

East Brent Church of England First School

Church Road, East Brent, Highbridge, TA9 4HZ

Inspection dates 5–6 December 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, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, achieve well and make good progress. They attain standards that are above those expected when they leave the school at age nine.
- Pupils behave well and the large majority have positive attitudes to learning. They say that they feel very safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- High-quality support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and particularly for those with very complex needs and disabilities.
- The school makes good use of the pupil premium to support eligible pupils and their attainment matches that of other pupils in the school.
- Leadership and management are much improved. The acting headteacher has a very clear vision shared by the whole team. She is working closely with the governing body to drive forward school improvement.
- The good quality school development plan shows that the school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses.
- New leaders and managers are providing strong support for the improvements taking place across the school and the quality of teaching has improved significantly over the last 18 months.
- The school makes very strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within a broad curriculum.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Although much improved, the quality of teaching is still not outstanding enough to make sure that pupils receive challenging tasks so that progress in reading in Years 1 and 2 or in writing in Years 3 and 4 is as good as in other subjects.
- Although pupils' work is marked frequently, pupils are not involved enough in checking their own progress against their targets.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons or parts of lessons taught by three teachers. Some of these were observed jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, members of the teaching staff and representatives of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority. Members of the support staff and lunchtime staff were also spoken to. Meetings were held with a group of pupils and 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 acting headteacher 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 and carers were spoken to at the start of the school day and the responses of the 35 parents and carers to the online survey, Parent View, were analysed. The responses to the nine 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 and serves mainly the local village although almost a third of pupils come from nearby towns.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- Around one sixth of pupils are known to be eligible for 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 proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average. The main difficulties are speech, language and communication needs with a few pupils who have very complex needs including some physical disabilities.
- The school currently has an acting headteacher who also teaches for two days a week. All other teachers are new to the school since September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement in reading in Years 1 and 2 and in writing in Years 3 and 4 to match that in mathematics by:
 - completing the review of how the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is organised in order that all pupils learn more effectively
 - making sure pupils are more involved in the marking of their work and checking their progress against the targets set for them
 - building upon the good practice found in some parts of the school to improve the quality of writing so that information on what pupils already know and can do is used to provide tasks that challenge all pupils to achieve their best
 - making sure that teachers give enough emphasis, when marking, to the quality and consistency of handwriting.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year due to the small cohorts but it is usually typical for that age. In the last few years the progress made by children has improved and this improvement is being sustained so that they achieve well and start Year 1 well prepared for learning.
- Attainment is above average in the national assessments by the end of Year 2 but attainment in writing is further above the national average than attainment in reading. The acting headteacher noted that in the past assessment of pupils' attainment and progress had not always been reliable and so a robust system of confirming assessments alongside teachers from other schools, and internally, has been introduced. This is making sure that assessments are now rigorous and accurate.
- These regular assessments show that pupils are making good progress and the teaching of phonics is now stronger. The school has already identified that some changes to the organisation of phonics groups are necessary in order to improve the quality of learning and raise attainment in reading in Years 1 and 2 to match the attainment in mathematics.
- Pupils build well upon their prior attainment and make good progress in Years 3 and 4 so that their attainment is above that expected when they leave the school at age nine. Nevertheless, there are some gaps in their learning from earlier years and despite the improved teaching, attainment in writing remains lower than that in reading and mathematics.
- In the most recent check on phonic skills, fewer Year 1 pupils than average reached the required standard. Many of those who did not reach the standard had started the school with low-level communication skills. In the national assessments at the end of Year 2, pupils reading is broadly average but strong measures are taken to improve this in Years 3 and 4 and by the time pupils leave the school at age nine their reading skills are above those normally found.
- Those pupils supported by the pupil premium receive good quality targeted support to enable them to make accelerated progress. As a result their attainment is now the same in English and mathematics as that of other pupils in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported very well by knowledgeable and effective teaching assistants. This enables those who are capable to be fully included in lessons. Those pupils with very complex needs and disabilities make outstanding progress against the targets set for them although their attainment is significantly below that of other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- The almost complete change of teaching staff has strengthened the teaching considerably with teaching now much more consistently good and 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 science lesson, pupils made outstanding progress as they designed a model of a 'doggy doorbell' that would alert an owner when the dog wanted to come in.
- The school has identified gaps in pupils' prior learning that are limiting the quality of writing. For example too few use powerful verbs or adjectives in their writing and too few of the more able use enough complex writing techniques such as alliteration or drop-in clauses to enhance their writing. This is being addressed through short daily sessions that concentrate on specific areas.
- In a Years 3 and 4 lesson the progress pupils made in improving writing was evident for all. For example, when asked to improve a sentence containing the phrase 'the girl cried', a pupil thought about the verb and changed it to 'whined'. Nevertheless this emphasis is not consistent across the school.
- Although targeted activities are improving the quality of writing rapidly, less time is being taken

to improve the handwriting and too many pupils are still not writing in a well-formed joined cursive style by the end of Year 4.

- In a few lessons information on what pupils already know is not used well enough to provide tasks that meet the needs of all pupils. For some the work is too hard and for some too easy and this negatively affects learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced by the way in which the broad curriculum is taught. For example, pupils' empathy for others was developed well in a lesson for Reception and Year 1 where a good discussion took place on how the father in the story 'Peace at Last' felt when he was unable to find anywhere quiet enough to sleep.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and regularly. They note the next steps in pupils' learning and most pupils follow these up to correct their work. Assessment information is used well to set targets for pupils' achievement but these are not set down in such a way that pupils can check their own work against the targets to see if they have met them.
- Teaching assistants give particularly effective support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to keep them included in lessons. They work in close partnership with teachers and offer support to groups of all abilities and help manage behaviour. This has contributed greatly to the improvements in behaviour that have taken place over the last year or so.
- A minority of those parents and carers who responded to Parent View did not agree that they received valuable information on their child's progress. Inspection evidence shows that reports issued by the school are comprehensive and detailed but judgements about pupils' achievement and progress are not always completely clear. The acting headteacher agrees and is already reviewing the format of the reports written by teachers.

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. All groups spoken to, especially the pupils, agreed that behaviour has improved considerably over the last 18 months.
- The revised procedures for promoting good behaviour are understood by pupils. The number of minor behaviour incidents noted in the log has reduced considerably and disruption to the learning of others by a few pupils is now much less frequent. Nevertheless for a few pupils their own learning is slowed by their lower level of concentration and their weaker learning skills. This is what is stopping behaviour from being outstanding.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and know about avoiding cyber bullying and unsafe sites on the internet. They have a good understanding of the different types of bullying including discrimination and prejudice-based bullying.
- Attendance is average. A robust approach to not authorising holidays in term time which has been introduced this year is already starting to reduce the percentage of pupils whose attendance causes concern.
- Almost all those parents and carers who responded to Parent View and those spoken to agreed that behaviour is good. Some of those who help in school spoke of the exemplary behaviour seen when pupils go out of school on visits.

The leadership and management are good

- The acting headteacher and the governing body are ambitious for the school and along with all the staff share a strong desire and vision to make the school the best it can be. This has been a key factor in the recruitment of strong staff who share that same ambition and work as an effective and cohesive team.
- Governors recognised that progress was not good enough some 18 months to two years ago and sought support from the local authority. For a 12-month period intensive support from a

local leader in education was provided but this has now reduced to a light touch because the acting headteacher and the new teachers have made considerable improvements. All leaders and managers recognise that it is too early to see the full impact of their work but the new teachers have taken on the management and leadership of subjects well which is contributing to the continuing improvement.

- Good quality training for all staff is linked closely to the targets set for teachers that are used to determine progression along the salary scale. The links with the school providing the continuing light-touch support offer further opportunities for staff to share best practice.
- The procedures for checking on the progress of individual pupils have been strengthened and improved. Good quality information enables early identification of those pupils who may need additional support. Senior staff monitor the progress of all pupils frequently in order to be sure that they are receiving equal access to the curriculum and to prevent discrimination.
- The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and uses this information well in a good quality school development plan. The areas for development are clearly identified and shared with all staff and governors so that they can contribute to achieving the targets set. This has contributed to the many improvements that have taken place. The school clearly has the capacity to improve further.
- The broad and rich curriculum makes strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is seen in the school's good record in winning singing and dancing competitions over a wide area. After-school sports clubs have recently been extended using the grant for primary school sports. In addition teachers are receiving additional training and professional development in order to sustain the impact after the grant ceases.
- Procedures for child protection meet requirements. Training in safeguarding and child protection is up to date for staff and governors and the school takes all reasonable steps to keep pupils safe.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body gives clear direction to the work of the school. Governors visit the school regularly and question how well pupils are learning and why. In this way they gain an understanding of the quality of teaching.
- They have taken a measured view and received good advice in dealing with the appointment of a permanent headteacher. Parents and carers spoken to indicate that the large minority who indicated in Parent View that they did not agree that the school was well led and managed are concerned because they do not know when a permanent headteacher will be appointed. Governors are already aware of this and are reviewing their systems for communication with parents and carers but are also aware that some matters cannot be shared fully until the process is complete. They have recently appointed an external consultant to provide additional reports on the quality of teaching and assist them in the process of appointing a permanent headteacher.
- Governors undertake suitable training to improve their skills. They analyse data on school performance well and understand how this information is used to reward teachers for good performance or indicate where additional training may be required. They know how the school is setting targets for teachers to improve their practice. Governors manage the budget well and check on the impact of specific funding such as the pupil premium or the new primary school sports funding.

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	123809
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	426762
Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beverley Lloyd-Jones
Headteacher	Nicola Hare
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 January 2012
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