

# The Dolphin School

Cheltenham Road, Bristol, BS6 5RDS

**Inspection dates** 8–9 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not applicable
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
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 achieve well and make generally good progress in developing a wide range of skills and knowledge. Many pupils make outstanding progress in Year 1 especially in reading.
- Teaching is typically good through the school and some outstanding practice is used to help pupils understand how they can make their work even better.
- Expectations for the school are high and the new headteacher, with the strong support of the Executive Principal of the Trust, and all the staff are enabling the school to move forward rapidly.
- There is an exciting range of visits and other activities that enhance the pupils' experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. They promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The staff and pupils benefit from the support and expertise of staff from other schools in the Trust group.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are good and strengthening daily as they get involved in the work of the school and their children's activities.
- Governors have high aspirations for all the pupils and are well focused on supporting the school to further improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Although teaching in the Reception classes is good overall there are some inconsistencies in approach and activities which result in variations in the progress children make in different areas of the Early Years curriculum.
- There are weaknesses in the number and range of resources, especially in the outdoor areas, for children in Reception to use to experiment and explore new ideas.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons led by five members of staff. Many of the lessons were joint observations undertaken with the headteacher. There was also a brief session focusing on the teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) and the inspector listened to some of the pupils reading.
- The inspector held a meeting with four members of the governing body and chatted informally with the children. In addition to a number of meetings with members of staff, questionnaires completed by seven members of staff were taken into account.
- Account was taken of 44 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and to a recent survey of parents' and carers' views made by the school to which 52 parents and carers responded.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation including the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, pupils' work in Year 1, the learning journeys of children in the Reception classes and the school's development plan. Minutes from recent governors' meetings and the record of checks made on staff's suitability to work with children were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Hazel Callaghan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Dolphin School opened in September 2012. It is much smaller than most primary schools and is currently made up of only two Reception classes and one class of pupils in Year 1. Two more classes will be formed in September 2014 with plans for the school to grow to educate 420 pupils in the future.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much higher than in most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below that found in schools nationally. This is additional government funding provided for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. There are no looked after children in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. Some of these pupils have been identified as having challenges in their lives that make them vulnerable. There are below average proportions of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school holds a breakfast club each morning for pupils in the school.
- The Dolphin School is part of a group of schools within the CGS Trust consisting of Colston's Girls' School, The Kingfisher School (another primary school) and The Dolphin School. The Society of Merchant Venturers is the supra sponsor.
- A new headteacher took up post in January 2014.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure children in both Reception classes have the same opportunities to make rapid progress in their learning by:
  - sharing good practice across the classes
  - developing a range of activities that promote children's good learning across both classes so that they make similar good progress in all areas of their work and play
  - providing a wide range of resources, particularly in the outside area from which children can choose, that will excite their interest and motivate their desire to experiment and explore new ideas.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils across the school achieve well and attainment is rising rapidly.
- Children start in Reception with a range of knowledge and skills similar to that typical for their age. They make good progress in their learning but do better in some areas than in others. Nearly all children make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics but there are some inconsistencies between the two classes. However, an above average proportion of children reached the expected levels or higher by the end of the Reception Year across all areas of learning. This is an improvement on the standards achieved last year when attainment was broadly average.
- Those children who do not speak English at home are well supported and they make good progress in learning the language which enables them to take an equal part in all the activities and prepare them well for their learning in Year 1.
- The results of the phonics check in Year 1, through which pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds they make is assessed, are above the national average for both boys and girls. Pupils use this knowledge well to help them read new words and to spell.
- Pupils in Year 1 have made rapid progress in all areas of their learning and almost all pupils have reached the levels of attainment expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. All pupils have made strong progress in their reading. The relative slower start made by boys in their early writing skills last year in Reception has been addressed and boys and girls have achieved similarly well.
- The most able pupils are well ahead of the expected levels for their age and already reaching standards expected of pupils in Year 2.
- Those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium also have achieved well and the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils in the school has closed for many of them, particularly in Year 1. It is closing for those in Reception.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported so that they achieve well. Their individual difficulties are identified effectively and activities adapted to promote their learning. Those who have barriers to their learning because of difficulties in their lives are well supported through play therapy sessions so they can socialise more successfully with others and settle to learning.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers assess their pupils' learning regularly and accurately. They use the information effectively to plan activities that promote the next steps in learning so that pupils of all ages make overall good progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants who act as key workers in the Reception class monitor children's learning in the children's self-chosen activities and during the adult-led tasks to get a comprehensive view of what children know and can do. Well-timed interventions and support help children to move to their next steps in their learning.
- A good range of activities which are planned to extend their knowledge and skills is available so children become confident to select resources they need to develop their own ideas.
- Although the teachers in Reception follow the same structure of expected levels of knowledge and skills for children to achieve, the range of activities differs, which has resulted in some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and rates of progress in some areas of learning. Overall, good progress is achieved but progress in writing in one class is not quite as strong in the other, while strengths in mathematics in one class are not as clearly evident in the other.
- The outside area is used well to extend the activities children meet in the classroom but there are fewer resources available outside and so opportunities for children to develop their

understanding and skills further and to experiment and explore new ideas are not sufficiently promoted.

- In all classes the pupils are given lots of praise and encouragement and their styles of learning are recognised and supported so they become confident learners ready for the next stage of their learning.
- In Year 1, pupils are given clear information about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. The systematic use of strategies that the children understand and respond to readily is moving them forward rapidly, especially in reading and writing. A system of symbols for the expected elements needed in a piece of work, such as capital letters, is well understood by the pupils and they try hard to include them in their work.
- Good questioning that probes pupils' understanding and develops their vocabulary and understanding is used well. Opportunities for children to work together to share ideas and to explain their thinking effectively consolidate their understanding. They feel confident to use what they have learnt in new activities and this strengthens their understanding further.
- The teaching of phonics (the knowledge of letters and the sounds they make) is effective in all classes and this is supporting pupils' good reading and helping them to spell with increasing accuracy.
- Teaching assistants are a strong part of the teaching team and they use their expertise and knowledge of the pupils' needs to provide the appropriate levels of support, particularly for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of the pupils in the school is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their confidence in themselves and in their surroundings is clearly evident. Nearly all the parents and carers who responded to the school questionnaire and to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire indicated that children do feel safe and happy at school.
- Pupils in all classes get on well together. They play together and share resources sensibly. Any upsets are usually due to the pupils' developing social and emotional skills and not to any form of bullying. All such upsets or disagreements are well monitored by staff who quickly help the pupils to sort out their differences fairly.
- There are a small number of pupils who have difficulties in their lives that make them vulnerable and they sometimes get upset and find it difficult to play nicely or to concentrate on their activities. The staff support these pupils well using a variety of effective strategies so they can settle and resume their activities.
- Children in Reception follow the teachers' instructions and cooperate with all the staff. They know the class routines and happily clear up, run errands and act as monitors. They are proud of their work and want to share their activities with others. Children in Reception often concentrate for long periods of time developing their ideas and making improvements.
- In lessons, pupils in Year 1 behave well. There is rarely any disruption because the pupils enjoy their activities and want to do well. They try hard, they read the messages the teacher has left on their books and use both the written comments and symbols to focus on what they need to do to improve in their work. They work well together sharing ideas and cooperating effectively to solve questions. They actively use the resources, such as a collection of different words that mean the same thing, to make their work more interesting.
- The school's work to keep the pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils understand the importance of keeping safe and follow the safety rules sensibly. They walk in pairs with their safety waistcoats on when they go out of school. They confidently and sensibly move around the school building.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The new headteacher has brought an increased rigour to the monitoring of pupils' progress. Comprehensive analysis of pupils' attainment is used to monitor their progress as individuals and for groups. This information is discussed with staff so that any underachievement is identified and extra support put into place to accelerate learning.
  - Setting targets for teachers has raised expectations for pupils' progress and the teachers' part in promoting good achievement. Relationships throughout the school are highly positive and together the new three year plan for school development has been created.
  - The headteacher has been the driving force for improvement in the school. There has not been the need as yet to develop a middle leadership team but this is now planned for next term with the creation of two new classes. The school's links with the other schools within the Trust provide additional expertise. Specialist teaching in mathematics, music, French and sport complement the teaching in the school. Many developments, including plans for a new curriculum, are promoted across the Trust so that individual strengths of the staff are utilised effectively.
  - The range of activities provided for the pupils in all classes is good and enhances their learning. They have many opportunities to explore the area around the school, including regular visits to the library and local woodland. A recent visit to the centre of Bristol on an open-topped bus was a really exciting event and one the pupils talked about a great deal. The work with outreach workers from the Bristol Old Vic is also a great success.
  - Strong partnerships with the parents and carers make these events possible so that the pupils can be carefully safeguarded on the trips. All the activities have a significant impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Forty of the children with their parents and carers, led by two members of the staff, created their own Carnival Club developing costumes and dances in use at the St Paul's Carnival. They had great fun and the impact of the experience was immense for all who took part. One girl in Reception was heard to say, 'It was the best day of my life.'
  - The school does not have a large hall or outside space for sports and games but close links with the Colston's Girls' School next door and the specialist teaching of the staff give all the pupils a weekly opportunity to develop their physical fitness and skills. The school has only just secured the government funding for physical education and the headteacher has many plans for its use next term. Arrangements with a local park and a dance studio are just two of the opportunities planned to extend the pupils' well-being and develop their love of sport.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body is still fairly new and developing its expertise and expanding its understanding of the school's performance and its needs. So far there has been very little data for them to consider and almost no comparisons to national figures against which they could make comparison. As the school data for pupils' attainment and progress are compiled they are discussed carefully and the progress of different groups evaluated. Governors are fully involved in discussions about the use of the pupil premium funding and make a check on the impact on pupils' achievement.
    - Governors have a clear strategic plan for the future development of the school and its role within the Trust. The governing body has not yet developed a committee structure feeling that at this moment of the school's development they all want to be part of the discussions and decisions. They have all attended a range of courses to make them more efficient and effective in their roles. Governors are also well supported by the finance and human resources team from the Colston's Girls' School which is part of the Trust.
    - Governors are kept informed of the outcomes of performance management of teachers and are committed to rewarding good teaching and effective management.
    - Big improvements have been made to the security of the school site and governors carry out their responsibilities to ensure a safe and secure environment. All safeguarding requirements
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are met.

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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138377
<b>Local authority</b>	Bristol
<b>Inspection number</b>	440043

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–6
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	90
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss Sonia Mills
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Naomi Triggol
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	No previous inspection
<b>Telephone number</b>	0117 9424328
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