those with special needs and disabilities to keep them included in lessons.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The large majority of pupils behave very well. Behaviour in and around the school at playtime and lunchtimes and before and after school is consistently good and at times outstanding. All of those parents and carers who responded to Parent View and those spoken to, along with staff and governors, agree that behaviour and safety are good overall and very much improved over that of a year or so ago.
- All adults have very high expectations of how pupils should behave. A new behaviour system based upon 'traffic lights' makes good use of praise to promote good behaviour and is used consistently. As a result of this and the strong provision for their personal development, pupils are confident and articulate and talk freely with adults about their work and how they are feeling.
- Pupils say the school is a calm and friendly place to be and they all agree that behaviour is usually very good. Pupils play together very well, with older pupils looking after younger ones on the playground and recognising that the playground is a shared space.
- The positive attitudes to learning of most pupils support the accelerating progress being made. Nevertheless, behaviour and safety are not outstanding because the positive attitudes are not consistent enough. A few pupils occasionally still do not sustain concentration or work rapidly enough to ensure that they make the best possible progress.
- Pupils say that the improvement in behaviour is due to the headteacher and the new teachers. They understand the new behaviour policy and feel it has made a very big difference. Although one or two pupils can be 'silly', pupils say that disruption to learning is now rare.
- Pupils are very positive about the way the school looks after them and helps them feel and stay safe. They have a very good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and discrimination-based bullying. Pupils 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.
- Attendance is above average. The school monitors attendance carefully. As a result it has improved under the new regime and only a very small number of pupils have poor attendance. This is monitored extremely closely and parents, including those who may be hard to reach, are engaged with and encouraged to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher and the governing body have an extremely strong vision for the school. They share an ambition to make this school outstanding and do everything in their power to bring this about. This has driven the recruitment of high-quality staff who share that same ambition and

drive and work as an effective and cohesive team. This dynamic and determined leadership is the most significant factor behind the transformation that has occurred since the last inspection. In a very short space of time the new teachers have taken on the management and leadership of subjects very effectively, contributing well to the accelerating improvement in achievement.

- High-quality professional development supported by the partner school in the federation is linked closely to the targets set for teachers that are used to determine progression along the salary scale. Until last April the school was supported very well by the local authority to enable the rapid turnaround in achievement and quality of teaching. The obvious capacity of the school to continue this improvement is seen very clearly in the improvements that have occurred in all aspects of the school. Parents and carers recognise this, as can be seen by the rapidly increasing roll. The effectiveness of the leadership and management is so apparent that the local authority now monitors the school with a light touch.
- The procedures for checking on the progress of individual pupils have been strengthened and improved and the high-quality information available is used extremely well to identify those pupils who may need additional support and those who are capable of high attainment. These checks also enable the senior staff to check that all pupils are receiving equal access to the curriculum and prevent discrimination.
- The school has a very accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. The areas for development are clearly identified in a high-quality school improvement plan and shared with all staff so that they can contribute to achieving the targets set. Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been addressed extremely well.
- The broad and rich curriculum makes excellent links between areas of learning. The grant for primary school sports is being used well to extend the amount of sport in the curriculum, including after-school clubs and the introduction of competitive sports such as cross-country running. The impact of this is being strengthened by linking this to additional professional development for teachers so that they can continue the sport after the grant ceases. A close link with a school in Mumbai broadens the curriculum and strengthens the high-quality provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- Procedures for child protection meet requirements. The school has stringent procedures that ensure all reasonable steps are taken to keep pupils safe. Training in safeguarding and child protection is up to date for staff and governors.
- The governance of the school:
  - The governing body provides extremely clear direction to the work of the school. Governors are keen to see the school succeed and strengthen the whole federation so that this school becomes a beacon of excellence. Governors visit the school regularly and question the school leaders relentlessly about how well pupils are learning and why, and undertake frequent training to hone and improve their skills in this area. They have commissioned external reports on the quality of teaching to enable them to corroborate their own findings and ensure that they have high-quality information about the quality of teaching. Governors interrogate data on school performance thoroughly and are well aware of how this information is used to reward teachers for good performance or indicate where professional development may be required. They ensure that the information on school performance is linked closely to the performance management of the headteacher. Budget management is of high quality and governors check regularly upon the impact of specific funding such as pupil premium or the new sports grant to ensure that all funds are used effectively.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113427
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	426745

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	87
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Whitaker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrea Rice
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12–13 October 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01460 220534
<b>Fax number</b>	N/A
<b>Email address</b>	admin@acornfederation.co.uk



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