

Pitton Church of England Primary School

White Way, Pitton, Salisbury, SP5 1DT

Inspection dates 30 April–1 May 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- All groups of pupils achieve well as teaching engages and motivates them.
- Pupils respond with great enthusiasm to the imaginative curriculum.
- Pupils' outstanding behaviour and thirst for learning contribute to the good progress they all make.
- Parents much appreciate the warm family atmosphere and the commitment of staff. One parent commented, 'The teaching staff are genuinely caring and really go the extra mile for their pupils.'
- Pupils feel entirely safe and parents are rightly confident in the high level of care the school provides.
- Meticulous tracking of every pupil's progress means that any glitches are quickly spotted and addressed; the school is fully aware that pupils' writing is not as strong as their reading.
- The quality of teaching is checked regularly, and teachers benefit from strong guidance by the headteacher and a wide range of training.
- The headteacher's relentless drive to ensure all pupils do as well as they can is shared by all staff.
- Governors support the school extremely well and provide insightful guidance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not reach the same standard in writing as they do in reading. Although many pupils read fluently, this is not reflected consistently in the quality of their written work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 14 lessons, of which five were observed jointly with the headteacher. Pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime was also evaluated.
- Discussions were held with pupils, four members of the governing body, the headteacher, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed many aspects of the school's work, including the support for pupils who need extra help. He heard groups of pupils read and examined pupils' work in their books and on classroom and corridor wall displays.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including plans for the school's future development, lesson plans, the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings and records of how pupils' learning is monitored and how the quality of teaching is checked.
- The views of parents were taken into account, including those expressed in the 50 responses to the online Parent View survey and during discussions with the inspector at the beginning of the school day. Letters were also received from parents.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at 13 returned questionnaires and through discussions with members of staff.

Inspection team

Rob Crompton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average. Almost all pupils have a White British heritage and all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils receiving additional funding through the pupil premium is well below average. (The pupil premium provides additional funding for children who are looked after and for those known to be eligible for free school meals). There are very few pupils eligible for free school meals and no looked after children.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is half the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is above average. These needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or speech, language and communication problems.
- There are four mixed age classes: Reception and Year 1; Years 1 and 2; Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- In 2013, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing so they more closely match those in reading by
 - developing pupils' skills in expressing ideas orally in order to develop their vocabulary and improve their confidence in writing
 - encouraging pupils to use, in their own written work, some of the vocabulary and sentence structure they come across in their reading.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's social, language and number skills as they enter Reception vary from year to year but are generally around the levels expected. They make good progress due to effective teaching and, although the proportion varies because of the small numbers involved, children typically reach a good level of development by the start of Year 1.
- The systematic teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), which begins in Reception, means pupils make a good start in reading and spelling. Results of the Year 1 spelling check last year were above average and current pupils are on track to reach similar levels.
- Pupils build well on their secure start to school due to the effective teaching they receive. By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading is generally above average, with around half often reaching the higher levels. Pupils' enthusiasm for reading was clear as they discussed their reading habits and preferences with the inspector. For example, they expressed mature views about whether PD James had been successful in writing a follow-up to *Pride and Prejudice*.
- Pupils also make good progress in writing and typically reach good standards. They are routinely accurate in the spelling, punctuation and grammar. Many show considerable flair. Writing about an orienteering session, one wrote, 'My fingers trembled with anticipation as we got closer to the trees.'
- The school's meticulous tracking indicates that pupils' progress in writing lags a little behind that in reading and, knowing each individual extremely well, staff feel they could do even better. Some older pupils said they are encouraged to use words and phrases in their writing which they encounter when reading. This is evident in the high quality writing of many pupils, but the written work of some other similarly confident and avid readers is not so accomplished.
- This was evident during the inspection as some of the written work by pupils, including the more able and fluent readers, lacked flair and did not engage the reader effectively.
- As they move through Years 1 and 2, pupils gain confidence in using their basic numeracy skills, through increasingly demanding calculations. By Year 6, pupils are adept in solving complex problems and they typically reach above average standards. Some make very rapid progress. A small group of more able pupils, for example, were learning how to present algebraic expressions as line graphs.
- The school's firm commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and tackling discrimination is seen in the progress made by different groups:
 - disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress due to effective support, both within lessons and during small-group sessions
 - for the past two years, there have been no pupils in Year 6 for whom the school received pupil premium funding. For those pupils who do receive it, this additional funding is used wisely. Extra staff and specialist resources are helping them to make similar progress to other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Effective and often outstanding teaching absorbs and challenges pupils.
- Children in the Reception class are keen to learn and eager to talk about what they are doing. They benefit from lots of practical activities both indoors and outside. 'We need to make it higher, so the cars will move,' said one child, as a group constructed a track from guttering held up by crates. Adults take every opportunity to engage with children and stimulate such problem-solving activities.
- Pupils make sustained efforts in lessons and are eager to respond to questions and share ideas. They take pride in their work and try their best to write neatly in joined handwriting and to set out their mathematics work tidily.
- In practical lessons, such as art and physical education, pupils work painstakingly to improve their skills. Role play helps pupils to develop their vocabulary and gives them ideas for writing.

This was evident when pupils in the Year 1/2 class, after acting out arguments between the Montague and Capulet families, created their own dialogue between Romeo and Juliet.

- In the mixed age classes, pupils are set work that builds on their starting points. Pupils are frequently grouped according to their level of ability rather than simply by age. In the Year 5/6 class, for example, pupils working in mixed groups made rapid progress as they used a wide range of practical resources to support their number work.
- Pupils benefit from feedback during lessons and through marking. They have time at the beginning of lessons to look at the comments on their previous work and, for the most part, they avoid making the same errors in subsequent work.
- Pupils and parents feel that homework is an important element of learning. In the younger classes, there is a useful ongoing dialogue through home/school books between teachers and parents about the progress pupils are making in reading and spelling. Older pupils were justifiably proud of the models of Stonehenge they had made at home and were keen to discuss their research into how the real stones were put into place.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. They are particularly effective in supporting pupils who find it difficult to sustain their concentration or who need help with their communication skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils' is outstanding. This is because leaders, teachers and all staff do their utmost to create a warm, positive and caring ethos where every pupil is seen as important.
- Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and strive hard in lessons to do their very best. They respond readily to instructions, work cooperatively and persist if they encounter a problem. There were no raised voices during the inspection and pupils said this was almost always the case, reflecting the seamless, low-key and effective management of behaviour by the staff.
- In the playground and at lunchtimes, pupils are polite and eager to help. Friendship groups cross all ages, with older pupils frequently and spontaneously leading young ones in their play. Pupils relish taking on responsibilities, such as being on the school parliament.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Consequently, pupils feel totally safe in school. When asked about this, one boy replied incredulously, 'Why wouldn't we feel safe here?', as if the thought had not occurred to him.
- An excellent programme of personal and social education gives pupils a strong understanding of how to keep safe and avoid potential hazards, for example when using the internet.
- Pupils are well aware of different forms of bullying, such as the malicious use of mobile phones and social media, but could not recall any incidents. They explained that any minor squabbles are soon resolved, mostly without the need for adults to intervene.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is extremely successful in maintaining high aspirations and is held in great regard by staff, pupils and parents. As a result, the school is a calm and safe environment which allows focused and stimulating learning to take place.
- In this small school, each teacher willingly takes on at least one leadership role. They carry out their responsibilities, such as overseeing the development of literacy, very effectively. There is a strong sense of purpose and staff frequently share ideas. The headteacher regularly checks the quality of teaching. He judges it accurately and gives extremely clear comments when feeding back to staff. They respect and welcome his advice and act upon it. As a result, teaching across the school is good and continuously improving, and pupils consistently progress well.
- Leadership and management are good rather than outstanding because, although improving, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are not yet outstanding, especially in how well pupils

write.

- Staff benefit from a well-designed training programme. This is particularly evident in the skilled teaching of phonics by teachers and support staff. A new emphasis on including debate and role play in lessons is helping pupils to gain confidence in describing events and expressing ideas in writing. Having seen how this initiative is helping to raise standards in Key Stage 1, the school is keen to promote this approach across the school.
- Meticulous tracking of pupils' progress, together with a clear view of the quality of teaching, provides an accurate basis for school improvement. Targets for pupils' attainment are specific and there are clear procedures to check the progress and evaluate the impact of initiatives
- Salary progression is used very well to improve teaching and raise standards because teachers are very clear that they will be rewarded when their pupils do as well as, or better than, expected.
- The new primary school sport funding has been used effectively to increase pupils' involvement in competitive sports, to develop teachers' expertise in teaching physical education and to introduce new pursuits, such as orienteering. Such activities are contributing well to pupils' physical development and well-being.
- Pupils have rich and memorable experiences through the imaginative ways teachers interpret the curriculum and the wealth of enrichment activities. They were eager to talk about singing in the choir, learning to play instruments, trips to an adventure centre, and rugby competitions, to name but a few of the wide range of opportunities they were excited about. Such activities, together with regular exchange visits to a contrasting school in central London, promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness extremely successfully.
- The school welcomes the support and advice it receives from the local authority. This has contributed to improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors offer highly effective support and rigorous challenge to the school. The Chair of the Governing Body provides insightful and enthusiastic leadership. Governors have a wide range of skills and experience and are very knowledgeable and passionate about the school. They keep a close eye on the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils, and seek assurance that good teaching is rewarded. They help to decide how the pupil premium money and sport funding are allocated and are acutely aware of their impact. Governors ensure that statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding are fully met. The budget is managed extremely well, with the needs and progress of pupils central to all spending decisions.

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	126490
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	439607

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Essigman
Headteacher	Michael Holyoake
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2009
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