

Ruardean Church of England Primary School

School Road, Ruardean, Gloucester, GL17 9XQ

Inspection dates 28–29 January 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| 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.

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved rapidly since the previous inspection. Attainment for pupils who have been at Ruardean for all of their education is above national levels in Year 6, with an increasing number of pupils working at the higher Level 5.
- Most pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good because teachers plan work that promotes good learning and gives all pupils opportunities to deepen their learning.
- Pupils in the specialist resource provision are particularly well taught and supported so that they make good progress in their learning and outstanding progress in their social development.
- Staff, parents, carers and pupils share a strong belief in the values of their school.
- Pupils are very happy at school and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel extremely safe in school.
- The care for pupils, particularly those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, is effective.
- The high numbers of pupils who join the school during the school year quickly settle in.
- The headteacher has been highly effective in leading changes that have resulted in rapid improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. She is strongly supported by a knowledgeable and challenging governing body.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure all pupils' progress is rapid and sustained.
- There is too much variation in attainment in writing and mathematics between groups of pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are not high enough.
- A few older pupils lack confidence with mental calculations and do not have the opportunity to use mathematics skills or to write at length.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons involving six teachers; one lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector held discussions with school leaders, staff, and governors and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documentation including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils' work. He heard pupils read and spoke with others about behaviour and safety arrangements at the school.
- Account was taken of the 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by those parents and carers who spoke with the inspector at the start of the school day, or wrote letters. The inspector also considered 14 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- Around one pupil in five is disabled or has special educational needs supported through school action. This is above average. Around one pupil in eight is supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, which is also above average.
- Around one in seven pupils is supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals), which is below average.
- An above average proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school part way through their primary school education. A large proportion of these pupils have special educational needs. More than a third of the Year 6 pupils in 2013 did not start their education at the school
- The school has a specialist resource provision, known as the Communication and Interaction Centre (CIC), for eight pupils with complex speech and language difficulties. The provision serves the Forest of Dean area.
- There are four mixed-aged classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage is combined with Year 1 pupils.
- A pre-school provision operates on the school site. This provision is managed externally and is subject to separate inspection and reporting arrangements.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding so all pupils make rapid and sustained progress in writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - gaps between the attainment of groups of pupils in writing and mathematics close rapidly and standards are raised, especially at the end of Year 2
 - activities develop pupils' mental skills in mathematics so that pupils are able to complete more challenging tasks successfully with confidence
 - mathematical skills are used regularly in other subjects
 - pupils have opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English
 - teachers consistently insist on high standards of presentation.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Reception class with skills well below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. They settle in quickly, are well taught and make good progress. In 2013 the school's data show that the children were below expected levels for their age when they started Year 1.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has risen rapidly since the previous inspection. By the time the pupils leave at the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in national tests in English and mathematics is above average. An increasing percentage of pupils make better than expected progress.
- This good academic progress is not reflected in whole-school data for 2013. This is because of the minority of pupils who had recently joined the school and the high number of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs who were working below expected levels for their age.
- Evidence from pupils' books, lesson observations and the school's own data shows that the vast majority of pupils in all year groups, including more-able pupils, are making good progress to reach and exceed the levels expected for their age. However, there are small, but significant, variations between groups of pupils in English and mathematics in a few year groups which are related to specific cohort issues. Leaders are aware of the issues and taking steps to address them.
- Pupils in the CIC make good progress overall, and outstanding progress in their social and personal skills, because their needs are provided for extremely well.
- The school has worked effectively to improve the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) by using teachers and teaching assistants to run daily small-group sessions which have improved pupils' reading skills. Results in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2013 were above average.
- A few older pupils lack confidence with mental calculations in mathematics which limits their ability to complete more challenging tasks successfully and slows learning.
- Pupils have good opportunities to read for a variety of purposes in lessons and enjoy reading a wide range of books. The additional support provided for pupils who do not read regularly enough outside school has ensured that their progress is similar to that of their classmates. Attainment in reading is above national levels at Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress due to highly focused one-to-one and group sessions which allow teaching objectives to be set very precisely.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional teaching assistants, and to fund visits and additional after-school clubs. In 2013 there were too few pupils in Year 6 supported by the pupil premium to make comparisons about their attainment in English and mathematics with their classmates. Eligible pupils currently in school are making similar progress as their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lesson observations, examination of pupils' work and the school's own data confirm that the overall quality of teaching is good, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding.
- The focus on individual needs means that disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those supported by the pupil premium and those who have recently joined the school are taught effectively so they make good gains in their learning. Small-group work has been used well to accelerate their progress.
- Effective staff training has generated greater consistency in teaching standards. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour. Reading, writing, mathematics and phonics are

taught effectively.

- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning, particularly when they are leading small group activities where learning is matched well to pupils' needs. For example, they support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs so they can access their learning more readily. Speaking, listening and social skills are developed effectively in these sessions.
- Good links are made with previous work. Pupils are motivated by the tasks and keen to participate. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics session, pupils were given good opportunities to discuss their calculation strategies with each other which encouraged them to use mathematical language proficiently. This secured good learning for all pupils.
- Teachers make sure that all pupils know the focus of learning so that they can check how successful they have been. Questioning is used well to deepen and extend pupils' learning. In a Year 6 science lesson, the teacher used a video clip to explain forces. The ongoing discussion ensured all pupils made rapid gains in their understanding of forces.
- Although the teaching of mathematics and writing has improved since the previous inspection, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills and to write at length in different subjects. Presentation is not always as good as it should be.
- Teaching in the CIC is good and, at times, outstanding. The team of adults works together well. Language, communication and social skills are promoted particularly well.
- Physical education is a strength of the school. The additional government funding for it is well used to extend participation in after-school clubs, to take part in inter-school competitions, for teacher training, to purchase new equipment and to increase swimming opportunities. The effect of the funding is closely monitored by the subject leader.
- Teachers' marking is regular and detailed, showing pupils how they can improve their work further. Pupils respond well to teachers' rewards and positive comments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Typically, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and show clear values of respect and tolerance towards one another. The good relationships between all groups of pupils and adults contribute well to the sense of belonging in the school.
- The school's culture and motto, 'a love of learning, of life and of each other' promote a positive learning environment. School records confirm that pupils' behaviour is good on a daily basis. Pupils respond well to the rewards they get for good behaviour and work and readily take on responsibilities.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because a few pupils need adult support to succeed with their learning and behaviour is not yet exemplary.
- Pupils in the Communication and Interaction Centre respond well to the very clear behaviour expectations and the rewards given out. The consistent approach by all staff ensures that the pupils feel safe and secure.
- Concern for pupils' welfare is a strength of the school. Staff use their excellent working relationships with outside agencies to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Parents and carers said that all staff 'go the extra mile' to ensure that pupils are able to make the most of the learning opportunities offered.
- Attendance is above average and continuing to improve, which reflects the effective work of staff since the previous inspection and the governing body's strong stance on deterring holidays in term times.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good and fully meets requirements. Parents and carers say their children are safe and well cared for. This view is reflected in the confidence expressed by pupils that they are safe at school and that any bullying is rare. Pupils have a good knowledge of most forms of bullying, for example cyber bullying.
- Pupils are helped to develop a range of strategies so they are able to manage everyday risks for

themselves, such as those associated with the internet, harmful drugs and road safety. Pupils say that they enjoy the additional sporting opportunities this year.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and staff form an effective team. With support from governors, the headteacher has successfully raised expectations and ensured that standards have risen rapidly since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher's and governors' accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, combined with the record of improvement, shows that leaders have a strong capacity to improve the school further. The headteacher has managed developments well so there is a common sense of purpose among all staff and morale is high.
- Regular lesson observations, detailed feedback to teachers and a successful programme of training have ensured that teaching is good. Leaders use pupil progress data to support their discussions with staff and to set teachers specific targets for improvement. The performance of teachers is managed effectively. Decisions about the salary that each teacher receives are securely based on the progress made by the pupils in their care.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. Strategies are effective and there are no recorded incidents of harassment.
- The support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including the high number of pupils with statements of educational need in the CIC and mainstream classes, is managed outstandingly well by the special educational needs coordinator and leader of the centre. The recent transfer into the new building has been particularly well managed to minimise the disruption to the pupils' learning and to enhance learning opportunities.
- The curriculum develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Visits, including residential visits, opportunities to sing, to take part in sporting activities and close links with the local church and community, add further enrichment. Much learning is linked to real-life experiences, for example Forest Schools and when Year 6 pupils interviewed members of the local community as part of their Second World War topic, which develops highly positive attitudes to learning.
- The local authority has provided effective assistance for school leaders to raise standards and training for governors. The school works effectively with a range of other schools in the local area to share teachers' training and to check the accuracy of assessments.
- The headteacher understands the needs of the local community and has established a school environment which parents, pupils and staff welcome and value. Partnerships with parents are developed effectively and start with well-managed arrangements when pupils start in the school.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because initiatives to improve pupils' achievements have not yet been translated into higher attainment across all year groups.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a clear knowledge of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to keep improving. It provides effective support and challenge. Governors visit the school regularly so that they are well informed about the quality of teaching and pupils' standards. They have a good understanding of the management of teachers' performance and the implementation of Teachers' Standards and how they affect salary progression. Governors monitor spending carefully and are aware of how the school is using the pupil premium to improve pupils' achievement. The range of expertise within the governing body enables close monitoring of the financial position of the school and the school improvement plan. Governors make sure they are kept up to date with training to improve their effectiveness, especially with regard to holding the headteacher to account. The governing body fulfils statutory duties, such as ensuring the school meets safeguarding requirements.

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 | 115647 |
| Local authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 431083 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 96 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Caroline Smith |
| Headteacher | Jane Evans |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10–11 July 2012 |
| Telephone number | 01594 542461 |
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