

Backwell Church of England Junior School

Church Lane, Backwell, Bristol, BS48 3JJ

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Excellent leadership and strong teamwork from all staff ensure that much teaching is outstanding and never less than good.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has successfully focused on taking teaching to the highest level.
- Achievement is outstanding throughout the school. Pupils of all levels of ability make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers keep a watchful eye on everyone's progress, and give all pupils challenging work, but written feedback to pupils on their work is not always fully effective.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary because the pupils find it inspiring. Pupils behave in a way that is both very courteous and respectful.
- Pupils feel safe and are very well looked after by adults within school. Every effort is made to support pupils who may be experiencing difficulties.
- The school provides memorable learning opportunities, and pupils benefit from an exciting and varied curriculum. Their enjoyment of the learning provided is reflected in their high rates of attendance.
- Educational visits, visitors, sporting and musical opportunities successfully enhance the curriculum.
- The strong links with the local church contribute very well to pupils' social and moral development.
- The governing body presents a high degree of challenge for senior leaders to continue to ensure teaching and achievement are of the highest quality.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day’s notice. Inspectors observed 12 lessons delivered by 12 teachers. All of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school’s view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons, around the school and during play. They looked at a selection of pupils’ written work and mathematics work from all year groups and listened to pupils of different abilities from Year 3 read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, including pupils who represented the school council.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, and leaders responsible for English, mathematics and special educational needs. The lead inspector held separate meetings with a group of governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection took account of 58 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) that were submitted during the course of the inspection. An inspector spoke to parents attending a class assembly and the team took account of feedback from 13 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and examined a range of documentation, including the school’s own records of pupils’ learning and progress, the checks made on the quality of teaching and performance of staff and those relating to behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jane Neech Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Backwell Junior School is an average-sized primary school. The school belongs to a federation with West Leigh Infants School and shares the same headteacher and deputy headteacher. There is one governing body for the two schools. West Leigh Infants School is subject to a separate inspection and was not part of this inspection.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is well below that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those that are looked after by the local authority. There are no children currently in the school who are being looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below that found nationally. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below the national figure. The pupils' needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties and behaviour difficulties.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils start the school in September after their seventh birthday. Pupils are taught in single-aged classes with two classes in each of the year groups.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further refine teachers' written feedback to pupils when responding to pupils' work by:
 - support for pupils to improve presentation and basic errors such as missing capital letters, punctuation and poorly joined handwriting
 - marking mathematics to give pupils sufficient challenge to improve their work and apply what they have learnt to a new challenge or more complex problem
 - marking in literacy and written work in other subjects which encourages pupils to act on advice and gives them time to do so.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils start school with attainment that is above the national average. During their time in school pupils, including the most able pupils, maintain very high standards in their work. This means that the levels of attainment, as reflected in the National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 2, are high. Currently, school assessment information shows that well over half of all pupils are reaching standards well above those usually found for their age groups.
- In lessons, pupils make excellent progress in writing, as a result of measures put in place to inspire pupils to write. In Year 3, pupils considered the features of writing a letter of complaint about 'toenails present in a pizza'. The subject matter meant that there was a high level of engagement and 'wow' moments of 'disgust' which inspired pupils to put pen to paper.
- There is a significant change to the progress pupils make in mathematics from the previous year. Currently, approximately two in every three pupils are now making more-than-expected progress, as a result of changes made to teaching. There is a sharper focus on challenging all abilities to achieve highly. This means that the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in mathematics has risen impressively in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Those pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding receive extra help in English and mathematics. The most recent National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 2 show that this small group of pupils did particularly better in reading than similar pupils nationally. The scores for eligible pupils were higher in both subjects than the scores for other pupils in the school, showing the impact of the extra help on closing the gap in achievement.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make impressive progress in reading, writing and mathematics and outperform similar pupils nationally. Support is carefully tailored to meet their learning needs and builds their understanding effectively. Parents rightly express the view that their children who receive extra help are doing very well.
- Pupils read widely and talk with confidence about their favourite authors. Younger pupils of different abilities use a variety of strategies to work out unfamiliar words in the text. Some use their phonic skills (the sounds made by letters) to sound out and build up words; others break more complex words, such as 'flamboyantly', down into recognisable syllables in order to make sense of the new and challenging vocabulary.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Pupils have the benefit of teaching that is, at least, never less than good, and usually outstanding. This has had a significant impact on their progress in writing, and more recently their impressive progress in mathematics. All the teaching that inspectors observed was, without exception, exciting, interesting and engaging.
- A key strength in the teaching is the way it challenges pupils, including the more able, to gain knowledge and skills. All abilities learn successfully. In Year 6 mathematics, the pupils achieved very well at their different ability levels. Pupils aspired to work at their highest level and to change class if necessary to help them do so.
- Homework is used for learning in different subjects. For example, in Year 4, pupils used homework as a basis for writing an explanation of what Anglo-Saxon houses were like from the models that they had made at home. The pride with which the pupils displayed their models helped to contribute to their learning, and meant that they were fully engrossed in their work.
- Relationships in lessons are exceptionally positive. The strong emphasis given to encouraging pupils to make contributions during lessons is very effective. Consequently, pupils are very articulate and explain their ideas well.
- Teachers create very positive atmospheres for learning. In Year 3 religious education, pupils discussed moral and spiritual issues from the perspective of the Islamic religion. The teacher created the mood for learning through Islamic music playing softly in the background. The

written work which resulted from this lesson, in the form of pupils' personal prayers, was of a high quality.

- Teachers' subject expertise is excellent, as is their use of assessment to judge how well pupils are progressing. Consequently, teachers know exactly the precise steps which will move the pupils on to the next level. In a literacy lesson for Year 4, the teacher's verbal advice about targets, with suggestions and reminders, moved pupils' learning seamlessly from one level to the next.
- Skilled teaching assistants provide support to ensure that those who find learning more difficult enjoy their learning and achieve well. Teachers' and teaching assistants' flexible approach results in this group of pupils making more-than-expected progress and achieving exceptionally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils receive regular comments in their books from teachers when work is marked. These are often positive, such as 'good work' or 'well done'. Teachers give pupils advice as to how to improve their work and further steps to take in learning. However, this is not always as effective as it could be. Some marking fails to pick up weaknesses in pupils' presentation of their work, and basic errors, such as omitted capital letters and poorly joined handwriting. At times, the marking in mathematics does not give pupils sufficient challenge to improve their work or apply their knowledge.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Inspectors endorsed the views of parents and staff, that the behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are invariably interested and curious about learning. Year 3 pupils responded very well to their teacher's skill in enlivening learning and remained enthralled by the experience. Teachers' management of behaviour is excellent.
- Pupils are very polite and respectful. Behaviour is excellent when entering and leaving assemblies. Parents comment on how respectful pupils are to each other when performing in front of an adult audience during class assemblies with visitors present.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The overwhelming majority of parents who spoke with inspectors or who responded to Parent View were positive about the care their children receive, so that they are happy and safe in school. Pupils are confident that bullying is rare and that should they seek help from adults if necessary; any concerns are resolved quickly. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected well in their high levels of attendance.
- A very small minority of parents expressed the view that behavioural concerns were not dealt with quickly enough. Inspectors scrutinised behaviour records and actions taken by the school. They talked to pupils and observed pupils at work and at play. They found no evidence to suggest that the school was anything but extremely vigilant about behaviour, with consistently high expectations that all pupils should behave exceptionally well at all times.
- Pupils' leadership gives them a sense of responsibility. Play leaders look after others during playtimes and take their roles very seriously. The school council organises activities to raise money for charity, such as through Sport Relief.
- The school has good systems for supporting those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Links with external agencies enable pupils to receive the specialist support they need. In-school and after-school activities, made available through the primary sports funding, develop pupils' confidence, sense of teamwork and fitness.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is leading the school with an impressively steadfast determination to ensure that teaching is always of the highest quality, that pupils receive memorable experiences and are very well prepared to move to the next stage in their education. Since the previous inspection, he has maintained the focus on pupils' behaviour so that exemplary behaviour is the norm. All areas identified at the previous

inspection have been addressed, with pupils' progress and attainment in writing being particularly impressive.

- The targets set for teachers link the impact of teaching to the pupils' achievement and are well used to keep expectations high. Leaders make sure everyone has an equal chance to do well. They have prudently planned this year's additional funds, provided through extra government money (pupil premium) to provide learning mentors for individual pupils and extra teaching assistant support, over and above that normally provided. Consequently, gaps between the achievements of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and other learners have narrowed successfully.
- Leadership at all levels is very effective. The subject leader for mathematics has a sharp understanding of the areas for development in his subject. He quickly recognised the reasons why a number of pupils narrowly missed out on achieving higher levels in mathematics last year and has put actions in place to redress this. As a result, internal school tracking data show a very strong picture of progress in mathematics in Years 4, 5 and 6, with approximately two in every three pupils making better than expected progress by moving rapidly to reach the higher levels.
- The school works well with parents. The quality of the work produced through homework tasks, particularly practical tasks such as model making, is testament to how well parents support their children's learning. Parents like the range of activities that the school offers through different topics and clubs. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument and young musicians demonstrate their developing skill to wider audiences during assemblies.
- The primary sports funding is well used to provide a range of sports. The leadership team keeps a close eye on the quality of sports teaching delivered by outside coaches, as well as talent spotting any pupils who excel in order to develop their potential further.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to visit places of cultural and historic interest which support their learning further. The strong links with the local church provide many opportunities, including holiday opportunities, for pupils to develop their understanding of social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of learning. There is an effective balance between the strong academic curriculum and other aspects of learning, ensuring that the school is well placed to deliver the changes to the National Curriculum 2014.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The local authority has provided good support and challenge. This is achieved through challenging conversations with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and, on many occasions, a representative from the governing body. For example, there has been close comparison of pupils' progress in mathematics in school with national expectations. Recent challenge from the local authority ensured that the school reflected on why some pupils missed out on achieving the higher levels in mathematics and a clear understanding of what needed to change.
- A key strength in the local authority's work has also been to challenge the school on the way self-evaluation documents are written. The headteacher reports that this has been particularly helpful in ensuring that self-evaluation is reflective and states what is working well and why, what not so well and what action needs to be taken. Governors endorse this improved practice.
- Governors report that training delivered by the local authority, such as a recent governor conference, has been excellent because speakers are 'inspirational' in enabling them to improve their practice. Where the governing body has needed advice on staffing, this has been timely, appropriate, highly professional and supportive. Over time, the school considers support from the local authority has been more effective in the last few years because the same local authority representative has been working with the school, leading to a greater impact on school improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a very sharp understanding of what goes on in school and the standards pupils achieve, including the difference pupil premium funding is making to eligible learners. They are strongly committed to see the school develop even further, through the recent federation with West Leigh Infants School. They ensure that their statutory duties are met, for

example in the systems to safeguard and protect pupils. The recent appointment of a business manager to oversee both schools has been a prudent decision and means that any issues relating to finance or safety are quickly addressed. Governors are very confident in challenging and holding school leaders to account for providing the very best education. They assiduously check the information they receive on the quality of teaching and the achievement and progress pupils make, through questions to senior leaders, headteacher's reports, joining discussions with the local authority and visiting the school to see it at work. This approach gives governors a very good understanding of how teachers, including the headteacher, are held to account for their performance, and why the very best teachers are being rewarded through salary progression.

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	109183
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	431474

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Selina Shattock
Headteacher	Alex Bell
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2009
Telephone number	01275 462632
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