

The Epiphany School

Shillingstone Drive, Muscliff, Bournemouth, BH9 3PE

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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

- Attainment for pupils is above national levels in Year 6, with an increasing number of pupils working at the higher Level 6.
- All pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with an increasing number of pupils making outstanding progress.
- Almost all teaching is good, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are particularly well taught and supported so that they make consistently good progress in their learning and personal development.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel extremely safe in school and are nurtured well.
- Pupils are very happy at school, as their high attendance confirms. Warm and trusting relationships underpin their enjoyment of learning.
- The very experienced headteacher and deputy headteacher have been highly effective in enabling the school to move forward, despite the very large number of changes in staff in the last two years.
- They are strongly supported by all staff and a knowledgeable and effective governing body.
- The school provides pupils with a wide range of subjects, topics and experiences which contributes strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Everyone is included and respected.
- Staff, parents and pupils share a strong belief in the values of their school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement is not outstanding, because the curriculum plans are not completely embedded in some classes and so pupils are not always fully challenged, especially in writing.
- Teachers do not always use pupils' responses early enough during lessons to make changes to their teaching.
- Teachers' marking does not always show pupils the next steps for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons or part lessons, some being observed together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, teachers and other members of staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, senior leaders, parents and pupils.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work, and heard pupils from different year groups read.
- Inspectors took account of 118 responses to the online Parent View survey, letters from parents and 38 staff questionnaires.
- They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including data on pupils' progress, the school's development plan, evidence of self-evaluation and monitoring records, and arrangements for safeguarding.

Inspection team

David Marshall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Linda Cowley	Additional Inspector
George Long	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-size primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium support (additional money allocated to schools by the government for pupils eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or whose families are in the armed forces) is below the national average.
- An average proportion of pupils is supported through school action, and the same proportion is supported at school action plus.
- The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is around the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been a very large number of staff changes in the last two years.
- The Epiphany School converted to become an academy school in April 2012. When its predecessor school, known as The Epiphany Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make all teaching as good as the best so that more pupils reach the highest levels of attainment by the time they leave the school, especially in writing, by:
 - ensuring the carefully written plans are implemented consistently by all teachers with their appropriately challenging activities for all pupils
 - making sure that all teachers capitalise on pupils' responses to provide work that moves their learning forward when ready
 - teachers consistently identifying and following up their marking to ensure that pupils are fully aware of what they need to do to achieve better in the future.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been above national averages at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 for the last two years. In the end of year assessments, pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar were above average for Year 6 in 2013.
- Current information shows that pupils make good progress in all subjects from their different starting points. The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) to small groups of pupils is very strong and leads to good progress. Pupils who did not reach the expected level in the screening check at the end of Year 1 quickly caught up. Pupils' reading skills are well developed, there are many opportunities for pupils to read and, as a result, they enjoy reading and achieve well above average standards by the time they leave school.
- Children come from a range of different pre-school experiences, and generally have around the expected levels of skills for their age, or just above, when they start school in the Reception classes. They have many opportunities to develop their language, writing and number skills, so by the time they enter Year 1 they have made good progress and have skills higher than those typically found.
- Although there are variations in different year groups, pupils' skills in writing develop well across the school. Over time they use a range of grammar, punctuation and spelling with growing confidence. Pupils have above average skills in using vocabulary and certain grammar and punctuation, but variations in teaching and the failure to use the well-developed plans on occasions mean that some pupils are not given sufficient opportunities for extended writing in some year groups.
- Mathematics lessons are characterised by a strong focus in the detailed planning on problem solving and investigation. A wide range of well-designed resources helps to meet the needs of different pupils and ensure their good progress. However, again, on a very few occasions, teachers fail to take all the opportunities that the good planning and excellent resources produce from pupils during lessons.
- Pupils funded through the pupil premium are given good support in the classroom, and in small groups outside their usual classrooms. As a result, the gap in achievement with their peers is reduced and closes completely in all subjects. In 2013, there was no gap in reading, writing and mathematics in the national assessments.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are also given very effective support. Work is well planned to meet their needs; careful questioning and guidance help them to progress in line with their peers. The very careful use of resources, and consistent tracking of progress, mean that those few pupils with significant special needs make outstanding progress. As one parent wrote, 'The Epiphany School has given our son the opportunity to reach his full academic potential and to have the same school life and social experiences as his peers.'

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good, and occasionally outstanding. Learning is more effective when teachers move learning on briskly with well-focused and probing questions that keep pupils on their toes.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good overall, and sometimes outstanding. In a particularly good writing session about 'The Greedy Gobbler', the teachers moved the children on quickly to write their own sentences.
- Throughout the school, teachers use the plentiful assessment information to plan well-structured lessons for all classes. Very occasionally, pupils make slower progress because the objective for the lesson is not sufficiently refined or made clear to challenge different ages and capabilities.
- The teachers in Year 6 used their carefully constructed plans in a series of English lessons observed. Pupils were given tasks according to their ability, and the very careful and detailed

planning met the needs of their level of achievement. The teachers' confident subject knowledge ensured that teaching points were clearly explained and demonstrated.

- However, learning is not yet outstanding overall because this careful attention to implementing all the agreed requirements of the curriculum is not consistent across the school. Some teachers are too concerned about general progress in literacy, rather than the enhancement of specific writing skills. The opportunities to use pupils' responses to enhance their progress are also sometimes missed.
- Teachers' management of behaviour is extremely effective and this creates a very positive climate for learning in lessons. It is a real strength of the school. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning, focus carefully on the teacher and make good progress.
- Teaching assistants are adept at supporting individuals and groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. The teachers and teaching assistants systematically circulate around the room, questioning individuals about their learning. On almost all occasions, teachers then adjust their teaching in light of the pupils' responses. During a Year 5 literacy lesson, the class teacher adapted the content by creating an impromptu teaching group to maintain an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils and this resulted in good progress being made.
- Pupils use their targets and checklists to evaluate their work very well. The quality of teachers' marking varies across the school. On most occasions teachers follow the very good school policy and give clear feedback and tell the pupils what they need to do next to improve further with examples. However, not all marking provides this feedback and, as a result, some pupils do not have the opportunity to improve as much as they could.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is consistently very good. The pupils enjoy warm and trusting relationships with each other and all members of staff. There is a strong and explicit emphasis on teamwork in the school and pupils respond to this very positively. Pupils have a great pride in their school and they respond well to rewards.
- On a very few occasions when the quality of teaching fails to engage the pupils in their learning, they become restless and off task. However, generally, they show interest, enjoyment and have a great desire to learn which contributes greatly to their good and better achievement.
- Attendance continues to improve and is consistently above the national average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Parents have great confidence in the care that the school provides and pupils agree that they feel happy and safe in school. A parent described the school as 'a family friendly school with the pupils at the heart of everything that is done'. Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, spoke to inspectors or wrote letters judged pupils' behaviour to be a strength of the school.
- Discussions with pupils showed they understand about different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They said that, although squabbles may sometimes arise, there is no bullying in school. Pupils have immense trust in the headteacher and all staff.
- Pupils play an active role in ensuring a happy, well-organised school. The school council, team captains and monitors make a strong contribution to the running of the school. These opportunities have an extremely positive impact on their personal development.
- Pupils and parents greatly appreciate the well-run early morning breakfast club, which provides a calm and sociable start to the school day, and the after-school clubs.
- Through a well-planned range of activities, pupils are helped to develop strategies so that they are able to manage everyday risks for themselves, such as those associated with the internet, personal safety and road safety.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are a very strong and inspirational team; they have raised the expectations of staff and pupils. Their excellent induction programmes, plans for

improvement and thorough checks on how well the school is doing show they are sustaining and improving outcomes for pupils, despite the difficulties caused by so many staff absences and changes over the last two years.

- A rigorous system has been introduced that allows staff to see at a glance the progress of individuals, of different groups, and to identify gaps in learning quickly. Where staff have identified gaps in the performance of some pupils, especially in terms of reading, writing or mathematical skills, additional funding has been used astutely to provide intervention lessons designed to raise standards.
- Senior leaders and governors have a good understanding of how effectively teachers are teaching. Targets have been set for staff to improve, which are explicitly linked to improvements in pupils' learning. No members of staff are offered salary increases unless this is justified by their performance.
- The many staff changes mean that middle leaders are very new to their roles and have only just begun to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning in their subject areas and help to decide what improvements can be made. As a result, their planning for improvement is not always clearly focused and, therefore, less effective than it could be.
- Changes to the curriculum have contributed to greater progress and raised attainment as it offers a good balance of academic and practical activities. The curriculum also promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively, for example by enabling pupils to learn about different faiths and ways of life. The school provides a good range of visits, special events and after-school clubs, which parents greatly appreciate. The visit by five members of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra during the inspection that highlighted the work in music of Year 5 pupils was an excellent example of the enrichment activities the school provides.
- Leaders use pupil premium money well to ensure that every pupil is given the opportunity to receive the support needed to make maximum progress. The good achievement of all groups within the school demonstrates its success in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling any form of discrimination.
- The new funding to enhance physical education is being put to very good use through the work of the new member of staff who provides specialist teaching and shares best practice with other teachers.
- Safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements, and exceptional ongoing partnership work with parents ensures vulnerable pupils are kept safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body know the school very well and provide a blend of support and challenge to school leaders. They offer a very good level of support for safeguarding, which ensures that statutory requirements are met. Governors have attended appropriate training to help them hold the school to account for safeguarding.
 - Performance management systems are used to set appropriate targets for leaders and teachers and the governors know about the link between the quality of teachers' work and arrangements for pay. They are kept informed about the quality of teaching and of the provision, including those supported by the pupil premium. They are aware of how pupil premium funding is spent and fully check on the impact of the spending.

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	138040
Local authority	Bournemouth
Inspection number	441139

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Broomfield
Headteacher	David Simpson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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