

West Monkton Church of England Primary School

School Road, Taunton, TA2 8PA

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. All groups of pupils are now making good progress and achieving well.
- When children start in the Reception class their skills are lower than normally expected. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class where adults support their learning well.
- Pupils' progress continues to accelerate on their journey through the school. By Year 6 standards are above average in reading and writing.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Learning is more effective when teachers use their subject knowledge well to challenge pupils and extend their thinking.
- Procedures to keep pupils safe are outstanding. They ensure that pupils feel extremely safe in school and act very sensibly.
- Decisive and specific actions by the headteacher and senior leaders have brought about improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders and the governing body are united in their ambition for the school.
- Teaching assistants contribute strongly to the school's success. They are well deployed in lessons to provide effective, targeted support for pupils.
- Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school. They use the high quality information they receive in detailed reports to rigorously check on the school's performance.
- Pupils' attendance is well above average. They behave well throughout the school in a polite and courteous manner. Pupils are proud of their work and their school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally teachers fail to intervene in lessons quickly enough when pupils' learning begins to falter. Pupils do not always get enough help in understanding their mistakes or in using effective punctuation.
- Some middle leaders are not playing a full part in driving improvements at the school and checking that planned actions are working.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lesson or part lessons. Most observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. All class teachers and some teaching assistants were observed.
- Meetings and discussions were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and staff. A telephone call was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils to discuss their work and explore their views about behaviour and safety at the school. An inspector heard some Year 2 pupils reading.
- The views of parents were gained from analysing 36 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View and 85 responses to the school’s most recent parental questionnaire results.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised including: the school’s plans for improvement; records of monitoring and the quality of teaching, including information on the performance management of teachers; minutes of governing body meetings; information on pupils’ progress; lesson plans; work in pupils’ books; and reports on behaviour incidents and attendance.

Inspection team

Richard Light, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Robert Arnold

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school in north Taunton.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is below average. This is additional government funding provided to schools to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care. Since the previous inspection the school has received support from a local leader of education (LLE) from Holy Trinity Primary School, Taunton.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' standards and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement further by making sure teachers and other adults:
 - provide clear expectations of what pupils must achieve when working by themselves and intervene more quickly when rates of learning start to fall
 - use the information from pupils' responses more carefully to check understanding, identify mistakes and correct these when they arise
 - help pupils make effective punctuation, word and sentence choices and understand the impact these have on the reader.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - increasing the involvement of middle leaders in driving improvements and monitoring the effectiveness of actions taken.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Reception class with skills below those normally expected especially in language and communication. They make good progress during the Reception class due to the good teaching and careful support they receive. Good opportunities to sustain and develop their thinking help children develop mature attitudes quickly. For example, as two boys toiled outside under a hot sun to construct a large car, they demonstrated good resilience and managed their disappointment very well when it fell over. Immediately they set about, in a determined fashion, to start all over again, finally placing a label on it which read 'please do not touch'.
- Pupils' achievement in early reading has improved and is now good. In 2013 34% of pupils in Year 1 achieved the national expectation for the phonics check. In 2014 this has improved to 71%; above the national average.
- Standards achieved by the end of Year 2 have improved from 2013 when they were significantly below the national average in writing and mathematics. This year standards in all subjects are at least in line with the national results with a much higher proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 outcomes than previously.
- Standards in Year 6 are above the national average for reading and writing. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 results has doubled from last year and is now in line with the national average. The school has been particularly successful in eradicating the gap in attainment of nearly a year for girls in the school and all girls nationally. Work in pupils' books shows this rapid rate of improvement is continuing.
- School data on pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school demonstrate that progress has accelerated and is now good. Pupils have responded well to the additional challenge and expectation set by teachers. The proportion on track to make better than expected progress is now in line with the national levels and accelerating further. Current standards in Year 5 are already similar to those of Year 6.
- Achievement has improved over the last two years for a number of reasons. At the heart of the matter is the relentless focus by the headteacher on the high quality teaching of basic skills. Rigorous monitoring, linked to performance management targets, has been used effectively to support teachers to improve their practice.
- The gap between the achievement of pupils supported through the pupil premium and others has closed completely. The additional funding for these pupils is being targeted at specific mathematical programmes and more structured reading schemes. This has made a real difference in pupils' attitudes, academic achievement and improved attendance at school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. The adaptations to the curriculum for these pupils, combined with new procedures to monitor their progress and fluency in reading, writing and mathematics by skilled staff, result in good progress.
- Knowledgeable teaching, including the use of complex language, sentence clauses and algebra, challenges more able pupils well. This results in some high quality extended pieces of work and lengthy, detailed investigations in lessons, for example in exploring the relationship between numbers and how they work.
- The school ensures that all pupils are treated equally and that they develop good personal qualities. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and other staff, and are successfully prepared for their next stage of education.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Discussions with pupils about their work and experiences in lessons reflect the improvement in

the quality of teaching over time. The school's recent monitoring of teaching and its impact on learning is accurate and chimes with the inspection findings that teaching is typically good.

- Teachers consistently use their good subject knowledge in planning to meet the different learning needs of pupils. Lessons typically challenge pupils well and move at a lively pace. This maintains pupils' engagement in lessons. Learning is more effective when the teacher's expert subject knowledge is used exceptionally well to motivate and challenge pupils to solve complex mathematical problems.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide effective targeted support for groups or individuals. Many play a key role in teaching pupils to read. The best assistants react quickly when a pupil's target is achieved and they encourage pupils to enhance their knowledge through well-considered questioning.
- Teachers receive frequent, highly detailed and specific feedback from the headteacher on how to improve their teaching. As a result, teachers have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what should be required from each group of pupils in their class. However, occasionally teachers do not provide a clear enough level of expectation for groups working by themselves, or intervene fast enough with these groups when the pace of learning drops.
- The teaching of writing is well structured and is helping pupils create technically accurate pieces of work. Year 1 pupils used time connectives correctly to extend their sentences when creating reports of their trip to Exmouth beach. However, teachers sometimes fail to explain the impact of punctuation, word or sentence choices. This hinders pupils' ability to understand the effect these choices have on the reader and develop more sophisticated writing skills.
- Teachers often check pupils' learning and adjust their planning between lessons where necessary. Occasionally checks by teachers and other adults are not precise enough within lessons to pick up on pupils' misconceptions or the exact enunciation required during phonics sessions.
- Children in the Reception class are provided with a well-planned balance of adult- and child-led sessions. The study of seeds, plants and caterpillars develops children's understanding of growth well.
- Teachers make good use of information and communication technology. For example, pupils' work when placed under a 'visualizer' receives immediate feedback. This helps pupils analyse their work and identify specific areas for improvement.
- Regular opportunities to swap their work with classmates are developing pupils' skills in identifying strengths and areas for improvement in written work. Pupils have a very mature outlook to this peer-to-peer approach, starting as early as Year 1. This culture is not only successful in accelerating pupils' academic achievement but is also having a very positive impact on their attitudes to learning and helping one another.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their positive attitudes to learning contribute strongly to their good academic and personal development.
- Pupils, staff and parent questionnaires confirm the inspector's judgement that the school manages behaviour well.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and respond keenly to their teacher's questions and prompts. They work thoughtfully during group work, carefully considering each other's views and ideas. They have a good understanding of the sanctions and value the certificates they receive in assemblies.
- Behaviour is well managed throughout the school and teachers are very respectful in the way they interact with pupils. The very strong relationship between pupils and adults in the school means pupils require little prompting to be in lessons on time, even after playtimes. They line up very sensibly recognising a change from play to learning time has occurred.
- The typically good behaviour seen on inspection is reflected in the small number of recorded incidents in the school's behaviour logs. Pupils know that any incidents will be followed up and

'sorted out' although also report that there 'aren't any'.

- Behaviour is not outstanding because on the few occasions where planned activities did not meet pupils' learning needs well enough or motivate and challenge pupils, some chose not to follow the instructions they were asked, and needed, to follow. This attitude slowed their progress.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent grasp of what it means to say they feel safe. They act and move around the school very safely. Parents agree that the school is a very safe place.
- Pupils play extremely sensibly outdoors and use the range of organised activities and apparatus very responsibly to help them organise their play and lunchtimes.
- Pupils demonstrate a very well developed knowledge of how to keep themselves safe online. They know who to tell if someone sends them hurtful messages or asks for their personal details and can describe the risks of posting inappropriate content on the internet in detail.
- The school has successfully improved pupils' attendance, especially for those pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which is now well above the national average. A number of strategies have contributed to this success; most notably, pupils are engaged, motivated and positive about school because they know where they are in their learning in relation to National Curriculum levels, and what they need to do next to improve.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders, is relentless in the pursuit of excellence for the pupils and community of West Monkton. The headteacher is an experienced and insightful leader who has managed the changes needed, during a period of significant staff turnover, extremely well. He promotes particular expectations that all staff will carry out their roles to a high standard.
- Decisive action to reorganise the leadership structure within the school has enabled developments to occur rapidly. Assistant headteachers, formerly middle leaders in the school, have stepped up to the additional challenge and driven improvements, for example, to improve the technical teaching of writing. Consequently, the current middle leaders, who have only recently assumed their posts, are yet to play a full part in driving improvements in their area.
- Policies and procedures which are key to improving teaching, and setting higher expectations for all have been implemented well. The persistent drive for improvement means there is no room for complacency. For example, stringent and highly detailed performance management procedures have been used very well to robustly challenge any underperformance. The assistant headteachers have combined checks on pupils' writing and mathematical development with recent educational research, to challenge teachers' expectations of pupils' work and ensure the additional guidance is effective.
- There have been alterations to the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to ensure that more pupils reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. A structured approach to the systematic daily teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is helping teachers and teaching assistants give more small-group attention in lessons. Occasionally, adults do not listen to or observe carefully enough pupils' responses to pick up on, and correct, any mistakes they might make.
- The process of monitoring and evaluating the school's performance is rigorous, highly detailed and sharply focused on improving teaching and pupils' learning. The headteacher is developmental in his feedback to staff but unrelentingly exacting over the smallest detail to ensure that all know only the best teaching is good enough.
- The school development plan is a thorough document that precisely identifies what needs to improve and why. Together with subject leaders' action plans, performance management arrangements and professional development activities, it makes a coherent package which is successfully improving teaching and pupils' achievement.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is good extra-curricular provision that supports pupils' personal development. Assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to accommodate differences while respecting the integrity of individuals through celebrating their personal achievements.
- Additional money to improve pupils' participation and ability in sport has been used very well. Expert sports coaches have increased within school participation from 0 in 2012/13 to 78 in 2013/14. Similarly, over the same period of time, the number of pupils competing in inter-school events at a local level has increased from 6 to 70. Currently 61% of Key Stage 2 pupils receive regular sports coaching. Teachers' confidence in teaching physical education has also been improved by working alongside experts.
- The school has used a range of external support on offer to bring about improvements. A local leader of education has co-ordinated this support well. Assistance with the development of calculation policies has provided teachers with greater clarity over pupils' expected progression in the four operations. Support for a newly qualified teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage has strengthened the curriculum and provision for children in the Reception class.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an acute understanding about how well the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally. They use the high quality, detailed information provided for them exceptionally well to ask searching questions about the pace of improvement to teaching, leadership and pupils' achievement. However, governors are not solely reliant on this information alone. They undertake a range of first-hand evidence gathering activities alongside senior and middle leaders. This enables them to check the success of subject leaders' action plans and to gain an insightful view of the quality of teaching. As a result governors are highly visible in school and seen very much as part of the whole team. They have a precise understanding of how performance management is used to improve teaching and how this links to teachers' pay progression. Governors demonstrate considerable skill in analysing pupils' progress data and consequently understand exactly the impact that the pupil premium funding is having. Safeguarding is given a very high priority in all aspects of governors' work; this ensures that all statutory requirements are met.

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	123804
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	431673

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

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	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Lowe
Headteacher	Ian Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 September 2012
Telephone number	01823 412582
Fax number	01823 413328
Email address	office@westmonkton.somerset.gov.uk

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